

# **SOUTHERN THAILAND: INSURGENCY, NOT JIHAD**

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## SOUTHERN THAILAND: INSURGENCY, NOT JIHAD

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Violence in Thailand's southern, mainly Malay Muslim provinces has been steadily escalating since early 2004, exacerbated by the disastrously heavy-handed policies of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. There is widespread concern in the region that left unchecked, the unrest could turn into a mass-based insurgency, or even a regional jihad, although to date there is no evidence of external involvement in the bombings and killings that have become almost a daily occurrence.

The rise of more puritanical strains of Islam in southern Thailand is often cited as contributing to the violence, particularly given Muslim anger at the deployment of Thai troops in Iraq. But while Islamic consciousness and a sense of persecution and solidarity with fellow Muslims has grown over the last two decades, it would be a mistake to view the conflict as simply another manifestation of Islamic terrorism. The violence is driven by local issues.

There is no question that the Muslim south is one of the poorest parts of Thailand, but the grievances are political, and even well thought-out development policies will not deal with the unrest effectively unless those grievances are addressed. However, almost every step the government has taken has exacerbated the problem.

The origins of the current violence lie in historical grievances stemming from discrimination against the ethnic Malay Muslim population and attempts at forced assimilation by successive ethnic Thai Buddhist governments in Bangkok for almost a century.

Armed separatist groups have been active there since the late 1960s, with particularly virulent violence in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The largest and most effective group of several operating then was PULO (Patani United Liberation Organisation), which called for an independent Islamic state but whose thrust was more ethno-nationalist than Islamist.

The Thai government managed to stem the unrest with political and economic reforms that undercut support for armed struggle, and hundreds of fighters accepted a

broad amnesty. The insurgency looked to be all but over by the mid-1990s.

But new strains then appeared, with four particularly significant groups emerging or re-emerging, and major violence erupting in early 2004. The major groups active today include:

- ❑ *BRN-C* (Barisan Revolusi Nasional-Coordinate, National Revolutionary Front-Coordinate) the only active faction of BRN, first established in the early 1960s to fight for an independent Patani state. Thought to be the largest and best organised of the armed groups, it is focused on political organising and recruitment within Islamic schools;
- ❑ *Pemuda*, a separatist youth movement (part of which is controlled by BRN-C), believed to be responsible for a large proportion of day-to-day sabotage, shooting and bombing attacks;
- ❑ *GMIP* (Gerakan Mujahidin Islam Patani, Patani Islamic Mujahidin Group), established by Afghanistan veterans in 1995, committed to an independent Islamic state; and
- ❑ *New PULO*, established in 1995 as an offshoot of PULO and the smallest of the active armed groups, is fighting for an independent state.

In an effort to understand the current violence and who is involved, this report focuses in detail on three recent major outbreaks. The first, on 4 January 2004, involved carefully coordinated attacks in which militants raided an army arsenal, torched schools and police posts, and the following day, set off several bombs.

The second, on 28 April 2004, involved synchronised attacks on eleven police posts and army checkpoints across Pattani, Yala and Songkhla, and ended in a bloody showdown at the Krue Se Mosque when the Thai army gunned down 32 men inside. By the end of the day, 105 militants, one civilian and five members of the security forces were dead.

The third, on 25 October 2004, began with a demonstration outside a police station and ended with

the deaths of at least 85 Muslim men and boys, most from suffocation after arrest as a result of being stacked five and six deep in army trucks for transport to an army base.

There are several explanations, none mutually exclusive, for why violence has escalated. Two of the most plausible are the disbanding of key government institutions, and the fear and resentment created by arbitrary arrests and police brutality, compounded by government failure to provide justice to victims and families. Rapid social change has also contributed to insecurity and frustration in Malay Muslim communities and a feeling that their way of life, values and culture are threatened.

Government missteps in handling the problem include:

- ❑ failure to diagnose it accurately;
- ❑ dismantling effective crisis management institutions;
- ❑ excessive use of force;
- ❑ failure to properly investigate and punish abuses by members of the security forces;
- ❑ deployment of officers with little or no understanding of local cultural sensitivities or Malay language skills;
- ❑ reliance on weak intelligence;
- ❑ frequent rotation of senior political and security personnel and failure to coordinate some ten security forces and intelligence agencies in the region; and
- ❑ dismissal of proposals for amnesty and less intrusive methods of regulating religious schools in favour of a more robust military response.

Beyond security measures, the government needs to understand and respond to the political grievances from which perpetrators of violence are drawing strength. The establishment in March 2005 of a National Reconciliation Commission, despite its mainly non-Muslim, non-southern composition, is the first encouraging step in this direction. In order to address immediate sources of tension, however, the government should, at a minimum, undertake a number of additional steps designed to break the cycle of violence by a measured response that acknowledges the need for more than police and military actions.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **To the Royal Thai Government:**

1. Conduct full and transparent enquiries into the 74 deaths on 28 April 2004 that have yet to be investigated, in particular the nineteen alleged extra-judicial executions at Saba Yoi.

2. Try the four generals implicated in the Krue Se and Tak Bai deaths in April and October 2004 and named by the investigative commissions. Those responsible should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, not merely subjected to disciplinary actions such as transfers.
3. Establish a special commission to investigate the rash of disappearances in the southern provinces, many of which are suspected to be the result of kidnappings by state officials, with particular attention to the case of Somchai Neelaphaijit.
4. Re-examine army and police rules of engagement in the south to better ensure human rights protection.
5. End the unofficial policy of sending corrupt and errant officials to the southern provinces as a punishment post, thoroughly screen officials being transferred from other regions, and provide them with adequate cultural awareness training.
6. Hire, where possible, local Malay Muslims in the local administration and security forces, and reinforce the recent commendable initiative of the Southern Border Provinces Peace-Building Command (SBPPBC) to take on an additional 30,000 locals by providing training to help elevate Malay Muslims to senior positions.
7. Reinstate some form of the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC) to coordinate policy and monitor its implementation, with a civilian head mandated to remove corrupt or abusive officials.
8. Make a serious commitment to identifying, understanding, and creating the mechanisms for addressing political grievances, perhaps initially by broadening and deepening the consultative processes of the National Reconciliation Commission.

**Singapore/Brussels, 18 May 2005**

## SOUTHERN THAILAND: INSURGENCY, NOT JIHAD

### I. INTRODUCTION

Violence in southern Thailand has surged since early 2004. Bombings and killings have become daily fare, and no clear solution is in sight.<sup>1</sup> Unrest in the largely Muslim Malay provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat is not new, but the context is now different. There is heightened concern about terrorism and worry among neighbours that, although there is no evidence to date of external involvement, the grievances may spawn support for radical Islamist ideologies or bring in jihadist groups like Jemaah Islamiyah. There is growing sophistication and coordination, aided by widespread use of mobile telephones and the internet. And it is taking place in democratic Thailand, where Prime Minister Thaksin's hardline approach has been as politically popular outside the south as it has been counterproductive inside - making a major change in tactics less likely.

Various explanations have been put forward as to why and why now. Some focus on historical grievances and the central government's long political and economic neglect of the Muslim provinces, which are among the poorest in Thailand. Others focus on missteps by the Thaksin government that exacerbated rivalry between police and the military and disbanded the one agency with a conflict management track record.

But close examination of the three major eruptions of violence -- January, April and October 2004 -- underscores the complexity and the dangers of single-factor explanations. In visits to the region in December 2004 and April 2005, Crisis Group interviewed families of victims, police and military, as well as participants in

the violence, and talked with leading Thai analysts. We also examined documents ranging from interrogation depositions to calls to jihad. However, many questions remain unanswered about who organised the three incidents and how they are linked.

The one unquestionable finding is that the policies of the Thaksin government over the last sixteen months have not helped. There is no question that the unrest poses a serious security threat, and the government's ability to respond has been hamstrung by poor intelligence, bitter inter-agency rivalries, and a legacy of mistrust and mutual suspicion with the community. Nevertheless, ill-conceived initiatives, focused on military force, have compounded those problems.

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<sup>1</sup> This report continues a series on issues of Islamism in South East Asia. See Crisis Group Asia Report N°92, *Recycling Militants in Indonesia: Darul Islam and the Australian Embassy Bombing*, 22 February 2005, and Asia Report N°80, *Southern Philippines Backgrounder, Terrorism and the Peace Process*, 13 July 2004. For detailed analysis of Islamism in its many aspects globally, see Crisis Group Middle East and North Africa Report N°37, *Understanding Islamism*, 2 March 2005. For a full list of Crisis Group reports and briefings on the theme Islamism, Violence and Reform, see [www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=2969&l=1](http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=2969&l=1).

## II. HISTORICAL GRIEVANCES

The Muslims of southern Thailand are mostly ethnic Malays and speak Malay, rather than Thai. They were once part of an independent sultanate of Patani, comprising the present-day provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and parts of western Songkhla, that flourished from 1390 to 1902.<sup>2</sup> That history as a separate political entity and the second-class status and political neglect the Malay minority has endured ever since within independent Thailand, provides the backdrop to the violence today.<sup>3</sup>

### A. PATANI AND SIAM

In 1902, Siam, now Thailand, formally incorporated the sultanate, a measure reinforced in 1909 by an Anglo-Siamese treaty that drew a border between Patani and the Malay states of Kelantan, Perak, Kedah and Perlis (in then British Malaya, now Malaysia).<sup>4</sup> A series of Thai administrative reforms unseated the Patani ruler and divided the sultanate into three provinces, Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat.<sup>5</sup> The local aristocracy was deposed

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<sup>2</sup> Patani, with one "t" is the Malay spelling, used to refer to the Malay Sultanate of Patani. Pattani, with two "t"s is the transliteration of the Thai name for the province of Pattani.

<sup>3</sup> Ethnically and linguistically distinct regions in the north and northeast of modern Thailand, Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae and Nan, and Udonthani and Ubonratchathani, were similarly incorporated in the early nineteenth century. See Tej Bunnag, *The Provincial Administration of Siam, 1892-1915* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 136-184.

<sup>4</sup> Prior to 1902, there had been periods of nominal Thai control of the Patani sultanate but independent political, economic and cultural structures were left in place. The sultans, known as rajas, were simply obliged to send gold and silver to the Thai king as symbols of loyalty and troops when requested during war. When Thai control was weak, Patani would rebel and cut off ties. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, however, Thai rulers responded more forcefully to these periodic rebellions, and Patani was fatally weakened. See Uthai Dulyakasem, "Muslim Malay in southern Thailand: Factors underlying the political revolt", in Lim Joo Jock and Vani S. (eds.), *Armed Separatism in Southeast Asia*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Regional Strategic Studies Program (1984), pp. 220-222. For a concise chronology of Patani history, see Supara Janchitfa, *Violence in the Mist* (Kobfai, 2005), pp. 273-274.

<sup>5</sup> Satun [Setul] was part of the Malay Sultanate of Kedah, which was under Thai suzerainty, but most of Kedah was ceded by Siam to British Malaya in 1909, and Satun was made a Thai province. Although its population is majority Muslim, its inhabitants are much more assimilated into Thai culture and language than those in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, and it has been largely insulated from separatist politics and violence. See Moshe Yegar, *Between Integration and Secession* (Boulder:

in favour of officials who spoke only Thai and reported exclusively and directly to Bangkok.

For most of the twentieth century, relations between Bangkok and the majority Muslim southern provinces were characterised by harsh assimilation policies, resistance, conciliatory government gestures that were seldom properly implemented, and then an easing of tensions.<sup>6</sup>

The strongest resistance to dismantling local power structures not unnaturally came from those it deposed. But as assimilation policies began to engender a sense that Islam and Malay culture were under attack, local resistance grew.

One source of this resistance was the *ponoh* (religious boarding school),<sup>7</sup> the most important institution for reinforcing Malay Muslim identity. When Thai rulers replaced traditional elites with Thai Buddhists, the head teachers (*Tok Guru*) became the de facto community leaders, defenders of the faith, and upholders of Malay identity.<sup>8</sup>

The first popular opposition to Siamese occupation was led by Tengku Abdul Kadir, the last sultan of Patani, who directed passive resistance by the displaced nobility and was charged with treason in 1903. His arrest and 1906 release provoked uprisings but Bangkok kept a lid on the unrest.

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Lexington, 2002), pp. 79-80; Andrew Forbes, "Thailand's Muslim minorities: Assimilation, secession or coexistence" in A.D.W. Forbes (ed.), *The Muslims of Thailand, vol. 2: Politics of the Malay Speaking South*, Centre for South East Asian Studies (Bihar, 1989). For a discussion of the language communities of Malay Muslims in Satun and Patani, see Seni Mudmarn, "Language use and loyalty among the Muslim Malay of southern Thailand", PhD dissertation at State University of New York at Buffalo.

<sup>6</sup> Todd A. Culp, "Who you are is where you stand", PhD thesis, Northern Illinois University, 2003, p. 34; Surin Pitsuwan, *Islam and Malay Nationalism: A Case Study of the Malay Muslims of Southern Thailand* (Boulder, 1985), p. 216. See also D. Tugby, and E. Tugby, "Malay-Muslim and Thai-Buddhist relations in the Pattani region: An interpretation", in Forbes, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> *Ponoh* is a Patani Malay corruption of the standard Malay word, *pondok*, from the Arabic word *fondok*, meaning hostel. It refers to the groups of huts in which *pondok* students live, within the *Tok Guru*'s compound, also known as *pondoks*. The Indonesian equivalent is *pondok pesantren*, or just *pesantren*, an Islamic boarding school.

<sup>8</sup> There were also popularly elected Provincial Islamic Councils and Mosque Councils, but due to their deeper knowledge of Islam, and a widely held belief that they better represented the interests of Malays, the *ponoh* teachers commanded more respect and authority than the Council members. Dulyakasem, op. cit., pp. 224-225.

Two further uprisings in 1910 were led by Sufi sheikhs (To'tae and Haji Bula) preaching jihad against the infidel Siamese government, but they were put down by the army and the leaders arrested.<sup>9</sup>

In 1915, Abdul Kadir fled to Kelantan where he continued to exert significant influence on events across the border. Among the uprisings he inspired was the 1922 Namsai Rebellion, in which residents of Namsai village in Mayo district, Pattani, refused to pay land tax to the Thai government in protest against the education reforms introduced in 1921.<sup>10</sup>

The 1921 Compulsory Primary Education Act required all children to attend state primary schools for four years to learn the Thai language. Strict enforcement was a huge affront to Malay Muslims, who perceived it as a direct attack on their culture, religion and language. The state schools not only taught a secular curriculum in Thai, but included instruction in Buddhist ethics, with monks often serving as teachers.<sup>11</sup>

This attempt to supplant the *ponohs* threatened to undermine not only the social and cultural but also the economic power of the religious teachers. The *Tok Gurus* effectively mobilised the community against the policy, presenting it as an attempt to turn Muslim Malays into Thais.<sup>12</sup> Parents refused to send their children to the state schools.<sup>13</sup> Villagers staged massive protests not only against the education policy but also against paying tax. The government eventually removed a particularly unpopular local official and reduced taxes on Muslim villagers while simultaneously arresting and executing suspected leaders.

Government pressure eased over the next decade, and violence subsided. The absolute monarchy was ended in

a 1932 coup, which ushered in changes allowing Malay Muslims to run for the national parliament.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, nationalist integration policies persisted.<sup>15</sup>

## B. NATIONALIST ASSIMILATION POLICIES

The rise of Phibun Songkhram and his ultra-nationalist Pan-Thai policy in the late 1930s precipitated the next period of confrontation. The ethnically-neutral name of Siam was changed to Thailand in 1939, and the norms of central Thai culture were imposed on the rest of the country with no deviation tolerated. Phibun instituted Cultural Mandates (*Ratthaniyom*) to assimilate ethnic minorities. These banned use of Malay in government offices, forced government employees to take Thai names, forbade men and women to wear traditional Muslim-Malay dress in public, and circumscribed almost every aspect of daily life. Islamic law, which King Rama V had recognised for family and inheritance matters, was rescinded.

Phibun also imposed elements of Buddhism on the Malay population. Buddha statues were placed in all public schools, and Malay-Muslim children were forced to bow before them as a patriotic act.

The second cultural mandate identified "anti-Thai" behaviour as seditious.<sup>16</sup> Expression of non-Thai identity was not only unpatriotic in the eyes of the authorities but in itself a security threat. The fusion of national security and national identity created one of the central paradoxes of the conflict: the state saw assimilation as the key to reducing a perceived security threat posed by Malay Muslims who refused to adopt Thai culture, but the only real threat to security came from protests against assimilation policies.

For Malay Muslims, the situation started to look increasingly like a choice between submitting to Thai

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<sup>9</sup> Yegar, op. cit., p. 87.

<sup>10</sup> Aphornsawan Thanet, "The origins of Malay Muslim separatism in southern Thailand", Asia Research Institute, Working Paper Series, No. 32, October 2004, pp. 18-19.

<sup>11</sup> Yegar, op. cit., p. 89.

<sup>12</sup> Several scholars argue that elites, in response to threats to their power, manipulated the crisis, fomenting confrontation against the state to restore their own legitimacy. See Thanet, op. cit., p. 5, Dulyakasem, op. cit., p. 224; Chidchanok Rahimmula, *Peace Resolution: A Case Study of Separatist and Terrorist Movement in Southern Border Provinces of Thailand* (Prince of Songkhla University, 2001) p. 268; Ornanong Noiwiang, "Political integration policies and strategies of the Thai government toward the Malay-Muslims of southernmost Thailand (1973 - 2000)", PhD dissertation, Northern Illinois University, 2001, p. 151.

<sup>13</sup> In regions where Muslims made up around 80 per cent of the population, the attendance rate at state schools was 20 per cent of the school age population, and most left after two years. Yegar, op. cit., p. 89.

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<sup>14</sup> Pridi Phanomyong was among the civilian officials involved in fomenting the coup, along with army and navy officers.

<sup>15</sup> Integration policies were quite successful in the north (Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai) and northeast (Phitsanulok, Korat) and even Nakhorn Si Thammarat and parts of Songkhla in the south. A key difference with the southernmost provinces is their geographical proximity to the larger Islamic Malay cultural world and the irredentist spirit of the population. Crisis Group Correspondence with Surin Pitsuwan, Democrat parliamentarian for Nakhorn Si Thammarat and former Thai foreign minister, April 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Craig J. Reynolds, "National identity and its defenders" in Reynolds (ed.), *National Identity and its Defenders, Thailand 1939-1989*, Monash Papers on Southeast Asia No. 25 (Glen Waverly, 1991), p. 6.



rule and forsaking language, culture and religion, or fighting for independence to retain them.<sup>17</sup>

Abdul Kadir died in 1933 but he had passed the mantle of leadership of the movement to his youngest son, Tengku Mahyiddin. By the time he and his fellow nobles arrived in Kelantan in 1939, World War II had broken out. Thailand allied with Japan in 1941. Seeing the interests of Malay Muslims as best served by an alliance with the British and encouraged by hints at support for an independent Pattani State after the war, Mahyiddin deployed his men against the Japanese.<sup>18</sup>

### C. HOPES OF INDEPENDENCE

Pridi Phanomyong, ideologue of the 1932 revolution, which transformed Thailand from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy, led the anti-Japanese Seri Thai (Free Thai) movement during the war and supported Mahyiddin's resistance.<sup>19</sup> He also hinted that an Allied victory would bring independence to Pattani.<sup>20</sup> When Japan unexpectedly captured Singapore in February 1942, however, any hope of such a deal fell flat.

The Japanese restored the territories of Kelantan, Kedah, Trengganu and Perlis, ceded to the British in 1909.<sup>21</sup> This deepened the link between the struggle for an independent Pattani and nationalist movements of British Malaya. Receiving little support from London, Malay nationalists collaborated with ethnic Chinese communists against the Japanese. Mahyiddin stayed on in Kelantan, also spending a brief period in India organising Malay resistance, and

became heavily involved in planning for post-occupation Malaya.

Phibun left office a few months later, in July 1944, when the tide had started to turn against Japan, and his harsh assimilation policies went with him. His successor, Prime Minister Pridi Phanomyong, revoked some of the more egregious measures and generally took a more conciliatory approach to governing the southern provinces.

In August 1945, the Thai government allowed the sultanates of Kelantan, Trengganu, Kedah and Perlis to rejoin Malaya. Although Patani's accession to British Malaya was keenly anticipated by Muslim leaders, who petitioned British forces in Kuala Lumpur, it was ultimately thwarted. It became clear to many Patani leaders at this point that hope for a return of these territories was gone. Some moved to northern Malaysia, others to Saudi Arabia. These exiled Patani Muslims later provided valuable support in fund raising and advocacy for the separatist movements.<sup>22</sup>

Pridi, anxious about rising nationalism in the Malay provinces, established structures designed to create a sense of belonging among Malay Muslims, but only succeeded in further alienating many. Shortly after he came to office, he introduced the Patronage of Islam Act, which incorporated Muslim leaders into a state structure (under the interior ministry) with its head, the *chulrajmontri*, appointed to advise the king on matters relating to Islam. This bureaucratic structure extended to the individual mosque.

Malay Muslims saw the new religious bureaucracy as inherently co-opted. Furthermore, there has not been a southern *chulrajmontri* to this day. Muslims from Bangkok or the Central Plain have always been appointed, making it hard for the office to command much legitimacy in the south, where *Tok Gurus* remained the primary source of authority.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Surin Pitsuwan, op. cit., p. 90.

<sup>18</sup> Mahyiddin even reportedly convinced the British to finance his recruitment campaign among the Patani Muslims living in Mecca. Surin Pitsuwan, op. cit., pp. 95-96.

<sup>19</sup> A bloodless coup was mounted in June 1932 by members of the People's Party (Khana Ratsadon). With the unwitting support of some sympathetic generals, People's Party leaders arrested leading royal members of the government, along with army and police leaders and detained them in the Anantha Throne Hall. Having gained control of the capital, the People's Party proclaimed its intention to establish a national representative assembly. The six principles of its revolution were to uphold national independence, maintain internal security, draw up an economic plan to promote the nation's economic well-being, equality for all, liberty, and education for the people. See Surin Pitsuwan, "Integration policy for Malay-Muslims in Thailand during the Rattankosin era", [Nayobai prasom prasarn chao Malay-Muslim nai prathet Thai samai Rattankosin], seminar paper No. 43, Thai Khadi Research Institute, Thammasat University, 24 December 1982. (BE.2525), p. 11.

<sup>20</sup> Yegar, op. cit., p. 93.

<sup>21</sup> Territories in northwestern Cambodia and southwestern Laos were also "restored" to Thailand by the Japanese in 1940 and 1941, and Shan State in Burma, in 1943.

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<sup>22</sup> Wan Kadir Che Man, *Muslim Separatism: The Moros of the Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand* (OUP, 1990), p. 59.

<sup>23</sup> When the Chularajmontri visited Pattani during the Muslim anti-government demonstrations in 1975, Malay Muslim leaders refused him the customary welcome ceremony. To' Mina and Surin in Wan Kadir, op. cit., pp. 98, 165. Similarly, when the Chularajmontri was invited to the opening of the first mosque on a university campus in Thailand (at the Prince of Songkhla University in Pattani), and although he came with great fanfare, no one paid him much attention. The real guest of honour was Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, a charismatic preacher, and head of Malaysia's Partai Islam Se-Malaysia. Nik Aziz spoke in Kelantan dialect (which is very close to the Patani dialect of Malay) and despite being Malaysian, was received much more

The ministry of justice appointed two *Qadis* (Islamic judges) in each Muslim-majority province to advise the state courts on Islamic marriage and inheritance law but Thai Buddhist judges retained ultimate authority.<sup>24</sup> The idea of non-Muslim judges involved in arbitrating Islamic law was seen by Muslims as unacceptable. The preference (as expressed in petitions by Muslim leaders to the Bangkok government) was for a parallel structure administered exclusively by Muslims.<sup>25</sup>

Pridi's government also established a special commission to investigate complaints against the government from Malay Muslims but police regularly beat up people who registered grievances. Many Muslims demanded the right to secede from Thailand and join British Malaya.

#### **D. HAJI SULONG AND THE DUSUN NYUR REBELLION**

Riots broke out in Narathiwat in 1946. The chairman of the Pattani Provincial Islamic Council, Haji Sulong (Sulong bin Abdul Kadir bin Mohammad el Patani), established the Patani People's Movement in early 1947 and petitioned for self-rule, language and cultural rights and implementation of Islamic law.<sup>26</sup> Haji Sulong was a modernist intellectual, educated in Mecca and heavily influenced there by the reformist ideas of Jamal al-Din Al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, as well as by his Saudi, Egyptian and Southeast Asian contemporaries. He combined deep religious faith with populist nationalism,

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as a local man. Crisis Group interview with Saroja Dorairajoo, Singapore, December 2004.

<sup>24</sup> Culp. op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>25</sup> See seventh demand in Haji Sulong's petition below. Similar demands were advanced by Muslim leaders in other provinces.

<sup>26</sup> Haji Sulong's seven demands were:

1. The appointment of a single individual with full powers to govern the four provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narthiwat and Satun, and in particular having authority to dismiss, suspend, or replace all government servants -- this official to have been born in one of the four provinces and elected by the people;
2. 80 per cent of government servants in the four provinces to be Muslims;
3. both Malay and Thai to be official languages;
4. Malay to be the medium of instruction in primary schools;
5. Islamic law to be recognised and enforced in a separate court other than a civil court where the kafir (non-believer) sat as an assessor;
6. all revenue and income derived from the four provinces to be utilised within them; and
7. the formation of a Muslim Board having full powers to direct all Muslim officers under the supreme head of state mentioned in (1).

Haemindra cited in Astri Suhrke, "The Muslims of Southern Thailand", in Forbes, op. cit.

and with other like-minded reformers, helped give the autonomy movement a broader base.

Fifty-five leaders in Narathiwat followed Haji Sulong's lead and presented a similar list of demands. Muslims in Satun also submitted a petition. Before Pridi, who actually advocated a model of Swiss-style federalism, had a chance to respond, Phibun mounted a coup and re-took office in November 1947.<sup>27</sup> The military government's response was to imprison Haji Sulong and several other religious leaders and parliamentarians on treason charges in January 1948. Many who escaped carried on the struggle from Malaya.

Around the same time, in 1948, 250,000 Thai Malays petitioned the UN to oversee the accession of Pattani, Narathiwat and Yala to the new Federation of Malaya. Many leading signatories were arrested. Under international pressure, Phibun reluctantly made some concessions, including allowing teaching in Malay in primary schools and application of Islamic law (through Thai courts) to family law and inheritance. He also allowed Muslim state employees to wear Muslim dress. These reforms, however, were implemented slowly and incompletely.<sup>28</sup>

Haji Sulong's imprisonment was a turning point in resistance to Thai rule. As in 1909, Malay officials in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat boycotted meetings with Thai administrators and planned to boycott the 1948 election. But the non-cooperation strategy soon turned into open confrontation. Rebellions broke out in the three provinces, including a mass protest outside the police station where Haji Sulong was incarcerated.<sup>29</sup>

Haji Sulong was moved out of the southern provinces for trial but the protests did not end. Riots erupted all over Pattani, Narathiwat and Yala. The biggest was the Dusun Nyur rebellion in Narathiwat on 26-28 April 1948. A religious leader, Haji Abdul Rahman, led hundreds of men against the police resulting in the deaths of some 400 Muslims; thousands more fled to Malaysia. Religious leaders on both sides of the border called for a jihad against Thai authorities, but leaders in Kelantan were aware that without British support, there was not much they could do to help.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Surin Pitsuwan, 1985, op. cit., p. 150. In fact, the 1947 military coup replaced the Pridi surrogate, Luang Thamrong Nawaswat, with Democrat Party leader, Khuang Aphaiwong, but he was replaced by Phibun in 1948.

<sup>28</sup> M. Ladd Thomas, "Thai Muslim separatism in Southern Thailand" in Forbes, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

<sup>29</sup> Protestors demanded to know why he was arrested.

<sup>30</sup> Haemindra in Surin Pitsuwan, 1985, op. cit., p. 162. Britain, facing a Communist insurgency in Malaya, soon dropped any semblance of support for incorporation of Patani into Malaya.

Haji Sulong was released from prison in 1952 but disappeared along with his eldest son, Ahmad Tomeena, in 1954, presumed drowned by the police.<sup>31</sup> His ability to unite nationalist and religious groups behind a push for autonomy expanded the resistance from an elite movement driven by the former aristocracy into a much broader, popular one. He himself was transformed into a symbol of resistance against Thai assimilation and suppression. Unlike earlier rebellions by the Patani Sultanate, which were essentially clashes over power, status and attendant interests of royal elites, Haji Sulong's leadership, and his Islamic credentials, recast ethnic Malay nationalism in Islamic terms.<sup>32</sup>

The expansion of Malay resistance in the 1950s was accelerated and consolidated by formation in Malaya of the *Gabungan Melayu Pattani Raya* (GAMPAR, the Greater Pattani Malay Association), an organisation set up to incorporate Thailand's four majority Muslim provinces into Malaya and the Patani People's Movement (PPM), a Thailand-based organisation with the same goal.<sup>33</sup> However, when the leaders of GAMPAR and PPM died in 1953 and 1954 respectively, the organisations disintegrated.<sup>34</sup> Their scattered memberships were collected by Adun Na Saiburi, the deputy leader of GAMPAR and former Narathiwat parliamentarian, when he established the Patani National Liberation Front (*Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani*, BNPP) in 1959, the first organised armed group to call for Patani's independence.<sup>35</sup>

### III. 1960-1990: REBELLION AND CONCILIATION

Over 60 armed groups were operating in the south in the late 1960s, some political, some criminal, some a mixture. They included Muslim separatists and Thai and Malaysian communists, criminal hit men claiming to be separatists, and guns-for-hire contracted by the political groups to carry out operations on their behalf.<sup>36</sup> Their tactics (extortion, kidnap and murder) were identical.<sup>37</sup> The goals of the armed separatist movements were broadly similar but they rarely cooperated.<sup>38</sup> There was no leader who could command the broad support of Haji Sulong. Attempts to coordinate were ultimately unsuccessful, and internal rifts significantly weakened the major groups.

After almost two decades of intense campaigns against separatist and communist insurgencies in the south, the government realised that its battle had to be political as well as military. In 1981, it overhauled security and governance structures to pursue political accommodation. The new approach, which emphasised public participation and economic development rather than a purely military strategy, was effective in stemming the violence. Hundreds of fighters, communist and separatist, accepted an amnesty, and the decision of many to participate in Thai politics undermined support for armed struggle. Ironically, however, weakening of the armed movements caused them to splinter and radicalise, not fade away.

#### A. BNPP

The first group to organise armed resistance in the south was the National Patani Liberation Front (BNPP) in 1959. Until then, resistance had been essentially passive, with only occasional violence. The ideological goalposts had by now shifted as well. Whereas PPM had demanded autonomy and GAMPAR accession to the Malayan Union, BNPP called for full independence. It recruited thugs and bandits as guerrilla leaders and began operations in the southern provinces.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Phanomyong in Surin Pituwan, 1985, op. cit., pp. 164-165.

<sup>32</sup> Thanet Aphornsuvan, "Origins of Malay Muslim 'separatism' in southern Thailand", Asia Research Institute working paper No. 32, pp. 13-18.

<sup>33</sup> GAMPAR was established on 3 March 1948 at Madrasah Muhammadiyah, Kota Baru, Kelantan. Tengku Ismail bin Tengku Nik was elected its chairman but Tengku Mahyiddin, despite holding no official post, was a strong supporter of the movement. GAMPAR's three objectives as stated in its manifesto were:

- to unite the four provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Satun as a Malay Islamic state and liberate its residents from oppression and exploitation;
- to establish a state appropriate to Islamic traditions and practices to meet the demands of the Malay-Muslims; and
- to improve the status and quality of life of the Malay-Muslims in the areas of humanity, justice, freedom and education without delay. Rahimmula, op. cit.

<sup>34</sup> Wan Kadir, op. cit., p. 98.

<sup>35</sup> BNPP document 1981a cited in *ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>36</sup> Although the communists and separatists shared the goal of destabilising the region and enjoyed a mutually convenient stand-off between Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur over accusations of offering shelter to insurgents across each other's borders, they eventually came to blows in 1981 in a dispute over Yala's border district of Betong. It had been under MCP control but PULO began to infiltrate, prompting MCP to collaborate with the Thai army. Yegar, op. cit., p. 160. See also Thomas, op. cit., 1989, p. 28.

<sup>37</sup> Yegar, op. cit., p. 141.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas, op. cit.

<sup>39</sup> One of the first BNPP militia commanders was renowned

BNPP's strength at its peak in the 1980s has been estimated at 200 to 300 men. Knowing that it could never rival the military strength of the Thai army, its strategy was to destabilise the region to make it seem ungovernable. Another important element was to provoke a crackdown, which it hoped would attract new recruits and prompt sympathetic Muslim governments to pressure Bangkok.<sup>40</sup>

Recruitment was conducted primarily through religious teachers, who selected students and teachers as well as villagers in the vicinity of their schools, then nominated the recruits for political or military training. The former was conducted by religious teachers; local military training was carried out by guerrilla leaders in the foothills of the southern mountains. Some recruits were later sent for military training to Libya, Syria and Afghanistan.<sup>41</sup>

BNPP's political leadership remained in Kelantan and attracted many Patani student activists who had studied in Malaya. It encouraged Patani Malays to apply for Malaysian citizenship, which made it easier to operate on both sides of the border. Many Patani students on Malaysian government scholarships did so and upon graduation joined the Malaysian bureaucracy and continued to support the movement from there.<sup>42</sup>

Several of these students also went on to Al-Azhar University in Cairo, where they established a BNPP base, Rumah Patani (House of Patani), which was used for advocacy and fund raising. In Mecca, a Patani students and workers association, Akhon (brother) was set up. It initially was to promote Patani education but it quickly became a training ground for young activists who supported the independence movement back home.<sup>43</sup>

BNPP also maintained links with the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organisation) and Pan-Muslim bodies such as the OIC (Organisation of the Islamic Conference),

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Pattani gang leader Idris Mat Diah (Deureh Madiyoh), alias Pak Yeh. Wan Kadir, op. cit., p. 98.

<sup>40</sup> This strategy was outlined to a conference of Muslim foreign ministers in Istanbul in 1976. Yegar, op. cit., p. 145. A former BNPP member also relayed to Thai researcher Ornanong Noi Wong that young men falsely accused of membership in separatist groups fled to the jungle, fearing police brutality, to join the separatist movements they had been accused of being members of. Ornanong, op. cit., p. 147.

<sup>41</sup> Wan Kadir, op. cit., p. 104, 108; Omar Farouk, "The historical dimensions of Malay Muslim separatism in Southern Thailand" in Lim Joo Jock and S. Vani (eds.), *Armed Separatism in Southeast Asia*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Regional Strategic Studies Program (1984), p. 241.

<sup>42</sup> Surin Pitsuwan, 1985, op. cit., pp. 229-230.

<sup>43</sup> Wan Kadir, op. cit., p. 99.

and the Arab League.<sup>44</sup> It is the group credited with publicising the plight of the Patani Muslims in the Arab world.<sup>45</sup> It also enjoyed considerable support from Malaysia's Parti Islam in Kelantan.<sup>46</sup>

## B. BRN

The National Revolutionary Front (Barisan Revolusi Nasional, BRN), emerged in the early 1960s. It was founded by Ustaz Haji Abdul Karim Hassan, a *Tok Guru* in Narathiwat's Ruso district, largely in response to a government education reform program.

Under the 1961 Educational Improvement Program, field marshal Sarit Thannarat's military government forced *ponohs* to take on a secular curriculum in addition to their traditional religious studies, thereby converting them to *rongrian ekachon son satsana Islam* (private schools teaching Islam, PSTI).<sup>47</sup> Schools that refused to convert were ordered closed. The program pushed many students into secular state schools, which were cheaper anyway, and many *Tok Guru* opposed to the changes into the *dakwah* (Islamic proselytisation) movement, where their preaching became increasingly political.<sup>48</sup>

Karim Hassan saw the 1961 reforms as another effort to assimilate Muslims and weaken Malay culture and formed the BRN with the aim of creating an independent republic of Patani out of the four majority Muslim provinces (Yala,

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<sup>44</sup> Yegar, op. cit., p. 145.

<sup>45</sup> Surin Pitsuwan, 1985, op. cit., p. 228.

<sup>46</sup> Previously known as the Pan Malaysian Islamic Party and advocating the accession of Thailand's four southern provinces to Malaysia, Partai Islam se-Malaysia, as it became known after 1973, although it no longer called for incorporation of the Thai Malay provinces, continued to give significant political and financial support to separatist movements. It lost power in 1978 and was, therefore, no longer able to provide the same level of support. Surin Pitsuwan, 1985, op. cit., p. 230; Sath-Anand, Chaiwat, "Islam and violence: a case study of violent events in the four Southern provinces, Thailand, 1976-81", University of South Florida Monographs in Religion and Public Policy, 1987, p. 14.

<sup>47</sup> By the early 1990s, there were only 189 *ponoh*, compared with 535 in 1961. Culp, op. cit., p. 32. The PSTI are now much more popular and prestigious than the traditional *ponoh*. They tend to be better funded and attract better teachers. They teach both the Thai national curriculum and Koranic and Arabic language studies. It is the PSTI, such as Thamma Witthaya Foundation School in Yala, where militant activity has allegedly been taking place, rather than the smaller traditional *ponoh*. Crisis Group interviews with students in Yala and Narathiwat, December 2004; Crisis Group interviews with military and intelligence officials, Yala and Pattani, April 2005.

<sup>48</sup> On the *dakwah* movement, see Surin Pitsuwan, 1985, op. cit., p. 248-249.

Narathiwat, Pattani and Satun) and parts of Songkhla.<sup>49</sup> In this sense, he shared the BNPP goal but BNPP was still dominated by remnants of the Patani ruling elite and clung to the idea of reinstating a sultanate. Karim Hassan and the young intellectuals and foreign-educated Muslims around him were more progressive, describing their ideology as "Islamic socialism".

BRN was much more focused on political organisation, particularly in religious schools, than guerrilla activities. It did not shy away from violence, however, and had a military wing led by Jehku Baku (alias Mapiyoh Sadalah), who commanded 150 to 300 men, mainly in Yala and some western districts of Songkhla province.<sup>50</sup>

In the 1960s and 1970s, BRN maintained close relationships with the communist parties of Malaysia and Thailand, whose goal of destabilising the border area it shared.<sup>51</sup> This cooperation alienated some of its more conservative supporters in Malaysia and the Middle East.<sup>52</sup> BRN's efforts to span socialism, Islamism and nationalism made it particularly vulnerable to factional splits.

### C. PULO

A third armed group, the Patani United Liberation Organisation (PULO),<sup>53</sup> emerged in 1968 and became the largest and most effective of the separatist movements during the next two decades.<sup>54</sup> It occupied the political middle ground between BNPP and BRN and was not strongly associated with either conservative Islam and former elites or socialism. Its official ideology is "Religion, Race, Homeland, Humanitarianism".<sup>55</sup> Although its stated goal was and is an independent Islamic state, it is more accurately characterised as ethno-nationalist than

Islamist. It relies heavily on Koranic citations, however, to justify violence.<sup>56</sup>

PULO was founded in India by Tengku Bira Kotanila (alias Kabir Abdul Rahman), who had just completed political science studies there.<sup>57</sup> Bira had become disaffected with what he saw as an ineffectual Malay resistance movement. In PULO he brought together younger activists, many of whom had studied abroad. As well as armed struggle, PULO was committed to raising education levels and political consciousness in the south.<sup>58</sup>

PULO's most senior leaders were based in Mecca, with political and military operational headquarters in Tumpat, Kelantan.<sup>59</sup> Recruitment focused on Patani Muslims studying in Malaysia and the Middle East, and religious teachers in southern Thailand. The Mecca office was also used to recruit Thai pilgrims on the haj.

Bira was an extremely effective publicist and fund-raiser and secured millions of dollars from Arab leaders, particularly from Libya and Syria, enabling him to obtain a stake in a Hamburg hotel and thus a guaranteed income source.<sup>60</sup> PULO also had the best trained and equipped fighting force and was active in all four majority Muslim provinces as well as parts of Songkhla, but its strongholds were mainly in Narathiwat, the districts of Ra Ngae, Bacho, Yi Ngo and Rusoh, and the neighbouring Pattani districts of Mayo and Yarang.<sup>61</sup> PULO used its Kota Baru (Kelantan) office as operational headquarters for senior leaders to brief field commanders.<sup>62</sup>

Many fighters were also foreign-trained. The PLO ran training programs for members, and PULO also had a training camp in Syria, along the border with Lebanon.<sup>63</sup> Its top military commander, Sama-ae Thanam, received military and explosives training in the Middle East.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Initially, BRN also had pan-Malay aspirations, but the divide over the confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia alienated more conservative elements, who split off to form Partai Revolusi Nasional (Parnas). Parnas had very little impact and disbanded soon afterwards, but BRN dropped its pan-Malay position. Farouk, op. cit., p. 240.

<sup>50</sup> Wan Kadir, op. cit., p. 99; Thomas, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>51</sup> Surin Pitsuwan, 1985, op. cit., p. 231; Surin Pitsuwan, "Issues affecting border security between Malaysia and Thailand", Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University, 1982.

<sup>52</sup> It did retain supporters in Algeria, Syria and Libya. Farish Noor, "Sejarah Patani yang tidak tercatat", Ummah Online, 12 May 2004. Available at <http://www.geocities.com/ummahonline/kolum/farish/040512farish-patani.htm>.

<sup>53</sup> Its Malay name is Pertubuhan Persatuan Pembebasan Patani, PPPP.

<sup>54</sup> Surin Pitsuwan, 1985, op. cit., p. 234.

<sup>55</sup> In Malay, "Agama, Bangsa, Tanah Air, Perkemanusiaan" or its acronym, UBANGTAPEKEMA. Ornanong, op. cit., p. 215.

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<sup>56</sup> See Satha-Anand, 1987, op. cit., pp. 31-35, for an analysis of pamphlets distributed in the name of PULO during the 1970s and 1980s, and PULO's website ([www.pulo.org](http://www.pulo.org)) for more recent press releases.

<sup>57</sup> He studied at Aligarh Muslim University.

<sup>58</sup> Peter Chalk, "Separatism and Southeast Asia: The Islamic factor in Southern Thailand, Mindanao, and Aceh", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24, 2001, p. 243.

<sup>59</sup> Surin Pitsuwan, 1985, op. cit., p. 234.

<sup>60</sup> John McBeth, "Separatism is the goal and religion the weapon", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 20 June 1980.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 19.

<sup>62</sup> Wan Kadir, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid; Yegar, op. cit., p. 146; Ornanong, op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>64</sup> Thomas, op. cit., p. 25.

Most reliable estimates of PULO's strength ranged between 200 and 600 fighters; PULO claimed 20,000.<sup>65</sup>

#### D. THE 1975 PROTESTS

Guerrilla activity in rural Yala, Narathiwat and Pattani increased through the late 1960s and 1970s, primarily through attacks on police posts and government buildings, including schools. Extortion, especially from rubber and coconut plantation owners but also from villagers and local businesses, and kidnap for ransom became important revenue-raising techniques.

In response, the government launched military operations, often in cooperation with police special forces and numerous Buddhist and Muslim civilian volunteers, but they seemed to have little impact other than intensifying local resentment.<sup>66</sup> A bewildered police captain remarked in 1977:

If we look at the statistics, we like to believe that our operations were successful and that the terrorists should have been entirely wiped out. On the contrary, several terrorists remain active; new leaders who are unfamiliar to us have appeared. In fact, we have conducted campaigns against them since 1905. Yet still they exist.<sup>67</sup>

One particular incident led to the emergence of several small Islamist militias and unleashed the most intensive violence yet seen. On 29 November 1975, Thai marines allegedly murdered five Muslim youths in Bacho district of Narathiwat. For months the government made no attempt to investigate.

PULO used the murders to organise a mass protest, building on local anger over the heavy-handed military crackdown of the previous seven years, including frequent "disappearances" of people suspected of collaborating with separatists.<sup>68</sup> PULO organised religious leaders, student groups, Malay Muslim politicians and political groups to come with their supporters to the rally. On 11 December 1975, three days before *Eid ul-Adha*, the

second most important holiday in the Muslim calendar, demonstrations began in Pattani, and on *Eid ul-Adha* itself, more than 70,000 Malay Muslims joined in.

A bomb was thrown into the crowd of demonstrators, reportedly by Thai Buddhist extremists, killing twelve and injuring at least 30. The twelve were buried as *syahid* (martyrs) the following day, setting the stage for calls to jihad.<sup>69</sup>

The government met most of the demonstrators' demands: the governor of Pattani was removed and replaced with a Muslim; bereaved families were compensated; the perpetrators were charged and imprisoned; the Marine unit was pulled out of the district; and an official inquiry was launched. But Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj came to hear the grievances only belatedly, after first sending lower-level officials.<sup>70</sup> Shortly afterwards, the government declared a state of emergency.

The unrest, which continued into 1976, gave rise to three new groups:

- Saibillillah (Path of God), bombed Bangkok's Don Muang International Airport in June 1977 and claimed later attacks on railway stations and other government installations.<sup>71</sup> Unlike BNPP, BRN and PULO, it was urban-based, drawing its membership mostly from Pattani province, and was thought to have links to Muslim activist groups in Malaysia, including the youth movement ABIM.<sup>72</sup> It was a shadowy organisation, however, with no identifiable leadership and seemed to vanish almost as quickly as it appeared.
- Gerakan Islam Patani (GIP), based in Kota Baru in Kelantan, was supported by the large Patani exile community there. It also received support from elements in the Middle East.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>65</sup> These figures are for 1981. Yegar, op. cit., p. 147.

<sup>66</sup> Special Operation for the Four Southern Border Provinces, Ramkamhaeng Operation and Special Terrorist Campaign in the Three Border Provinces.

<sup>67</sup> Yegar, op. cit. p. 147.

<sup>68</sup> Among Suthsana, "Thai society and the Muslim Minority", in Forbes (ed.), *The Muslims of Thailand*, op. cit., pp. 101, 107-109. False accusations and the fear of being arrested or killed even prompted some young men to flee to the jungle and join the separatist movements they had been falsely accused of belonging to. Interview with former BNPP cadre in Ornanong, op. cit., p. 147.

<sup>69</sup> Chaiwat Satha-Anand, "The dead under the same sky", *Fah Diew Kan*, 6 May 2004, p. 196; Surin Pitsuwan, 1985, op. cit., pp. 237-239.

<sup>70</sup> Yegar, op. cit., pp. 150-51.

<sup>71</sup> Classified documents, Parliamentary Special Committee 1979:16 in Surin Pitsuwan, 1985, op. cit., pp. 256-257; Thomas, op. cit., p. 26; Forbes, op. cit., p. 22. PULO and Black December were also reportedly involved in this operation. Satha-Anand, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>72</sup> Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia, founded in 1972 by Anwar Ibrahim. Yegar, op. cit., p. 157. Anwar Ibrahim was briefly detained in 1970 for leading campus protests against the policies of the Thanom government in southern Thailand. Forbes, op. cit., p. 177.

<sup>73</sup> Classified 1979 parliamentary report, cited in Surin Pitsuwan, 1985, op. cit. There is no link between GIP and Gerakan Mujahidin Patani (GMP), which was founded in 1986 and

- ❑ Black December 1902, active in Yala, claimed responsibility for one of the most audacious attacks, a bomb thrown at a royal ceremony there in September 1977.<sup>74</sup> King Bhumidol and Queen Sirikit escaped but five people were killed and 47 wounded. Black December called for an end to the teaching of Thai, recognition of Muslim teachers as government officials, employment of only Muslim officials in Pattani, jobs for the unemployed in the four southern provinces, assistance to Muslim children to get higher education, and an end to the use of force against Muslims.<sup>75</sup>

None lasted. While sporadic attacks continued, all stopped claiming responsibility by 1980 and ceased to exist as active terrorist groups.<sup>76</sup> The older movements also began to fracture: first BNPP in the late 1970s, then BRN and PULO in the early 1980s.

A 1972 military campaign had significantly weakened BNPP, and its leader, Tunku Yala Nasae, died in 1977. But the real setback came in 1978, when Partai Islam, one of its chief sponsors, lost power in Kelantan.<sup>77</sup> The organisation splintered, and many leaders left. Some simply took up Malaysian citizenship and settled down; others joined PULO.

The rest regrouped under a Central Committee of fifteen, led by Badri Hamdan in Ban Panare, Pattani province.<sup>78</sup> Under him, more religious-educated leaders came to dominate BNPP. Its supporters included conservative religious teachers, intellectuals and members of prominent families, and it received help from private individuals in conservative Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Pakistan.<sup>79</sup>

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reinvigorated in 1995 by returning Afghan veterans to become Gerakan Mujahidin Islam Patani, GMIP.

<sup>74</sup> The name refers to the date the Patani Sultanate was annexed by Siam. Classified documents, op. cit., pp. 256-7; Forbes, op. cit., p. 22; Yegar, op. cit., p. 147.

<sup>75</sup> Chaiwat Satha-Anand, "Islam and violence: A case study of violent events in the four southern provinces, Thailand, 1976-81", USF Monographs in Religion and Public Policy, 1987, p. 8; Wan Kadir, op. cit., p. 100.

<sup>76</sup> Military and intelligence officers interviewed by Crisis Group in April 2005 were not sure precisely what became of these groups after their brief spurts of activity in the late 1970s, but they are presumed to have disbanded.

<sup>77</sup> A mysterious fire also destroyed Tok Do village in Kelantan, where BNPP had its headquarters.

<sup>78</sup> Satha-Anand, "Islam and violence", op. cit., p. 14; McBeth, op. cit., p. 20; Thomas, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>79</sup> The BNPP obtained a fatwa (ruling) from Sheikh Abdul Aziz Ibn Baz, president of Saudi Arabia's department of scholarly research and religious training, that it had met the requirements to qualify as a charity, and was therefore able to collect alms.

BNPP's military operations, still led by Pak Yeh until he died in 1984, focused on reversing the government's resettlement scheme by attacking police and other official installations, Chinese businessmen and Buddhist settlers.<sup>80</sup> His 200 to 300 men had reportedly dwindled by the end of the 1980s to around 50, operating primarily in Pattani.<sup>81</sup>

In 1985 several more militant BNPP leaders broke off to form the United Patani Mujahidin Front (Barisan Bersatu Mujahidin Patani, BBMP). It was led by former BNPP Vice Chairman Wahyuddin Muhammad and was comprised primarily of secular and religious teachers educated in Malaysia and Indonesia.<sup>82</sup> Much more radical and Islamist than its parent organisation, it called for jihad against the *kafir* (infidel) Thai government, which it saw as deliberately undermining the Muslim identity of the Patani people.

BNPP changed its name in 1986 to BIPP (Barisan Islam Pembebasan Patani, the Patani Islamic Liberation Front) to emphasise its own commitment to Islamism.<sup>83</sup> The shift toward more radical agendas was also partly inspired by the success of the Iranian revolution in 1979.<sup>84</sup> Both factions had basically fizzled out by the early 1990s, however.

PULO and BRN became more violent, targeting Buddhist civilians even outside the south. Groups linked directly or indirectly to PULO carried out four major terrorist incidents during this period. PULO itself did four bomb attacks in Bangkok in a single day in July 1980.<sup>85</sup>

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But the primary source of its funding was reportedly the *Al Auqaf* (welfare department) and the Islamic Call Society (charity) of Kuwait. Wan Kadir, op. cit., pp. 104-105.

<sup>80</sup> Sarit's military government launched the "Self-Help Land Settlement Project" in 1961 to resettle poor landless farmers from the arid northeast in the more fertile south. Each family was granted seven to ten acres. By 1969, 160,000 Thai Buddhists had moved into the area. This was seen by many Malay Muslims as an attempt to water down the ethnic identity of the region. Although it was never publicly described as such, officials admitted privately that this policy was in fact an attempt to "balance" the population by increasing the proportion of Buddhists. Thomas, op. cit., p. 30; McBeth, op. cit., p. 21; Linda J. True, "Balancing minorities: A Study of Southern Thailand", SAIS Working Paper 02/04, May 2004, p. 5.

<sup>81</sup> Thomas, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>82</sup> Wan Kadir, op. cit., p. 103.

<sup>83</sup> Farish Noor, "Southern Thailand: A bloody mess about to get bloodier", Islamic Human Rights Commission.

<sup>84</sup> Farish Noor, "Sejarah Patani yang tidak tercatat" Ummah Online, 12 May 2004. Available at <http://www.geocities.com/ummahonline/kolum/farish/040512farish-patani.htm>.

<sup>85</sup> PULO cooperated with Saibillillah and Black December. PULO itself also detonated bombs in two train stations, a bus terminal and a bus on 1 July 1980. Satha-Anand, op. cit., p. 12.

BRN was also implicated in terrorist bombing in Yala and Songkhla in 1979.<sup>86</sup> By the end of the decade, the total number of active guerrilla fighters was estimated to be less than 1,000, half of whom were PULO.<sup>87</sup> But Thai security forces still found them troublesome, particularly as they could melt relatively easily into the population or slip over the border to Malaysia.<sup>88</sup>

## E. THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

When General Prem Tinasulanond took office in 1980, the government launched a new strategy emphasising enhanced public participation, economic development and a broad amnesty, which hundreds of communist and separatist fighters took up. Prem was himself a southerner and had actually served in the Fourth Army there, so he had a much better understanding of the identity politics and local grievances than his predecessors.<sup>89</sup>

He established a new administrative system to coordinate a shift from confrontation to negotiation. A Civil-Police-Military joint headquarters (CPM 43), set up to coordinate security operations, was under strict orders to ensure that extra-judicial killings and disappearances ceased. The government also launched a Policy of Attraction, aimed at drawing off sympathy from separatist groups by increasing political participation and lavishing economic development projects on the region.

The government launched several large infrastructure schemes and brought electricity and running water to remote areas. Military personnel and government officials helped establish committees at the village level to promote economic development and security.<sup>90</sup>

Political matters were handled by a new Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC), established in 1981 and initially under the Fourth Army Region commander, later the interior minister, but whose board also included many locals.<sup>91</sup> There was an emphasis on

understanding Malay Muslim culture, so training was provided for non-Malay officials in cultural awareness and the local Patani Malay (known by Thais as Jawi) language.

The SBPAC was designed to address two major problems in the administration of the southernmost provinces: poor coordination among agencies and corruption and prejudice among officials.<sup>92</sup> It was empowered to reward, punish or remove officials on the basis of performance.<sup>93</sup> Over 100 civil servants -- more than 80 per cent police -- were transferred out of the region between 1978 and 1995.<sup>94</sup> The Centre also held regular seminars for Malay Muslim leaders to air their grievances.<sup>95</sup>

Although this policy sent an important message to the community, its impact was undermined by the transfer into the southern provinces of corrupt and inept officials from other regions.<sup>96</sup> Nevertheless, the new approach seemed to work. Over the 1980s and early 1990s, violence dropped off significantly, and membership in armed organisations shrunk as fighters took up amnesty offers, abandoning their fight to participate in development programs or join the army. The greater political openness enticed some exiles to return, although many stayed on in Kelantan. Some joined the army or set up *ponohs*. Malay Muslim political participation increased, which also undercut support for armed struggle.

Although government programs improved southern Muslims' economic welfare and public participation, two major problems persisted. First, official, and especially

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remained under the control of the Fourth Army Commander.

<sup>92</sup> Malaysian scholar Omar Farouk asserts that the state often encouraged local repression by intolerant and corrupt officials. Omar Farouk, "The Muslims in Thailand: A review", cited in Ornanong, op. cit., p. 110.

<sup>93</sup> Ornanong, op. cit., pp. 183, 187-191. Corrupt and abusive behaviour on the part of officials has been a significant source of grievance since the 1940s. Crisis Group interviews with community and religious leaders and villagers, Yala and Pattani, December 2004.

<sup>94</sup> Ornanong, op. cit., pp. 187-188. Police have traditionally been feared and hated more than the military by residents of the southern provinces -- partly because they have more day-to-day contact with villagers and partly because the army was seen to be delivering tangible benefits through its role in implementing development projects. Since the army's violent role in the Krue Se and Tak Bai incidents (see below), however, it is starting to be seen as equally bad. Crisis Group interviews with villagers in Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Songkhla, December 2004 and April 2005.

<sup>95</sup> Ornanong, op. cit., p. 186.

<sup>96</sup> Rotating poor officers to the southern provinces was used as punishment. Interviews with SBPAC officials cited in Ornanong, op. cit., p. 188. This is reportedly still the case. Crisis Group interviews, April 2005.

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<sup>86</sup> McBeth, op. cit.

<sup>87</sup> Thomas, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>89</sup> Crisis Group interview with Panitan Wattanayakorn, political scientist at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, December 2004.

<sup>90</sup> Prime Ministerial Order No. 66/2523 of 1980 gave priority to political over military means to undercut support for insurgents. The subsequent Order No. 66/2525 (1982) was an implementation guideline that emphasised economic development and political participation. It stressed the need to address the social injustices that had drawn people into communist and separatist groups, namely, corruption, economic exploitation and lack of political access. Ornanong, op. cit., pp. 125-128; Rahimmula, op. cit.

<sup>91</sup> Prime Ministerial Order No. 56/2539 of 1996, brought the Centre under the direct control of the interior ministry. CPM 43



police, corruption remained pervasive, and secondly, political integration policies still contained Thai-centric elements. Many officials continued to equate cultural demands relating to expression of Malay identity with political demands for separatism, and their response was to suppress that identity.<sup>97</sup>

Promotion of the Thai language through education and the media was central to this effort. Teachers taught primary and secondary students to identify as Thai Muslims rather than Malay Muslims.<sup>98</sup> Thai was the only medium of instruction, even in PSTIs. Students could choose among English, French, German and Arabic as a second language, but Malay was not allowed, and Malay language media were banned.<sup>99</sup>

The government also changed street names from Malay to Thai, and people were encouraged to take Thai names.<sup>100</sup> These policies succeeded in the sense that almost all Malay children now speak Thai, but they generated a backlash against what was widely perceived as an attack on Malay language and culture.<sup>101</sup>

In spite of these shortcomings, however, by 1990 Thais had grounds for optimism that an end to rebellion in the south was in sight. Although problems persisted, forums existed in which they could be negotiated. Ironically, however, the very success of the conciliatory approach and the resultant splitting and weakening of the major insurgent groups led to the emergence of new militant strains.

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<sup>97</sup> Ornanong, op. cit., p. 144. It still is not possible to study Malay at secondary school; the language is seen as inherently suspect by Thai authorities. Crisis Group interviews with Muslim intellectuals, Pattani, April 2005.

<sup>98</sup> Among Suthsana, "Thai society and the Muslim Minority", in Forbes, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>99</sup> Even importing newspapers from Malaysia was illegal. In 1996, a daily one-hour Malay language government news program was introduced, which reports on development projects and gives official accounts of political and security events. Interview with director of channel 11 in Ornanong, op. cit., p. 141. Malay language newspapers are now permitted, as well as Malay language radio broadcasts, but there is still only one hour of Malay language television per day, a news broadcast described by one local as "national obedience lessons". Crisis Group interviews with residents and religious leaders, Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, December 2004 and April 2005.

<sup>100</sup> Suthsana, op. cit., p. 102.

<sup>101</sup> Crisis Group interviews with residents and religious leaders of Narathiwat, Yala and Pattani, December 2004 and April 2005.

## IV. NEW STRAINS EMERGE

### A. BRN AND PULO SPLIT

The first to fissure was BRN. Already weakened by the loss of its military commander, Jehku Din Adam, who was killed in 1977, its two top leaders, Abdul Karim Hassan and "Haji M", fell out in 1980. Another split emerged when Karim Hassan dropped "Islamic socialism" in favour of pure Islam. His leadership was put to a vote in 1984, and he lost to younger leaders. Jehku Peng (alias Pak Tua, alias Rosa Buraso, alias Abdul Razak Rahman) was appointed chairman and Pak Yusof secretary.<sup>102</sup>

The new generation of leaders advocated stepped-up military operations, whereas Haji M's faction was committed to a longer-term political strategy of expanding support in Islamic schools with only limited guerrilla activity. Ustadz Abdul Karim Hassan still considered himself BRN chief, so he and his followers split off from the newly-installed leaders, creating a third faction, BRN Ulama (also known as Gerakan Ulama Pattani or Pattani Ulama Movement).<sup>103</sup> He led this faction, which renounced violence to focus on religious activities, until his death in December 1996.<sup>104</sup>

Haji M's faction, BRN Coordinate, focused on political activities, particularly in religious schools, but also on urban sabotage.<sup>105</sup> Jehku Peng, commander of the main military wing, led the BRN Congress faction. All three factions were based in northern Malaysia but BRN's military units were operational in Narathiwat and Yala.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Jehku Peng died on 8 April 2005, aged 63. A new leader is yet to emerge. "Relatives confirm deaths of insurgents", TNA, 21 April 2005.

<sup>103</sup> Wan Kadir, op. cit., p. 107-109.

<sup>104</sup> He was succeeded by Haji Amin To'Meena (son of Haji Sulong) until his death in 2003, when Wan Muhamad Wan Yusof took over. He is still based in Perak, Northern Malaysia. Crisis Group interview with senior police official, Yala, April 2005.

<sup>105</sup> "Thai Muslims holding dual nationality pose constant security problem", *Bangkok Post*, 16 January 1995.

<sup>106</sup> In the late 1990s, BRN had three zones of operation, each with its own commander. Ma Su-ngaibatu was in charge of Zone One, which covered Krong Pinang, Raman, Muang, Bannang Satar and Than To districts of Yala. His 40-strong force was divided into four sub-units. They had their hideouts along the Thai-Malaysian border opposite Sakai village in Yala's Than To district. Ariya Tohbala was in charge of Zone Two, which covered Ra-ngae, Ja-nae, Cho Airong and Si Sakhon districts of Narathiwat. Pohyala was in charge of Zone Three, which covered Muang district and Kabang sub-district of Yala. His 30-strong force was divided into four sub-units. Pohyala's men had their hideouts along the Thai-Malaysian

PULO began to split in the early 1980s, into a more militant faction led by Hayihadi Mindosali that advocated cooperation with bandit groups to maximise harassment of the Thai state, and a faction led by Arong Mooreng, that opposed this. Hayihadi's group won out, and members opposing cooperation with thugs were sidelined.<sup>107</sup> PULO had also been significantly weakened by financial constraints. In 1984 its headquarters in Mecca was shut down and many of its leaders arrested and deported because the Saudi government had become increasingly uncomfortable with its activities.<sup>108</sup> By 1992 PULO had split into two factions, but Arong's did not formally break away until 1995.

Arong Mooreng and Haji Abdul Rohman Bazo (alias Haji Buedo) established New PULO and pursued a strategy of constant low-level attacks rather than the more dramatic violent approach PULO had begun to take in the 1980s. New PULO's policy was to minimise loss of life, perhaps in an attempt to enhance legitimacy, so it directed attacks at government installations rather than police and Buddhist settlers.<sup>109</sup>

New PULO was active in southern Yala and some districts of Narathiwat. Sali Ta-loh Bueyor was the commander for Narathiwat's Ja-nae and Sri Sakhon districts. Maso Tayeh's group covered Yala's Betong district. Ma-ae Tophien was the commander for all districts throughout Narathiwat and Yala provinces.<sup>110</sup> Mainstream PULO, led by Hayihadi Mindosali, remained loyal to PULO's founder, Bira Kotanila. Its armed units were commanded by Haji Sama-ae Thanam.

In addition to PULO/New PULO and the three BRN factions, disgruntled elements of both organisations came together in the mid-1990s to found Tantra Jihad Islam (Islamic Jihad Army), a fairly small and loose coalition whose aim was to destabilise the region through extortion, arson and sabotage.<sup>111</sup> Other elements, unhappy with the

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border opposite Klongpud village in Yala's Kabang sub-district. "Rebels demise - bandit's death weakens reign of terror in South", *Bangkok Post*, 13 April 1997.

<sup>107</sup> Wan Kadir, op. cit. p. 107.

<sup>108</sup> PULO had begun issuing "Citizen Identification for the Patani Republic" documentation to exiles living in Saudi Arabia and collecting taxes. The Saudi government was also very uncomfortable with PULO's increasingly close relationship with Baath Party officials in Syria and the opening of a PULO office in Iran. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>109</sup> U.S. Pacific Command (CINCPAC) Virtual Information Center, "Primer: Muslim separatism in Southern Thailand", 23 July 2002, pp. 9-10; Peter Chalk, "The Islamic factor in Southern Thailand, Mindanao and Aceh", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24, 2001, p. 244.

<sup>110</sup> Peter Chalk, "Islamic Factor", op. cit., p. 244.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

success of the government's amnesty program, turned to crime, such as drug trafficking and smuggling, including of illegal petroleum, often in cooperation with police and local politicians.<sup>112</sup>

## B. GMIP

In 1995, a new player emerged, the Islamic Mujahidin Movement of Pattani (Gerakan Mujahidin Islam Patani, GMIP). It was founded by Nasoree Saesang (alias Awae Kaelae, Poh Wae, or Haji Wae), a native of Narathiwat's Bacho district, who trained in Libya and fought with the Afghan mujahidin in the early 1990s gaining crucial expertise and contacts with like-minded organisations.<sup>113</sup> The movement is committed to creation of an independent Patani state but appears to be more closely tied in to an international Islamist agenda than BRN or New PULO. In late 2001, it reportedly distributed leaflets in Yala calling for jihad and support for Osama bin Laden, in the service of the separatist cause.<sup>114</sup>

Nasoree trained alongside Nik Adili Nik Aziz (son of charismatic Kelantan preacher and PAS Chairman Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat), who since 2001 has been in detention in Malaysia under the Internal Security Act for involvement in a jihadist group, the Kelompok Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM).<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Don Pathan, "Same faces, but motives have changed", *The Nation*, 3 April 2002.

<sup>113</sup> Crisis Group interview with military intelligence officer, Yala, April 2005. Supalak Ganjanakhundee and Don Pathan (eds), *Santipab nai plew pleung* [Peace Amidst the Fire], Nation Books International 2004, pp. 320-21. GMIP's president, Jaeku Mae Kuteh, who was arrested in Malaysia in January 2005, also reportedly helped set up the movement. He was GMP's head of public welfare but broke away in 1993. GMIP's strength in 1996 was reported to be 27 men, eight had explosives training but two of them (Ma-ae Aya and Maruding Teng-ni) were arrested on 29 February, 1996. "Mujahidin Blamed For Grenade Attacks", *Bangkok Post*, 30 May 1996.

<sup>114</sup> Anthony Davis, "Thailand faces up to southern extremist threat", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, October 2003.

<sup>115</sup> Across the border, GMIP's Malaysian cousin, Kumpulan Mujahideen Malaysia (KMM) was also set up in 1995 by Afghan veterans, among them Zainol Ismael. Nik Adili Aziz joined KMM upon his return to Malaysia in 1996. Both Malaysian and Thai militants later joined the Rabitat-ul Mujahideen, an alliance of South East Asian militant factions linked to Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) which was founded in 1999. Crisis Group Asia Report N°43, *Indonesia Backgrounder: How the Jemaah Islamiyah Terrorist Network Operates*, 11 December 2002, p. 8, fn. 36; Anthony Davis, "Thailand confronts separatist violence in its Muslim south", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 March 2004.

GMIP is an offshoot of Gerakan Mujahidin Patani (GMP), founded in 1986, then led by Wae-hama Wae-Yuso.<sup>116</sup> GMP cooperated briefly with New PULO but that relationship broke down after a disagreement over protection fees, and by 1993, it was defunct.<sup>117</sup>

Like BRN, PULO and New PULO, GMIP became embroiled in extortion activities to raise funds and was dismissed in the 1990s by Thai authorities as a bandit gang.

### C. BERSATU AND THE "FALLING LEAVES" CAMPAIGN

In the late 1990s, separatist groups attempted with only brief success to coordinate activities. In August 1997, PULO and New PULO formed a tactical alliance under an umbrella group known as *Bersatu* (Unity).<sup>118</sup> They jointly devised a campaign, code-named "Falling Leaves" that targeted state officials.<sup>119</sup> Elements of GMIP and BRN were also reportedly involved.<sup>120</sup>

Between August 1997 and January 1998, 33 separate attacks resulting in nine deaths were attributed to this effort -- arguably the most serious escalation since the 1980s.<sup>121</sup> GMIP and New PULO claimed responsibility for several of these by leaving notes at the scene or distributing leaflets.

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<sup>116</sup> GMP was a small group, only ever active in Ra Ngae and Rusoh districts in Pattani and Mayo and Yaring districts in Narathiwat. Oranong, op. cit., p. 240, fn. 43.

<sup>117</sup> "Birth of a Movement -- The story behind Gerakan Mujahidin Islam Pattani" *Bangkok Post*, 18 January 1998. Intelligence sources suggested that GMIP and New PULO also cooperated in extortion activities in 2000, with a third group called Gerakan Srinako, under the umbrella of Bersatu. [Deputy Education Minister], Dr Rung Kaewdeng, *Song Kram Lae Santisuk at Chai Daen Pak Tai* [War and Peace at the Southern Border] (Samnakkpim Matichon, 2004), p. 124.

<sup>118</sup> Initially established in 1989 but reinvigorated in June 1997, Bersatu is an umbrella organisation for loose political coordination between PULO, New PULO, GMIP and BRN. It was based in Malaysia and led primarily by ageing exiles, one of whom, Wan Kadir Che Man (Dr Fadeh), admits there is no operational control. "Southern Strategy: Talks with separatists 'informal'", *The Nation*, 26 May 2004. Bersatu is also sometimes known as the Patani Malay People's Consultative Council (Majelis Permesyuaratan Rakyat Melayu Patani, MPRMP).

<sup>119</sup> Peter Chalk and Angel Rabasa, "Muslim Separatist Movements in the Philippines and Thailand", in *Indonesia's Transformation and the Stability of Southeast Asia* (Rand, 2001), pp. 96-97.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid; "Chronological list of the events -- arrest of PULO's top guns", *Bangkok Post*, 1 February 1998.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid; Peter Chalk, "Separatism in Southeast Asia", op. cit., p. 244.

### D. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE AND THE MALAYSIA FACTOR

As democracy took hold and civil society's role was strengthened during the 1990s, successive governments made more systematic attempts to diagnose and address the causes of separatist violence, and policy responses became increasingly sophisticated.<sup>122</sup> This appeared to be successful. Membership of separatist groups fell, and Malay Muslim participation in political life increased. However, a key stumbling block to resolving the conflict, in the government's eyes, was external support of the separatist movements, particularly from Malaysia.<sup>123</sup>

Thai intelligence agencies argued that "Falling Leaves" could not have been possible without sanction from PAS, the governing party in Kelantan, where PULO and New PULO leaders were based. The Thai government threatened in December 1997 to restrict economic cooperation unless Malaysia cracked down on Thai separatist leaders in its northern states.<sup>124</sup>

This demand came at the height of the Asian financial crisis, and Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir, anxious about jeopardising the Malaysia-Indonesia-Thailand Growth Triangle, complied, personally sanctioning joint police raids.

In January 1998, Malaysia arrested New PULO's leader, Abdul Rohman Bazo, its military chief, Haji Daoh Thanam, and Bazo's senior assistant, Haji Mae Yala in Kedah, as well as PULO's military commander, Haji Sama-ae Thanam, in Kuala Lumpur, and quietly handed them to Thai authorities.<sup>125</sup>

This crackdown prompted other senior separatist leaders to flee Malaysia. PULO leader Tunku Bira Kotanila left for Damascus, Bersatu Chairman Wan Suleiman for Sweden. Former New PULO leader Arong Mooreng also went to Sweden, and his deputy, Haji Abdul Hadi bin Rozali (alias Hadi Muno), fled to Saudi Arabia.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> The government made significant improvements to education policy and economic development as well as continuing to encourage political participation among Muslims. See Oranong, pp. 163-181.

<sup>123</sup> The Thai foreign ministry also concentrated diplomatic efforts on persuading Middle Eastern countries that its development and modernisation programs in the southern provinces were improving the welfare of the Muslim residents, and they should stop supporting separatist movements. Oranong, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>124</sup> Chalk and Rabasa, op. cit., p. 97.

<sup>125</sup> "Terrorists asked to surrender in a month's time", *The Nation*, 27 January 1998.

<sup>126</sup> Crisis Group interview with military intelligence official who had met these exiled leaders, Yala, April 2005; "Security in

The Thai government then announced a deadline of 10 March 1998 for separatists to take up its amnesty offer.<sup>127</sup> This deadline and the pressure of the joint police raids proved very effective. Another 50 fighters turned themselves in to join rehabilitation programs, bringing the total to 969.<sup>128</sup> CPM 43 ran a reintegration program which provided training in construction, electronics and mechanics to defectors.<sup>129</sup>

Lt. General Pairat Khemkhan, director of a CPM 43 southern development program, estimated in August 2000 that only 70 to 80 "armed bandits" were operating in the southern provinces.<sup>130</sup> The National Intelligence Agency had estimates of less than 1,000 armed militants in 2001.<sup>131</sup>

Throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s, government officials were quick to dismiss southern separatism as a spent force that had degenerated into common criminality. In many ways, they were right.<sup>132</sup> The policy shift paid off, and as foreign funding and domestic support dried up, separatist groups relied increasingly on extortion and other criminal exploits to raise revenue.

The combination of internal rifts, and the defection of hundreds of fighters significantly weakened the armed movements. The government's improved cooperation with Malaysia and diplomatic efforts in Middle Eastern countries sympathetic to the separatists also deprived the movements of bases and much-needed funding.<sup>133</sup> The separatists became increasingly difficult to distinguish from organised criminal gangs but they were not fatally weakened.

Despite the capture of key leaders, New PULO, although small, remained active. Kamae Yusof replaced Abdul Rohman Bazo as leader after he was captured, and New

PULO still counts several foreign-trained explosives experts among its membership, not least Marudee Piya (Piyo), trained in Libya in 1985 and now reported to be living in Kelantan.<sup>134</sup>

The original PULO, led by Sweden-based Syamsuddin Khan, maintains a website but has no military capability on the ground. Similarly, the once influential BNPP is also basically defunct.<sup>135</sup>

BRN, also quiet during the 1990s, appears to have focused on consolidating and expanding its network within Islamic schools. It was also less affected by the Thai-Malaysian police raids in 1998, perhaps because the non-violent BRN Ulama faction provided it with a veneer of respectability. Only a small proportion of BRN fighters surrendered under the amnesty program.<sup>136</sup>

BRN-Coordinate is now reported to be the strongest and best organised of the known active separatist groups. It is also believed to have begun recruitment of a large youth wing (sometimes known as "Pemuda" -- youth in Malay) in 1992 or even earlier.<sup>137</sup> Security officials have linked Pemuda to many arson attacks and shootings over the last fifteen months. Detailed information about its command structure is very thin, however. Many cells appear to be operating autonomously,<sup>138</sup> and others have been set up outside the BRN structure.<sup>139</sup>

PULO also established a youth wing, PANYOM (Patani National Youth Movement), focused on propaganda campaigns aimed at gaining international recognition. Its

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South - Separatists in Malaysia flee abroad", *Bangkok Post*, 22 February 1998.

<sup>127</sup> Ormanong, op. cit., pp. 149-150.

<sup>128</sup> Between 1979 and 1997, 919 had surrendered. Ibid., p. 161. Of the 50 who defected in early 1998, 23 were from mainstream PULO which was believed to have 93 members, twenty from the 102-strong new PULO, and seven from BRN, believed to have 131 members. None came from GMIP, another separatist movement said to have 79 members. Figures are from a SBPAC report cited in "Terrorism, 50 separatists surrender", *Bangkok Post*, 12 March 1998.

<sup>129</sup> Ormanong, op. cit., p. 161.

<sup>130</sup> He estimated that there were another 200 leaders of various groups living in exile. "Name hitch for unity plan", *Bangkok Post*, 4 August 2000.

<sup>131</sup> Crisis Group interview with NIA official, Pattani, April 2005.

<sup>132</sup> Anthony Davis, "Thailand's troubled south", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 October 2003.

<sup>133</sup> Ormanong, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

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<sup>134</sup> Supalak and Don, op. cit., pp. 331-332; Anthony Davis, "Southern Thai insurgency gains fresh momentum", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 August 2004.

<sup>135</sup> Crisis Group interviews with military officials, Pattani and Yala, April 2005.

<sup>136</sup> See fn. 128 above.

<sup>137</sup> Some members referred to the movement as Pemuda or Pemudo, as it is more accurately pronounced in the Patani dialect. Sometimes it was referred to as Pemuda Bersatu; others were not sure what it was called. Crisis Group interviews with military officials, member of an uncertain separatist youth wing, Pattani, April 2005; interrogation depositions of Adinan Sarideh, 31 May, 1 June, 2004; Wae Arong Who, Azmin Kaji and others. The movement is also sometimes known as PKRRP (Pasukan Komando Revolusi Rakyat Patani). Crisis Group interview with Chidchanok Rahimmula, a political scientist at Prince of Songkhla University who has been working on the separatist conflict for the last decade, Pattani, April 2005.

<sup>138</sup> According to intelligence assessments, Pemuda is strongest in Narathiwat's Singai Padi and Sungai Kolok districts, and Yarang district in Pattani. Crisis Group interviews with military intelligence official, Yala, April 2005.

<sup>139</sup> Crisis Group interview with senior police official, Pattani, December 2004.

website no longer exists, and it does not appear to be involved in recent violence.<sup>140</sup>

If PULO, New PULO, and BRN members accepted the government's amnesty offer, not a single member of GMIP surrendered.<sup>141</sup> Although security forces tended to dismiss GMIP as a bandit group in the 1990s, they suspected its involvement in several attacks on military bases from 2001 to 2003 in which arms were stolen, as well as the 4 January 2004 raid.<sup>142</sup>

Useng Hama, a Muslim army conscript who was arrested in connection with a 28 April 2003 raid on a Marine Corps rural development unit in which 30 M16 assault rifles were stolen and five marines killed, described Nasoree Saesang as the overall planner of the attack. Several GMIP members are reportedly former army draftees.<sup>143</sup> These weapons, and others stolen in raids between 2001 and 2004, have yet to be used in attacks in Thailand. Whether they have been sold or are being stockpiled is unclear.

Nasoree Saesang led GMIP's operations in Narathiwat, but reportedly fled Thailand in 2001 after a gun battle with soldiers in Bacho district.<sup>144</sup> Karim Karubang (the alias of a leader from Karubang village in Yala's Raman district) is GMIP's commander in Yala.<sup>145</sup> Thai intelligence sources reportedly believe GMIP maintains an important underground base in Trengganu in northern Malaysia. Military and intelligence sources maintain, however, that GMIP is less ideological than BRN and more motivated by financial considerations.<sup>146</sup>

GMIP lost two key leaders in August 2003, when its Afghanistan-trained operations chief, Nasae Saning (alias Manase Jeh-da), and Mahma Maeroh, a Pattani *Tok Guru* and former army rifleman, were killed by security forces in Pattani province.<sup>147</sup> Nasae had been arrested by Malaysian authorities in Trengganu and was quietly handed to Thai authorities in August. He escaped but was caught and shot dead by police in Pattani's Nong Chik district. After the loss of these two commanders,

Thai military intelligence estimated the group's strength at seventeen men whom it dismissed as "guns-for-hire".<sup>148</sup>

## E. BEGINNING THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL

A new round of violence opened on the night of 24 December 2001 with five well-coordinated attacks on police posts in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat that left five officers and a village defence volunteer dead. The near-simultaneous raids displayed much greater sophistication than the sporadic attacks (mostly extortion and kidnap-for-ransom) seen for more than a decade and set a pattern that has continued: coordinated attacks on police posts, often quite far apart, and raids by masked gunmen to capture weapons.

According to ministry of interior statistics, insurgency-related incidents rose from 50 in 2001 to 75 in 2002, 119 in 2003<sup>149</sup> and then, in a dramatic escalation, over 1,000 in 2004.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Rung, op. cit., p. 125.

<sup>141</sup> Davis, "Thailand's Troubled South", op. cit.

<sup>142</sup> See below.

<sup>143</sup> Davis, "Troubled South", op. cit.

<sup>144</sup> Police believe he has been hiding in northern Malaysia, and issued warrants for his arrests in 2000, 2001 and 2002. "Militants face treason charges", *The Nation*, 15 January 2004.

<sup>145</sup> Davis, "Southern Thai Insurgency", op. cit.

<sup>146</sup> Crisis Group interviews with military officers, Bangkok, Patani and Yala, April 2005.

<sup>147</sup> "Battle is on for hearts and minds in the South", *The Nation*, 12 January 2004. It has also been alleged that Nasae Saning's escape was staged by police so they could kill him. Crisis Group interview, April 2005.

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<sup>148</sup> "Thailand's trouble in the south", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 8 January 2004.

<sup>149</sup> From Anthony Davis, "Ethnic Divide Widens in Thailand", *Jane's Terrorism & Security Monitor*, 17 November 2004; figures compiled by Panitan Wattanayakorn, political scientist at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok.

<sup>150</sup> Insurgency-related incidents can mean sniper attacks, usually directed at members of the security forces, arson attacks, on schools usually, as symbols of Bangkok's assimilation policies, as well as against economic interests, and more recently, crude explosive devices and small homemade bombs, again, usually directed at the security forces or government buildings but since January 2004, increasingly at soft targets.

## V. 4 JANUARY 2004

### A. THE ARMY CAMP RAID

The first major incident in 2004 was a pre-dawn 4 January raid on the Royal Thai Army's 4th Engineering Battalion in Cho Airong district, Narathiwat province. In a carefully planned, well-coordinated series of attacks at around 2:00 a.m., at least 100 assailants stormed Rachanakarin army development battalion base and seized some 400 weapons, including assault rifles, machine guns, pistols and rocket launchers.<sup>151</sup>

The raiders were equipped with oxyacetylene cutting torches and bolt cutters to break into the weapons store and a quick-rig wire pulley system to haul the guns into sacks and then on to trucks, demonstrating both careful planning and very good knowledge of the target.<sup>152</sup> They killed four Buddhist soldiers guarding the arsenal, but none of the Muslim guards. They were in and out in twenty minutes, leaving a trail of nails and felled trees behind them on the camp's approach roads.

There were also elaborate diversions. At around 1:30 a.m., insurgents launched arson attacks on twenty schools and three police posts across eleven of Narathiwat's thirteen districts, and set up decoys in neighbouring Yala province, leaving tires burning on roads and fake explosive charges attached to bridges and overpasses.

Within 24 hours, on 5 January, it transpired that several bombs had been planted around Pattani province. Police defused some but two bomb squad officers were killed attempting to defuse another. The sophistication and scope of these synchronised attacks, as well as the numbers involved, stunned the intelligence agencies and security forces.<sup>153</sup>

### B. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The next day Prime Minister Thaksin told the press the soldiers on guard deserved to die for failing to prevent

the raid.<sup>154</sup> He imposed martial law in eight districts of the three provinces (later extended to cover the three provinces completely), and set a seven-day deadline for authorities to identify and capture the perpetrators. He ordered deployment of an additional 3,000 troops to the Fourth Army Region that covers fourteen provinces in the south, including Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala, mandating them to make arrests without a court warrant.<sup>155</sup>

Until the January 2004 attacks, the government insisted the mounting violence in the southern provinces, including earlier arms raids, was the work of petty criminals and drug dealers and dismissed any suggestion separatist groups may have been re-activated. But the sophistication of the 4 January operation made this untenable. Thaksin admitted "the assailants are not ordinary bandits. They are professional and well trained".<sup>156</sup>

Although the government continued to downplay the possibility of resurgent separatist militias, it issued 33 arrest warrants ten days after the attack, including for five senior separatist leaders. Three of those were from GMIP (Nasoree Saesang alias Awae Keleh, Karim Karubang, and Jehku Mae Kuteh alias Doromae Lohmae alias Abdul Rahman Ahmad), one from BRN (Masae Useng alias Hasan Husen) and one, Waeli Copter Waji, whose affiliation remains unclear.<sup>157</sup>

Police arrested five suspects in early February under the pressure of Thaksin's unrealistic deadline. They confessed to having been hired for 8,000 Baht (just over \$200) each by the BRN and GMIP leaders but it was later revealed that the confessions were extracted under police torture.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>151</sup> Investigation by the Fourth (Southern) Army Region concluded that at least 50 people were involved in the raid. According to the army's count, the haul consisted of 366 M16 rifles, 24 pistols, seven rocket-propelled grenades, two M-60 machine guns and four rocket launchers. Supalak and Don, op. cit., p. 31. Security analyst Anthony Davis estimated 100 to 150. *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 March 2004.

<sup>152</sup> Davis, "Thailand confronts separatist violence", op. cit.

<sup>153</sup> Crisis Group interviews with military and intelligence officials, April 2005.

<sup>154</sup> Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, cited in "Southern Violence: Pattani hit, martial law declared", *The Nation*, 6 January 2004. Following a barrage of criticism, he clarified his statement on 6 January, claiming that when he said, "They deserve to die", he meant "they deserve to be punished". He blamed the media for misrepresenting his remark, "Chee puan tai yong korkanrai sakon, khor moon Sant, moong 12 pao, krung thep yu nai khai" [Troubles in south linked to international terrorism], *Matichon*, 7 January 2004; "Maetap pak4 pratat 8 amphoe chai kod ayakarnsuk" [Fourth army commander declared eight districts under martial law], *Thai Rath*, 7 January 2004.

<sup>155</sup> "Maetap pak4 pratat", op. cit.

<sup>156</sup> "Southern violence: Pattani hit, martial law declared", *The Nation*, 6 January 2004.

<sup>157</sup> "Ork mai jab gang puan tai, si punam kor jor gor jak sam khabuankan, chai khon 200" [Arrest warrants out for four terrorist suspects from three organisations, using 200 saboteurs], *Matichon*, 15 January 2004.

<sup>158</sup> The five were Makata Harong, 48, Sukri Maming, 37, Abdullah or Poloh Abukaree, 20, Suduerueman Malah, 23, and Manasae Mama, 25. General Kowit Wattana, deputy national police commissioner, told reporters that a machete, a saw, a Malaysian flag, 61 rounds of ammunition, and various documents

The suspects' lawyer, Somchai Neelaphaijit, disappeared in mysterious circumstances the day after he called for an investigation into the torture.<sup>159</sup>

### C. POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

Despite dozens of arrests, precisely who organised and executed the attacks remains unclear. Informed speculation centres on three possibilities: reinvigorated armed separatist movements, the security forces, and corrupt local officials and politicians. Of these, only BRN and GMIP, among the separatists, and the Royal Thai Army (RTA) and Royal Thai Police (RTP), had the capacity to carry off the coordinated attacks.

Although the police and army are almost certainly responsible for some violence vaguely attributed to "militants" or "separatists" in recent years, and while the mounting insecurity presents a useful cover for the settling of personal and business scores, there are two

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were confiscated from the five. Their interrogations also led to the arrest of four men suspected of carrying out the 4 January 2004 arson attacks on twenty schools. They are Mawae Samah, 19, Jeh-hami Teh, 39, Manase Manaheng, 23, and Abudeng Awae, 39. Abdullah Abuakree was released from prison in May 2004. After public prosecutors failed to file charges on time, the Criminal Court also released the four men arrested with him but they have since been detained again on murder charges. The five alleged that police held guns to their heads and in their mouths, that they were urinated on, and that police took them to a beach, blindfolded, and told them that if they did not confess, they would be thrown into the sea. Crisis Group interview with Anand Thaisenit, lawyer for the five after Somchai's disappearance, Narathiwat, April 2005; Petition by the detainees, describing the torture and proclaiming their innocence, submitted to the interior minister on 10 March 2004, viewed by Crisis Group December 2004. Sukri Maming, 38 Ma-wae Samoh, alias Samoh, 19, Jeh-hami Teh, 39, and Makta, alias Makata Harong, 49 have been charged with conspiracy to commit murder. Narathiwat Provincial Court, Criminal Case Number 751/2547. Figures denoted in dollars (\$) in this report are in U.S. dollars.

<sup>159</sup> Somchai was last seen at the Chaleena Hotel on Ramkhamhaeng Road in Bangkok on 12 March 2004. His car was found abandoned on Kamphaeng Phet Road near Mor Chit 2 bus terminal. Five police officers have been charged with abduction; their hearing began on 21 March 2005. Somchai Neelaphaijit was also defending four men accused of plotting to blow up foreign embassies in a Jemaah Islamiyah plot. Crisis Group interviews with associates of Somchai, Chalida Tajaroensuk, Director of Human Rights Protection at the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, Bangkok, and Ahmad Somboon Bualuang, former Prince of Songkhla and academic, Pattani, December 2004; "Missing Lawyer Somchai accused police of torture", *The Nation*, 27 March 2004.

aspects of the 4 January attacks that tip the balance of suspicion in favour of separatist groups.<sup>160</sup>

First, arson attacks against state schools, as emblems of the Thai state and its hated assimilation policies, are a classic separatist tactic employed since the 1960s, both to inconvenience and discredit the government, and to send a political message. In the 4 January attacks, the school burnings appeared to be designed for political and psychological impact, but also as a diversion from the weapons raid. Secondly, the targeting of Buddhists but not Muslims is a political device also employed by separatist groups in the 1980s. Some have suggested that the police or army were behind the attacks and built in these features as an elaborate cover; it is not impossible but the weight of the evidence, albeit largely circumstantial, suggests otherwise.

The government's working theory that elements of BRN and GMIP were behind the attacks is credible. GMIP is suspected of having participated in several raids in 2002-2003, using army conscripts with inside knowledge of bases to plan at least one attack.<sup>161</sup> BRN, strong in the district where Rachanakarin camp is located, is the biggest and best organised of the known separatist groups. Police also claim to have physical evidence of Masae Useng's and Waeli Copter's involvement.<sup>162</sup> BRN has a history of organising in religious schools and has reportedly been stepping up this effort in recent years under the coordination of Masae Useng, who taught briefly at

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<sup>160</sup> Conflicts between the police and the military may account for some of the violence. Organised crime rampant in the southern border provinces is also facilitated by systemic official corruption. The trafficking of people, narcotics, and small arms in which members of the security forces are involved also explains some of the violence. See David Fullbrook, "Thailand: behind the Muslim 'insurgency'", *International Herald Tribune*, 17 December 2004; "Reason for southern unrest elusive", *The Nation*, 16 March 2004. Saroja Dorairajoo points out that incidents of bombing (empty) police stations and fires in (empty) schools often increased just before the budget was considered in parliament. See "The Ghost of Separatism Revived: the current state of the Malay Muslim separatist movement in southern Thailand", in Vivienne Wee, *Political Fault Lines in Southeast Asia: Movements for Alternative Sovereignty in Nation States* (London, 2004).

<sup>161</sup> GMIP leader, Mama Maeroh (killed in a shoot-out with police in August 2004), was trained as an army rifleman. See also Davis, "Thailand faces up to southern extremist threat", op. cit., on the role of Useng Hama (army conscript and GMIP member) in the April 2003 raid of a Yala marine base.

<sup>162</sup> Fragments of cloth from the bags used to carry weapons away from the camp were matched with fragments found on clothes in these two militants' houses. Crisis Group interview with senior police official, Yala, April 2005.

Thamma Witthaya Foundation School, an elite private Islamic college in Yala.<sup>163</sup>

On 16 December 2004, police arrested three teachers and one of their former colleagues at Thamma Witthaya School. Waeyusof Waeduramae, Muhamad Hanafi Doleh, Ahama Buleh and Abdul Roseh Hajidoloh were charged with treason, separatism and causing unrest. The school's head, Sapa-ing Basoe, and five others suspected of involvement, escaped and are still at large.<sup>164</sup>

Sapa-ing, said to be leader of the political arm of BRN (BRN-Coordinate), is accused of directing and coordinating much of the violence in the southern provinces, including the 4 January raid.<sup>165</sup> He reportedly recruited bands of youths through religious schools to fight for the creation of a separate Islamic state of which he would become prime minister.<sup>166</sup> Waeyusof is accused of being the head of military operations.<sup>167</sup>

In operations over 7-8 January 2005, police arrested another three religious teachers, Masukri Hari, manager of Pattana Islam Witthayalai School, Hama Jehteh, also from Thamma Witthaya School, and Salae Deng, in connection with the January 2004 attacks. Torleh Disaeh, a Malay language teacher, was arrested four days later.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Useng fled in June 2003, reportedly to Malaysia and after receiving death threats from police. Before that, he was a teacher at Samphan Witthaya School in Narathiwat's Cho Airong district, and the secretary of PUSAKA, the *tadika* (weekend religious school) association of Narathiwat. Crisis Group interview, April 2005; "TRT MP's 'fund body linked to militants'", *The Nation*, 2 April 2004. Documents uncovered in a raid on Useng's house in 2003 revealed plans to infiltrate *tadikas*. Anthony Davis, "School system forms the frontline in Thailand's southern unrest", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 November 2004. Several *tadika* teachers have been involved in organising arson attacks and recruitment for separatist groups. Interrogation deposition for Yakaria Ali.

<sup>164</sup> Sapa-ing allegedly contacted a senior member of the government in January 2005 about turning himself in and then changed his mind. He is believed by Thai authorities to be hiding in northern Malaysia. There are also rumours in the southern provinces that he was secretly arrested and is in police detention. Crisis Group interviews, Pattani and Yala, April 2005.

<sup>165</sup> Crisis Group interviews with military and intelligence officials, Bangkok, Yala and Pattani, April 2005.

<sup>166</sup> Crisis Group interviews with military officials, Bangkok, Pattani and Yala, April 2005.

<sup>167</sup> He was said to have organised paramilitary training and ordered members to kill police, state school teachers, Buddhist monks and civilians. "Religious teachers plead not guilty", *The Nation*, 11 March 2005.

<sup>168</sup> "Tang kha-hua Sapae-ing perm 10 lam, ruab ik 5 puan tai mi ustaz 3" [10 million baht reward for Sapae-ing, five more south

However, the evidence against these men is fairly weak, coming mostly from a single source, Abdullah Akoh, who was also a teacher at Thamma Witthaya School and a member of the group responsible for the 28 April 2004 assaults. He was arrested in July 2004 and is now cooperating with the authorities, but at the time of his arrest, he seemed to know nothing about the planning of the January attacks or the senior leaders in Thamma Witthaya School.<sup>169</sup> In his interrogation deposition, there is nothing to suggest he was part of the school's inner circle with Sapa-ing and Waeyusof.<sup>170</sup>

Four prosecution witnesses have already been killed; a fifth, Mada'oh Yala-Pae, Thamma Witthaya School's head of academic affairs, was shot but survived, and a sixth key prosecution witness, Usama Useng, fled to Malaysia under police protection, fearing for his life. He is expected to testify via video-link.<sup>171</sup>

The trial of the eight, charged variously with membership of BRN, masterminding and instigating attacks, arson and murder, as well as raids on military camps in Yala and Narathiwat, commenced on 29 April 2005. They have pleaded not guilty to all charges.<sup>172</sup>

None of the weapons stolen from Rachanakarin camp surfaced until 2 April 2005, when Masukri Saeng, a *tadika* (weekend religious school attached to a mosque) teacher from Tajung Lulo village in Muang district of Narathiwat, was arrested by a joint police-military team.

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saboteurs nabbed, including three ustadz], *Matichon*, 11 January 2005.

<sup>169</sup> In his first interrogation, Abdullah Akoh claimed only to know Ustadz Soh, who recruited him, and four other members of his "cell" and explicitly denied there was separatist activity in Thamma Witthaya Foundation School beyond his own involvement in Soh's group, Abadan. In interviews with journalists, he also said he only knew the members of his cell. See "Southern Front", *Time*, 11 October 2004; "Superstition, fear and loathing: the secret life of the Thai Muslim militant", 1 September 2004, Agence France-Presse. However, in his second interrogation, he expressed detailed knowledge of the various groups alleged to be operating within the school, which corresponded uncannily closely to the documents authorities seized from Masae Useng's house. The deposition does not, however, explain how Abdullah came to know the identities of senior leaders and inner workings of these groups. 22 and 24 July interrogation depositions of Abdullah Akoh, viewed by Crisis Group, April 2005.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid; "The turning point that wasn't", *The Nation*, 27 January 2005.

<sup>171</sup> Mada'oh Yala-Pae has, according to military sources, testified against Sapa-ing. Crisis Group interview with military official, April 2005.

<sup>172</sup> "Sarn naad talaeng pued khadi 8 ustaz puan tai 11 April" [Court schedules opening of the trial of eight ustadzest destabilising the south for 11 April], TNA, 10 March 2005.



He led police to two stolen M16 rifles and confessed more were stashed at a hiding place in Kaluwor Nua sub-district, and some had been distributed by his boss, Kamarusman (also known as Kaman), to members of their group. Masukri admitted being the weapons trainer for a group led by Kamarusman. Another member of the group, Mayuree Niwae, was arrested on 12 April on the basis of his testimony.<sup>173</sup> Military intelligence sources allege that Masukri's group is linked to BRN-Coordinate but as yet there is no proof of a connection to the teachers from Thamma Witthaya and Pattana Islam Witthaya Schools.<sup>174</sup>

Local politicians and officials have also been implicated in the 4 January 2004 attacks. Police arrested Anuphong Panthachayangkul, a Narathiwat official, in March 2004 on murder charges. In detention, he confessed to helping plan the raids. He also accused then Narathiwat parliamentarians Najmuddin Umar and Aripheh Utrasin and Pattani Senator Den Toemeena of planning the operation. Najmuddin Umar, also president of Pusaka, was charged in April 2004 with treason.<sup>175</sup> He attended a hearing on 3 June, denied all charges and was released on bail.<sup>176</sup>

There appear to be some irregularities with Anuphong's testimony. He reportedly confessed to police that he had hidden 100 stolen weapons at his house but they have not been found. He claimed the raid on Rachanakarin camp was planned in a single night at Najmuddin Umar's residence.<sup>177</sup> But it is not credible that such a sophisticated operation could have been organised so quickly. His testimony is also undermined by torture allegations.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Crisis Group interview with National Intelligence Agency official, April 2005; "Two survive ambushes in Pattani", *Bangkok Post*, 19 April 2005.

<sup>174</sup> Telephone interview with military intelligence officer, April 2005.

<sup>175</sup> "TRT MP's 'fund body linked to militants'", *The Nation*, 2 April 2004.

<sup>176</sup> "Najmuddin granted Bht3m bail", *The Nation*, 4 June 2004. Aripheh also donated Bht100,000 to Pusaka. Pusaka is the *tadika* (weekend religious school) association of Narathiwat of which Masae Useng was secretary before he fled. Thai authorities claim Pusaka is a BRN front. Even if so, it is also a legitimate charity for village schools, and Najmuddin's and Aripheh's associations with it cannot be equated with membership of BRN.

<sup>177</sup> Asian Human Rights Forum, "Urgent Appeal: Mr Somchai Neelaphajit is still missing and the police may have been involved in his disappearance", updated information posted on 25 March 2004. Available at <http://www.ahrchk.net/ua/mainfile.php/2004/640>.

<sup>178</sup> A senior police official confided to Crisis Group that Anuphong was taken by police in a helicopter and told that if he did not confess, he would be thrown out. Crisis Group

There are too many plausible suspects and not enough evidence at this stage to say with certainty who organised and carried out the attacks. The available evidence, however, seems to point at the separatist groups. Their motivation, both to capture arms and undermine the government's credibility, is clear, and they have the expertise. At least two of the weapons are known to have been in the possession of a separatist group. It is too early, however, to conclude that BRN was behind the attacks.<sup>179</sup> The evidence against the religious teachers and the politicians is weak, and several confessions have been called into question by suspicion of torture.

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interview, Yala, April 2005. Other police and military sources also said Anuphong's testimony was unreliable.

<sup>179</sup> Indeed, the very existence of BRN-Coordinate is reportedly questioned by some within military intelligence. Joseph Liow, "Who are the hands behind Thailand's southern insurgency", *Asian Analysis*, January 2005.

## VI. 28 APRIL 2004

### A. USTADZ SOH'S BROTHERHOOD

If the January attacks were part of an ongoing pattern, the 28 April 2004 attacks were a dramatic departure with new and perplexing elements. Although the targets -- police and soldiers -- were the same, the perpetrators were quite different: young, deeply pious, poorly armed, and willing to die for their cause.

The attacks appear to have been carried out by a group known as *Hikmat Allah Abadan* (Brotherhood of the Eternal Judgement of God) or simply Abadan or Abadae, and coordinated as of 2000 by a Yala-born, Indonesian educated *ustadz* (religious teacher) named Ismael Yusof Rayalong (alias Ustadz Soh alias Ustadz Ishma-ae).<sup>180</sup> Ustadz Soh was apparently in close contact with a man in Baseh Buteh village in Tanah Merah, Kelantan, known as Ayoh or Poh Su.<sup>181</sup>

According to local police, Ustadz Soh recruited at least ten other *ustadz*s (religious teachers) from mostly rural villages in the provinces of Yala, Pattani and Songkhla as cell leaders. They trained in jungle camps in Kelantan between 2000 and 2003, then returned to their villages and recruited groups of between five and twenty.<sup>182</sup> Although cell leaders were in their late 30s and 40s, most recruits were teenagers or in their 20s, from religious schools (*ponohs*, PSTIs and *tadikas*).<sup>183</sup>

Ustadz Soh himself led one cell in Kuwa village, in Krong Pinang sub-district, Yala, and possibly another in Melayu Bangkok sub-district.<sup>184</sup> Another was led by

Sakariya Yuso alias Ustadz Ya, a teacher at Al-Islam Witthaya Islamic School from Kubae Yalah village, Pattani. Ustadz Ya had taught at Triam Suksa School in Muang district, Pattani, in 2002, where he recruited students into Abadae.<sup>185</sup> Ustadz Ya also helped to recruit other cell leaders, including Mama Matiyoh (alias Mana Madiye alias Baeka), from Pattani's Nong Chik district.<sup>186</sup> Yukipali Dolloh (alias Yohli), also recruited by Soh, led the cell that attacked military base 403 in Ban Rae sub-district in Than To district.<sup>187</sup> Other cell leaders included Hama Saleh from Khok Poh district in Pattani, Sama-ae Lateh and Abdulroha Sama.<sup>188</sup>

The cells met regularly, often nightly, in mosques or *tadikas* to pray and study. The training consisted mostly of ideological indoctrination and spiritual preparation but there was also physical fitness training and in some cases rudimentary weapons training.<sup>189</sup> The military training was conducted in jungle areas of Saba Yoi district, Songkhla, or Kabang, Yaha, Than To, Aiyer Weng and Betong districts in Yala.<sup>190</sup>

The cells were very disciplined, and recruits showed unconditional loyalty to their leaders. They were required to take vows of silence (*supoh*) on the Koran, swearing not to reveal anything about the group's membership, activities or plans.<sup>191</sup>

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*ponoh* in Melayu Bangkok in Yaha district of Yala, which is also his hometown. Crisis Group interview with military official, Yala, April 2005.

<sup>185</sup> Interrogation deposition of student at Triam Suksa in Muang district of Pattani arrested on 12 August 2004 for directing an arson attack the previous day on a former police officer's residence.

<sup>186</sup> Interrogation deposition of an Abadan recruit; "Militant tells: 'It was a sacrifice for God'", *The Nation*, 30 April 2004; "Shadowy network unfolds", *The Nation*, 1 May, 2004; "Villagers surprised at 'quiet, devout' teacher's role", *The Nation*, 3 May 2004; Davis, "Southern Thai insurgency", op. cit.

<sup>187</sup> Interrogation deposition of Adinan Sarideh, 31 May, 1 June 2004; confirmed by police.

<sup>188</sup> Hama Saleh and Sama-ae Lateh both died in the Krue Se Mosque and Abdulroha Sama died at the Mae Lan police post. Rai-gnan khana kammakan issara dtaisuan khotedjring koranee massayid krue se, [Report of the Independent Fact-Finding Commission on the Krue Se Incident], declassified on 24 April 2005.

<sup>189</sup> Crisis Group interview with a member of separatist youth movement, Pattani, April 2005; Crisis Group interviews with police and military intelligence, Pattani and Yala, December 2004, April 2005.

<sup>190</sup> Interview with 4th Army Commander, Lt. Gen. Phisam Watawongkiri, in *Matichon*, 3 May 2004.

<sup>191</sup> *Supoh* is probably a corruption of the Malay word, *sumpah*, meaning oath or curse. Some recruits were told that if they broke the *supoh*, they would not go to heaven, others that they would be executed. Interrogation depositions of Abdullah Akoh,

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<sup>180</sup> Interrogation depositions of Abdullah Akoh and Adinan Sarideh; Crisis Group interviews with police and military officials, Pattani and Yala, December 2004, April 2005. Police claim that he was the *Tok Guru* of the Tohyeeming *ponoh* in Yala's Muang district. He had also taken on temporary teaching assignments in other schools in the region.

<sup>181</sup> Interrogation deposition of Adinan Sarideh, member of the Ban Kuwa cell, 31 May, 1 June, 2004; Crisis Group interview with National Intelligence Agency official, Pattani, April 2005.

<sup>182</sup> Crisis Group interview with Police Major General Thani Tawitsri, Deputy Commissioner, Provincial Police Region 9, December 2004; "Muslim teacher says he took militant training in Malaysia, co-wrote book on Pattani secession", *Bangkok Post*, 2 September 2004.

<sup>183</sup> However, some members had also gone to state schools, for example, Adenan from Susoh village, who died at Saba Yoi. Crisis Group interview with Adenan's mother and father, Susoh (Songkhla), April 2005.

<sup>184</sup> Interrogation deposition of Adinan Sarideh; Crisis Group interviews with families of members of the Ban Kuwa group [Kuwa village group] who died on 28 April 2004, Krong Pinang, Yala, December 2004. Ustadz Soh was teaching at a

Abdullah Akoh, the man whose testimony led to the arrests of the religious teachers in connection with the January 2004 attacks, was a key figure. An *ustadz* from Yala, he had become friends with Ustadz Soh in 1999.<sup>192</sup> Just three weeks after they met, Soh invited Akoh to join a movement to liberate Pattani from the "infidels".<sup>193</sup> Akoh did not need much persuading; his anger over past government injustices was still close to the surface:

We asked for justice but the government would just give the families a bit of money....It all came together. Soh told me the history, the background and all the events that had happened but I had heard many things and seen bodies.<sup>194</sup>

Ustadz Soh also claimed to have supernatural powers that would help them fight. He taught Akoh and four other recruits from his village how to perform *zikir* (recitation of the name of Allah) and special prayers over and over -- as many as 70,000 times a day for 40 days -- in order to become invisible at will and be impervious to bullets and knives.<sup>195</sup> He gave recruits in Songkhla sacred water to make them invisible. Some members travelled with Ustadz Soh to Malaysia, to visit Ayoh, the Kelantanese they referred to as "the master", to receive special blessings, for which some paid 450 baht.<sup>196</sup> They were also taught not to fear martyrdom:

Though we may lose our lives, this death is considered the death of a warrior for the nation. Oh my brothers please know that the death of a *syahid* (martyr) warrior does not mean that he is dead. Instead, he is still living beside God. He is resting for only a while, by God's command.<sup>197</sup>

The recruits studied from a training manual, "Berjihad di Pattani", a text that frames separatism in explicitly Islamic terms, indeed with detailed Quranic justification for deaths as martyrs in the cause of jihad, but one more Sufi than salafi in tone.<sup>198</sup>

## B. THE BATTLE OF KRUE SE MOSQUE

On the evening of 27 April 2004, just before sunset, a group of 22 men and boys arrived at Pattani's historic Krue Se Mosque and prayed together.<sup>199</sup> Some of the boys were as young as twelve or thirteen. Although the leader of the group told the mosque's imam that they had come only to meditate (*iktikaf*), he later said, "If I'm going to die, I want it to be in this mosque".<sup>200</sup> Around four hours later, another group of men, mostly in their late twenties, arrived. They joined the first group and slept that night in the mosque.<sup>201</sup> At 2:00 a.m., Hama Salae instructed five members to sprinkle magic sand on roads in Taepa and Natawee districts in Songkhla to prevent military reinforcements from coming to Krue Se.<sup>202</sup>

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22, 24 July 2004, Adinan Sarideh, 3 June 2004, Mahmud Himbou, August 2004; Rosali Sannateh, August 2004; Aseng Puyo [date unknown], Maroki Sa, [date unknown] and Yakaria Ali [date unknown]. In order to obtain information from captured and surrendered members of the group, the army had to ask locally respected imams to perform a rite to lift the vow. Imams placed copies of the Koran on their heads and revoked the vow. Crisis Group interviews with senior military and intelligence officials, Pattani and Yala, April 2005.

<sup>192</sup> In Abdulla Akoh's initial interrogation, he claims to have first met Ustadz Soh in 2001 but he told military officials with whom he later became close that he had met him in 1999. He also later told journalists that he had first met Soh in 1999. Interrogation depositions of Abdullah Akoh, July 2004; Crisis Group interviews with military officials, April 2005; Agence France-Presse interview with Abdullah Akoh, op. cit.

<sup>193</sup> Interrogation deposition of Abdullah Akoh, July 2004.

<sup>194</sup> Agence France-Presse interview with Abdullah Akoh, op. cit.

<sup>195</sup> Four youths, Ibroheng Masatae, 17, from Yala, and Pattani residents Preecha Maseh, 19, Isma-ae Maha, 20, and Rommadi Ding, 21, who surrendered after participating in attacks on a sub-district office, a police station and a military base in Krong Pinang, Pattani on 28 April 2004, confessed under army interrogation that after evening prayers on 27 April, Ustadz Soh gave them sacred water and told them it would make them invisible to police. Crisis Group interviews with military officials; interrogation deposition of Adinan Sarideh, 3 June 2004.

<sup>196</sup> Interrogation deposition of Adinan Sarideh.

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<sup>197</sup> "Berjihad di Pattani" (text studied for spiritual preparation by 28 April assailants). A copy was found on the body of one of the militants killed at Krue Se Mosque. The text was jointly written in Kelantan in August 2002 by Ismael Jaffar, alias Poh Su, a Kelantan native, and Abdul Wahub, imam of Tarpia Tulwatan Mullaniti Islamic Boarding School in Yala.

<sup>198</sup> Crisis Group discussion with salafi scholar. Some of the 28 April assailants also wore strings of beads commonly used in Sufi meditation. Survivors from Sabayoi claimed that their cell followed "Latthi Supri" [Sufism], *Matichon*, op. cit.

<sup>199</sup> Many members told their families before they left they were going on a religious outreach mission [*dakwah*]. Crisis Group interviews with families of Abadan members killed on 28 April 2004, Yala and Songkhla, December 2004 and April 2005.

<sup>200</sup> The group went to the nearby Makamae restaurant for dinner. One man was overheard by locals telling the others, "Eat as much as you like because we only have today; tomorrow we won't be eating anymore". Rai-gnan khana kammakan issara dtaisuan khotedjring koranee massayid krue se [Report of the Independent Fact Finding Commission on the Krue Se Incident], declassified on 24 April 2005

<sup>201</sup> Crisis Group interview with Imam Ni Seng of Krue Se Mosque, Muang, Pattani, December 2004. Imam Ni Seng was inside the mosque on 27 April and until approximately 6 a.m. on 28 April. After that he watched from outside.

<sup>202</sup> Independent Fact Finding Commission, op. cit.

At 4:30 a.m. on 28 April, one of the men led a group prayer. When it was finished, the leader said to the group, which now also included five locals who had come to pray, "Whoever wants to stay, stay, whoever wants to go, go" but without elaborating on what staying or going entailed. Eight men left, led by Hama Salae, and attacked the nearest security checkpoint. Another group came out from the mosque and attacked the checkpoint from the opposite direction. The assailants stabbed one police officer and one soldier to death.

The fight spilled over into the Chinese cemetery, Lim Koneaw, next to the mosque. In the exchange of fire that followed, the attackers accidentally shot dead one of their own, an old man. Another militant was shot in the leg but was quickly driven off in a car parked nearby. The others ran back inside the mosque.<sup>203</sup> A total of four, including Hama Salae, died.

Immediately afterward, Colonel Manas Kongpaen, Commander of the Pattani Special Task Force, dispatched a patrol team to assess the situation. The five-man team drove around the mosque in an armoured Humvee but was shot at from inside the mosque and retreated.

Army reinforcements (anti-riot troops and snipers) arrived at approximately 6:00 a.m. The soldiers blockaded the mosque with a tank and used a megaphone to try, unsuccessfully, to entice the militants to surrender. Using the mosque's loudspeaker, their leader repeatedly stated that they would fight to the death. Soldiers fired tear gas, M16 rifles, machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades into the mosque. The militants returned fire with assault rifles and M-79 grenades, from 7:00 a.m., and the exchange lasted around an hour.<sup>204</sup> The anti-riot troops attempted to storm the mosque but two soldiers were shot dead and the mission aborted. A civilian, Donkodae Jeho, emerged from the mosque and was mistakenly shot dead by the security forces.<sup>205</sup>

A crowd of onlookers, numbering over 1,000 by 10:00 a.m. and growing increasingly agitated, had begun to

gather, as those inside the mosque used the loudspeaker to call on them to rise up.

Military helicopters started circling the mosque at around 9 a.m., dropping smoke bombs. The soldiers on the ground then fired cannons into the side of the mosque to let some of the smoke out. Troops coaxed the younger teenagers out through this hole in the wall.<sup>206</sup> At 10:00 a.m., anti-riot troops threw more grenades and tear gas into the mosque, causing casualties.

General Phanlop Phinmani arrived at around noon. took command of the operation from a Colonel Manas, who relayed to him his instructions from Deputy Prime Minister Chawlit Yongchaiyudh to surround the mosque but not to attack. Phanlop then consulted with Chawlit by phone, stressing the need for military action. Chawlit ordered Phanlop not to attack but rather to provide food and water to the militants and coax them out of the mosque. At 12:30p.m., on Phanlop's orders, however, soldiers threw four grenades into the mosque and another fire fight ensued.<sup>207</sup>

The army warned the militants by loudspeaker to lay down arms and exit the mosque but made no attempt to negotiate. At 2:00 p.m., Phanlop ordered five teams of Special Forces troops to storm the mosque and shoot to kill.<sup>208</sup> They threw in nine grenades before entering and opening fire. The troops killed 31 militants, aged between seventeen and 63.<sup>209</sup> Most were residents of Yala; others came from Pattani, Songkhla, and Narathiwat.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Crisis Group interview with Imam Ni Seng, op. cit. The report of the government-appointed independent fact-finding commission states that two groups of men totaling around 30 came out of the mosque and attacked the checkpoint from opposite directions, op. cit.

<sup>204</sup> Militants were armed with M16 and HK33 assault rifles and M79 grenade launchers. They fired a few rounds, and the security forces responded by firing five M16 RPG rounds, and throwing nine hand grenades and several tear gas bombs, as well as using a heavy machine gun. Report of the Independent Fact Finding Commission, op. cit; Unpublished fact finding report from lawyers committee, May 2004.

<sup>205</sup> Report of the independent fact-finding commission, op. cit.

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<sup>206</sup> Crisis Group interview with Imam Ni Seng, op. cit., an eye witness to the stand-off.

<sup>207</sup> Crisis Group interview with Fourth Army colonel, Bangkok, April 2005; independent fact-finding commission, op. cit.

<sup>208</sup> General Phanlop claims he received conflicting orders from Deputy Prime Minister Chawlit. "I was under immense pressure because the two orders that followed each other in quick succession conflicted. The first order was for us to surround the mosque. But the second order was for us to find these people food". Gen Phanlop Phinmani, *Pom Pi Duay Rue? Ti Yued Krue Se? [Am I Really Wrong For Storming Krue Se?]* (Good Morning Publishing, 2004), p. 33; "Southern Command: Pallop moved for insubordination", *The Nation*, 30 April 2004.

<sup>209</sup> Independent Fact Finding Commission, op. cit.

<sup>210</sup> Arms uncovered from the mosque after the raid included three HK33 rifles, two M16 assault rifles, one M79 grenade launcher, eight Sparta knives, three trekking knives and one machete, *ibid*.

## C. ATTACKS ELSEWHERE

The battle at Krue Se Mosque was not the only clash that day.<sup>211</sup> Ten small cells congregated before dawn in mosques across Yala, Pattani and Songkhla, and after prayers, launched simultaneous pre-dawn raids on rural check points, police stations and army bases.<sup>212</sup> Their members were very lightly armed, most with only knives or machetes, but eight men in Yala had assault rifles and others in Songkhla allegedly had pistols and hand grenades.<sup>213</sup>

An eyewitness described the zeal and determination of Waehama Panawa, one of the attackers of the police post at Ban Niang in Yala. The 42-year-old father of eight sped out on a motorcycle close behind the pack heading towards the post. Police had already mowed down nine of his fellow fighters with automatic-rifle fire, yet he turned his bike around and charged, machete in hand, into certain death, crying "Allahu Akbar!"<sup>214</sup>

Many of the confrontations took place in or near mosques to which the young mujahidin had retreated for shelter from the security forces. In all, 105 attackers were killed along with one civilian and five members of the security forces, the highest death toll in a single day for decades. In addition to the Krue Se showdown:

- ❑ Ten were killed at Ban Niang checkpoint in Muang district (Yala). They were aged between nineteen and 42 and came from Yaha district. Many were students at Thamma Witthaya Foundation Islamic School in Yala city.<sup>215</sup>
- ❑ Two were killed at an army base in Muang district.
- ❑ Sixteen men, aged between eighteen and 43, from a village in Krong Pinang sub-district (Yala), were killed at Krong Pinang police station.
- ❑ Eight Yala residents were killed at a border patrol police base in Bannang Sata district (Yala). They were aged between eighteen and 30.
- ❑ Five were killed and three wounded at an army camp in Than To district (Yala). Those killed were aged between twenty and 32 and came from Yala's Muang district.
- ❑ Two were killed at Mo Kaeng checkpoint in Nong Chik district in Pattani (no age details).
- ❑ Twelve were killed at Mae Lan police station in Pattani, having attacked from Tambon Muangtia and Tambon Yupoh, including Abduroha Sama, one of the organisers of the attacks.<sup>216</sup> They were aged between eighteen and 41. Most were from Yala.
- ❑ Nineteen were killed at Saba Yoi market (Songkhla). They were aged between sixteen and 30. All except one were local, from Susoh village. The other man came from Pattani.<sup>217</sup> Fifteen had gunshot wounds in the back of the head, some also scars on the wrists, apparently from being tied up.<sup>218</sup>

Although no prisoners were taken at Krue Se Mosque, seventeen attackers were arrested in other areas, including Mama Matiyoh, Abdullah Disaeh, Ahsae Wadeng, Ariyas Wani, Yusuf Yimadiya, Athit Salae, and Jerosmi Karemmanant.<sup>219</sup> Four others, Ibroheng (Ibrahim) Masatae from Yala and Ismaae Maha, Preecha Majeh, and Romuedee Ding from Pattani, turned themselves in at the Krong Pinang sub-district office in Yala.<sup>220</sup> Another three presented themselves to the army in July 2004. The

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<sup>211</sup> A meeting was convened just over a week before the attacks to agree on the eleven targets. On the evening of 20 April 2004, twenty senior members of Abadae -- including Ustadz Soh, Sakariah Yuso, Mama Matiyoh, Hama Salae, Sama-ae Lateh, Abdulroha Sama, Asmi "Saimee" Salam, Fauzi Salam and Niloh Tonee -- met at the home of Hama Salae in Khok Poh district to designate targets and pray together for strength, *ibid*.

<sup>212</sup> The attacks took place in Tambon Muangtia and Tambon Yupoh in Melan district (Pattani), Ban Niang in Yaha district (Yala), Sabayoi in Songkhla, Krue Se (Pattani), Krong Pinang (Yala), Ban Bejoh in Penang Setah district (Yala), an army base in Muang district (Yala), a border patrol police base in Ban Nang Sata (Yala), Mo Kaeng checkpoint in Nong Chik district (Pattani), and Mae Lan police station (Pattani). Crisis Group interviews with police and residents, December 2004.

<sup>213</sup> Police reported that the militants at Sabayoi were armed with pistols. See "Dead and alive", *The Nation*, 1 May 2004. Fifteen of the nineteen boys and men who died at Songkhla were shot in the back or back of the head, and witnesses claim some were running, unarmed, from the police as they were shot, while others were pursued into the restaurant where they sought shelter and then executed. No police were shot at Saba Yoi. If the boys and men had been armed with shotguns, they would presumably have tried to use them. The father of one of the dead boys asked the police to show him the weapon his son allegedly had but they refused. Crisis Group interviews with parents of the dead, Songkhla, April 2005.

<sup>214</sup> Interview with an eye witness to the raid on Ban Niang police post, "The New Face of Militancy in the South", *The Nation*, 19 May 2004.

<sup>215</sup> "Police scour schools for militants", *The Nation*, 2 May 2004.

<sup>216</sup> Independent Fact Finding Commission, *op. cit*.

<sup>217</sup> *Matichon*, *op. cit*

<sup>218</sup> Crisis Group interviews with parents of the dead, Susoh village, Songkhla, April 2005; Amnesty International, "Thailand Memorandum on Human Rights Concerns", 27 October 2004. Available at: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGASA390132004?open&of=ENG-THA>.

<sup>219</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview with deputy commissioner, Provincial Police Region 9, Thani Tawitsri, January 2005; "Dead and alive", *The Nation*, 1 May 2004.

<sup>220</sup> Crisis Group interviews with military and intelligence officials, Yala, Pattani, April 2005.

coordinator of the attacks, Ustadz Soh, did not participate. Thai intelligence officials believe he has fled the country.<sup>221</sup>

#### D. POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

It remains unclear if there was any link between the 28 April 2004 attacks and the 4 January raids, but the tactics, and areas of operation were very different.

Raids on weapons depots have been carried out since 2001 by well armed and trained commandos, usually at night in very tight time frames, presumably to minimise risk of exposure. The April 2004 attacks, however, appear to have been carefully planned for symbolic value. The choice of date was no coincidence. The Dusun Nyur rebellion, the first major insurrection against Bangkok after Pattani was annexed by Siam and the first to be cast in Islamic terms, took place on 26-28 April 1948.<sup>222</sup>

Thai Defence Minister General Chettha Thanajaro and security adviser General (rtd.) Kitti Rattanachaya insist the 28 April attacks were inspired and assisted by foreign Muslim radicals, implying Indonesians.<sup>223</sup>

Poh Su, Ustadz Soh's Kelantan contact, was arrested in Malaysia in August 2004, held a few weeks for questioning and then released. According to a Thai military source but denied by Malaysian officials, he was captured with Jehku Mae Kuteh (alias Man Kuteh, alias Man Untah, alias Cheku Mae Doromae), President of GMIP, and Kamaruding Abu, a member of BRN, the three having recently returned from Indonesia.<sup>224</sup>

One Abadae cell leader, Mama Matiyoh, captured after the attack in Saba Yoi district, Songkhla, was later revealed to be a member of BRN, but his involvement cannot be taken as endorsement from the group's leadership.<sup>225</sup> It is

possible that a disaffected faction or members with a stronger jihadist leaning from one of the separatist groups went off on an independent path and recruited young foot soldiers for the operation. BRN has been making inroads into *tadika* schools in recent years, and many of the cells were recruited through *tadika* teachers.<sup>226</sup>

But it seems unlikely the 28 April attacks were devised and directed by the regular command structure of BRN. If so, it would mark a striking departure in tactics as well as something of a geographical shift.<sup>227</sup> The other key difference is the overtly jihadist tone of those attacks. BRN has always been more of an ethno-nationalist movement, with Islam as an important aspect, but cast in terms of reasserting ethnic identity rather than religion per se, let alone jihadist martyrdom.

The picture beginning to emerge from information obtained from arrests since the 28 April 2004 attacks, however, is of a much broader separatist youth movement from which Ustadz Soh split off. Dozens of suspects arrested in the latter half of the year told police and military interrogators they had undergone *supoh* (vows of secrecy) rituals identical to those of the surrendered and captured members of Abadae. Cells are likewise small and highly secretive.<sup>228</sup> A key difference is that the text, "Berjihad di Patani", which frames the separatist struggle in terms of Islamic martyrdom does not appear to have been used by the recruits outside the 28 April group.<sup>229</sup>

Intelligence sources and civilian analysts estimate that as many as 10,000 to 30,000 youths have been recruited as part of this separatist youth movement, but the actual number is likely far fewer.<sup>230</sup> The recruitment program

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> As well as using Islam to inspire participants, mystical elements were present in the 1948 uprising. The "warriors" in the Dusun Nyur rebellion bathed in holy oil for immortality and wore holy robes into battle. From Forum Asia interviews with religious leaders.

<sup>223</sup> "Time to acknowledge that 'jihadism' is at work in South", *The Nation*, 15 May 2004.

<sup>224</sup> "Malaysian riot suspect in southern Thailand arrested", 12 August, VNA; "Malaysia 'unaware of arrest'", *The Nation*, 14 August 2004. Thaksin announced in late January 2005 that Malaysian authorities had arrested Jaeku Mae Kuteh on 5 January. Kuteh is a Malaysian citizen and is being held under the Internal Security Act. Thai extradition requests have been refused. "Extradition Request: Malaysia may keep Jehku Mae", *The Nation*, 28 January 2005.

<sup>225</sup> Davis, "Southern Thai insurgency", op. cit. According to a military intelligence source, three other members of Abadae, Asmi "Saimee" Salam, Fauzi Salam and Niloh Tonee, from

Khok Poh district in Pattani, who turned themselves in to the Fourth Army Division in July 2004, also confessed to being BRN members. Crisis Group telephone interview with military intelligence official, May 2005.

<sup>226</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Bangkok and Pattani, April 2005. Documents uncovered in a raid on the house of BRN leader Masae Useng in 2003 revealed plans to infiltrate *tadika*. Davis, "School system forms the frontline", op. cit.

<sup>227</sup> The 28 April 2004 attacks took place in Pattani, Yala and Songkhla. BRN has traditionally focused its operations on Narathiwat.

<sup>228</sup> Over a dozen interrogation depositions viewed by Crisis Group; Crisis Group interview with Pemuda member; Crisis Group interviews with intelligence, police and military officers.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> The wide range of the estimates is indicative of how little is known about the youth movement. The figure of 30,000 comes from a document seized from the house of BRN leader Masae Useng but is probably too high. For comparison, PULO claimed to have 20,000 fighters in the 1980s, whereas the reality was closer to 500. See Yegar, op. cit., p. 147. Analyst Anthony

allegedly began at least by 1992 and was spearheaded by BRN-Coordinate.<sup>231</sup> Although security and intelligence sources link this movement to BRN, they admit that large parts now operate autonomously.<sup>232</sup>

For example, you have a cell, a team of say ten to fifteen guys. Trainers come and give them basic physical and weapons training as well as some ideological preparation and then leave them more or less to their own devices.<sup>233</sup>

Recruitment agents, often religious teachers (from PSTIs, *tadikas* and *ponohs*), reportedly select youths who display three key characteristics: piety, impressionability, and agility.<sup>234</sup> Agents recruit these youths into small groups (usually no more than five, but up to twenty), initially by befriending and inviting them to join discussion or prayer groups.

Candidates are sounded out in conversations about Patani history. Those who seem receptive to liberationist ideology are invited to join the movement. They are required to undergo *supoh* ceremonies and then inducted into physical fitness programs. A much smaller number are selected for basic weapons training, while others are trained for sabotage operations.<sup>235</sup> Yet others are assigned recruitment, propaganda and fund raising roles. Each member is eventually expected to establish his own cell.<sup>236</sup> Ustadz Soh was allegedly a member of BRN-Coordinate but became impatient with the long-term strategy of his seniors and decided to test out some of the units he had

helped to recruit and train.<sup>237</sup> According to Abdullah Akoh, Abadae was an offshoot of BRN-Coordinate, which broke away in 1999-2000. Ustadz Soh was the head of its operations division, and his deputy was a *Thamma Witthaya* teacher, Usman Saeng, alias Mang Lago.<sup>238</sup> The two apparently broke away to get things moving more quickly. According to a senior military intelligence source:

Soh was in BRN, but he wasn't very senior. He went off on his own to test out some of the Pemuda cells but he didn't consult with the big bosses, who got really angry because it [the 28 April attacks] undermined support among villagers. They didn't like young lives being wasted.<sup>239</sup>

There is credible evidence of the existence of a broader separatist youth wing, of which Ustadz Soh's Abadae movement could well have been a part, but the evidence linking either Abadae or Pemuda to BRN is much weaker. It seems to rely heavily on the questionable testimony of Abdullah Akoh.<sup>240</sup> The precise nature of Ustadz Soh's relationship with his Kelantanese associate, Poh Su, also remains unclear.

## E. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Prime Minister Thaksin's reaction was to praise the army for its swift response but play down the political aspect: "There is nothing to be afraid of. These are drug addicts", he said.<sup>241</sup> His response to the bloody suppression of the attacks was "victory has been achieved".<sup>242</sup>

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Davis has estimated there are between 3,000 and 10,000 members of Pemuda, "Southern Thai insurgency", op. cit.

<sup>231</sup> The intelligence agencies' assertion that BRN began to establish a youth wing in 1992 is based on documents seized from Masae Useng's house in 2004. Chidchanok Rahimmula argues that it was first conceived as early as 1986. Crisis Group interview with Chidchanok Rahimmula, Pattani, April 2005.

<sup>232</sup> Crisis Group interviews with police, military and civilian intelligence, Pattani and Yala, December 2004 and April 2005.

<sup>233</sup> Crisis Group interview with senior police official, Pattani, December 2004.

<sup>234</sup> Crisis Group interviews with intelligence officials, scholar of the southern Thai crisis, Chidchanok Rahimmula, and one member of this youth movement; Interrogation depositions of Adinan Sarideh and Abdullah Akoh.

<sup>235</sup> For example, Abdullah Akoh had never fired a gun before he shot a soldier on Ustadz Soh's instruction in 2004, despite having already been part of the movement for three to five years. Interrogation of Abdullah Akoh, 24 July 2004. There is, however, allegedly a "commando" force of anywhere from 50 to 200 members with more advanced military training. Crisis Group interviews with military and civilian intelligence officials, April 2005; Davis, "Southern Thai insurgency", op. cit.

<sup>236</sup> Crisis Group interviews with military and civilian intelligence officials, Pattani and Yala, April 2005.

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<sup>237</sup> Crisis Group interview with military intelligence official, Yala, April 2005.

<sup>238</sup> There was also allegedly a proselytisation and recruitment division led by another *Thamma Witthaya* teacher, Ustadz Royali. Had things proceeded as planned, Abdullah Akoh would have been placed in charge of the one-year physical training program, after which recruits were to be turned over to Ustadz Soh for weapons training. Interrogation deposition of Abdullah Akoh, 24 July 2004.

<sup>239</sup> Crisis Group interview with military intelligence official.

<sup>240</sup> See fn. 169.

<sup>241</sup> "Khamtalaeng jak Thaksin-Chaisith korani patibatkam dedcheep 107 sop" [Statement from Thaksin and Chaisith on the operation in which 107 were slaughtered], *Matichon*, 29 April 2004.

<sup>242</sup> Joseph Liow, "Bangkok's southern discomfort: violence and response in Southern Thailand", Institute for Defence and Strategic Studies Commentary, 14/2004, p. 2; "The government of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra declared victory over the killing of people it believed to be behind all the troubles in the south in recent months....The announcement of such victory came without knowledge of who exactly those killed were. Many senior government figures branded them drug addicts, separatists, or fools". Supalak and Don, op. cit., pp. 96-97.

When local and international human rights groups, including the national and UN High Commissioners for Human Rights condemned the army's use of lethal force and called for an investigation, Thaksin told them to mind their own business.<sup>243</sup> On 4 May 2004, however, he appointed an independent commission to investigate. Its findings were tabled at a 3 August cabinet meeting<sup>244</sup> but only made public almost a year after the fact, on 24 April 2005.<sup>245</sup>

The report concluded that the force used by security forces at Krue Se Mosque on 28 April 2004 was disproportionate, and officers should be held responsible.<sup>246</sup> It implicated Internal Security Operations Command Deputy Director General Phanlop Phinmani and Fourth Army chief Lt. General Phisarn Wattanawongkiri.<sup>247</sup> Phanlop was transferred out of the region but neither he nor any other officer has been disciplined. The report only investigated the 32 deaths at Krue Se, however. The 74 deaths in other areas of Pattani, Yala and Songkhla should also be probed, particularly the nineteen at Saba Yoi, which, according to witnesses, were executions.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Thaksin told critics, "think about your homeland. Right now, some foreign countries are poised to intervene, so leave that to me...Please don't invite enemies into your household". "Prime Minister said violence beyond control, without retaliating, all officers would be dead", *Thai Rath*, 2 May 2004; "Thaksin tells the world to back off", *The Nation*, 2 May 2004.

<sup>244</sup> Amnesty International, "Thailand memorandum on human rights concerns", 27 October 2004. Available at: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGASA390132004?open&of=EN-G-THA>.

<sup>245</sup> The National Reconciliation Commission released an almost complete version of the 39-page report on 24 April 2005, though photographs and names of witnesses were removed.

<sup>246</sup> A minority on the commission dissented, led by Bhumarat Taksadipong, who felt that no conclusion should be drawn on whether the force used was excessive. See independent fact-finding commission, op. cit.

<sup>247</sup> The report listed another eight responsible officials involved in the incident without directly blaming them for the deaths: Deputy Prime Minister General Chawlit Yongchaiyudh; Pattani Provincial Governor Saneu Chantra; his deputy, Trairat Jongjit; then police commissioner for the Ninth Region, Police Lt. General Proong Boonpadung; his deputy, Police Lt. Major Thani Tawitsri; Pattani provincial police chief, Police Lt. Major Paithoon Patanasophon; Pattani provincial police station chief, Police Major Phote Suaysuwan; commander of Pattani special task force, Major Manas Khongpaen; and Muang District Chief Nipon Narapithak.

<sup>248</sup> Crisis Group interviews with parents of boys killed by police at Saba Yoi, Songkhla, April 2005.

## VII. 25 OCTOBER 2004

### A. THE TAK BAI PROTEST

Early on the morning of 25 October 2004, during the fasting month of Ramadan, people congregated outside a small police station in the town of Tak Bai, southern Narathiwat, not far from the Malaysian border. By 10:00 a.m., there were around 1,500.<sup>249</sup> They gathered ostensibly to protest the incarceration of six village defence volunteers who gave their government-issued weapons to militants.<sup>250</sup> It later emerged that many came because they had been told to do so, without knowing anything about the arrests.

According to army sources, the detained volunteers initially claimed that assailants raided their houses in Tak Bai on 12 October and stole the guns. Under intense questioning, they admitted they had handed their weapons over to militants, but said this was under duress.<sup>251</sup> They claimed they were afraid that if they told this version to the police, they would not be believed. The police detained them on 19 October for false filing, criminal association and embezzlement.<sup>252</sup>

Protestors at Tak Bai claimed the men were innocent and had been detained unjustly. They also feared for their safety, especially in light of the arbitrary arrests and disappearances that had become so widespread during the war on drugs and the general climate of suspicion and fear in the southern provinces.

Not all the protestors were at the police station that day out of concern for the six detainees, however. Some had been asked to come by friends, others by their village heads or imams, for a host of different reasons: to hear a lecture by the *chulrajmontri* on Islam, to break the daily fast, to attend a *sembayang hajat* (mass prayer) for the

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<sup>249</sup> Estimates of the numbers vary from 1,300 to 4,000 but most agree on approximately 1,500. Some 1,300 people were arrested after women and small children had been separated.

<sup>250</sup> The six defence volunteers were all from Pron in Tak Bai district, Narathiwat: Arun Binmah, 21; Abdulramai Hakuling, 26; Kama Ali, 32; Mahamarusuli Jehwae, 33; Rugemuli Hakuling, 29 (brother of Abdulramai); and Rohnin Binmah, 24. They confessed to having handed weapons to separatists after being threatened. "Six dead, 50 injured", *Thai Rath*, 26 October, 2004.

<sup>251</sup> They said that two brothers had forced them to hand over their weapons. Crisis Group interviews with military officials, Bangkok and Pattani, April 2005.

<sup>252</sup> Crisis Group interviews with Tak Bai protestors, Narathiwat, December 2004; fact-finding report by Bangkok human rights organisations. A local newspaper report claims the village defence volunteers were arrested on 12 October 2004 but police claim they were not detained until 19 October.



detainees; to be on hand when Prime Minister Thaksin came to hand out money -- and to attend a protest.<sup>253</sup>

Many were simply curious passers-by (many of whom were coming to the border to shop for *Eid ul Fitr* celebrations) and got caught in the crowd.<sup>254</sup>

Around 11:00 a.m., some protestors tried to enter the police station but retreated when soldiers fired warning shots. Deputy Director of the Southern Border Provinces Peace Building Command Siva Saengmanee, Fourth Army Region Commander Lt. General Phisarn Watawongkiri, and Ninth Police Region Chief Manote Kraiwong came to assess the situation. They held a ten-minute meeting, and Siva Saengmanee addressed the crowd, urging it to disperse and promising to arrange bail for the six detainees. Demonstrators continued to demand their release and refused to disperse.<sup>255</sup>

At noon, the demonstrators stopped for midday prayers, but without leaving the site.<sup>256</sup> Around 2:15 p.m., Phisarn Watawongkiri emerged from the station and ordered the crowd to disperse. Police brought family members of the detainees to the the crowd to reassure the protestors. This was followed by pleas from the head of Narathiwat's *Majelis Islam* (Islamic council), and an official of the provincial governor's office. All failed to persuade the crowd.<sup>257</sup>

Protestors interviewed by Crisis Group pointed out, however, that even if they had wanted to leave, they were trapped. Army trucks and tanks were blocking each end of the street, and there was a river behind. Some claimed soldiers and even the protest organisers prevented them from leaving.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Crisis Group interviews with protestors, Narathiwat, December 2004.

<sup>254</sup> Crisis Group interviews with protestors, Narathiwat, December 2004. Anand Thaisenit, the defence lawyer for the 59 protestors charged with illegal assembly, destruction of public property and possession of unlicensed weapons, told Crisis Group that around 400 of the protestors had come for the above reasons but the majority were simply curious local residents (mostly from Che He, Prai Wan, Sala Mai sub-districts in Tak Bai district) and visitors to Tak Bai. Crisis Group interview, Narathiwat, April 2005.

<sup>255</sup> Fact-finding report from Bangkok NGOs; Crisis Group interviews with Tak Bai protestors and residents of village adjacent to Tak Bai police station (across the river), Tak Bai district, Narathiwat, December 2004.

<sup>256</sup> Protestors interviewed by Crisis Group (Narathiwat, December 2004) claimed that neither they nor other protestors left the site to pray. A senior military official present at the protest claimed that many left to pray at the mosque then returned to the protest. Crisis Group interview, Bangkok, April 2005.

<sup>257</sup> Crisis Group interviews with Tak Bai protestors, Narathiwat, December 2004.

<sup>258</sup> Crisis Group interviews with protestors, Narathiwat,

At around 3:00 p.m., some protestors allegedly tried to break through the police barrier. At this point, General Phisarn gave the order to forcibly disperse the crowd. Fire engines arrived, and about half an hour later, water cannon and tear gas were used to disperse the crowd, which prompted some protestors to throw rocks, bricks and bottles at the police and soldiers.<sup>259</sup> Many people ran to the river to wash off tear gas. Until then, the security forces seemed to be doing their best to control a large and increasingly unruly crowd by peaceful means. But five minutes after the water cannon and tear gas was used, shooting started.<sup>260</sup>

Most soldiers only fired warning shots but witness accounts, the angles of the bullet wounds, and a chest-high bullet hole in an adjacent concrete post, suggest that some fired directly and deliberately on the crowd. A photograph appeared on the front page of *The Nation* the following day of a soldier with his gun aimed horizontally and shell casings bursting out of the magazine. Seven protestors, including a 14-year-old, died; another two were shot but survived.<sup>261</sup> A police officer was admitted to a hospital with a bullet in his lung.<sup>262</sup> A senior military official present claims no order was given for troops to fire.<sup>263</sup>

Soldiers ordered protestors to lie face down on the ground, then allowed women and young children to leave. Soldiers

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December 2004; Protestors also told this to Anand Thaisenit, defence lawyer for arrested Tak Bai protestors, interviewed by Crisis Group in Narathiwat, April 2005.

<sup>259</sup> Crisis Group interview with military official, Pattani, April 2005; independent fact-finding commission, op. cit. Authorities also allege that shots were fired from the crowd but that only two or three protestors were armed. One police officer was shot but survived. It is unclear whether a protestor shot him or it was "friendly fire" but no one has been charged. Crisis Group interviews with military officers and lawyer for the protestors, April 2005; Fact finding report of Bangkok NGO quoting a doctor on duty at Narathiwat hospital who treated victims of gunshot wounds from the protest.

<sup>260</sup> Crisis Group interviews with Tak Bai protestors, Narathiwat, December 2004; footage of the protest.

<sup>261</sup> Another three bodies were found in the river the following day but the cause or causes of death were unclear.

<sup>262</sup> Six died on the spot and a seventh man who had been shot died in the hospital. Mahamah Ali Jarawae, 51, was shot above the right nipple while crouching in front of Tak Bai police station. Maludi Yakoh, 39, was shot in the back. Waedi Masoh, fourteen, was shot in the right side of his head, penetrating his left eye, and in his left leg. A child in the village directly across the river from the station (approx. 300 metres away) was hit by a bullet in his leg. Information from Narathiwat hospital, 5 November 2004. Cited in fact-finding report by Bangkok NGO.

<sup>263</sup> Soldiers were allegedly shouting requests for permission to fire but no command was given. Crisis Group interview with senior military official, Bangkok, April 2005.

instructed the men and older boys to remove their shirts and belts and empty their pockets. Police and soldiers then tied the hands of protestors behind their backs.<sup>264</sup> Around 1,300 men and boys were loaded into army trucks to be taken to Inkayuth army base in Pattani for questioning.<sup>265</sup> Many were kicked and hit by officers with batons and rifle butts as they lay waiting. Soldiers stacked them in trucks up to five or six layers deep.<sup>266</sup> There were 28 six-wheeled trucks to transport some 1,300 passengers.<sup>267</sup>

The 150 km journey to Pattani normally takes approximately one hour and twenty minutes, but the trucks were stationary for anywhere from one to four hours before departing and stopped several times, bringing the average journey time closer to five hours.<sup>268</sup> Protestors, particularly those on the bottom layers, reported extreme difficulty breathing during the journey. The soldiers forbade those in the trucks from moving or making noise. If they cried out or lifted their heads, they were hit with rifle butts.<sup>269</sup> During the long trip, many vomited, defecated or urinated in the truck.<sup>270</sup>

The trucks began to depart Tak Bai at around 4:00 p.m. When the first arrived at the camp around 6:00 p.m., one passenger had died of suffocation. The camp's doctor reported this but it was not communicated to the drivers of the other trucks so they could modify the transport arrangements.<sup>271</sup> The last truck left Tak Bai at around 8:00 or 8:30 p.m. and reached Inkayuth camp after 2:00 a.m., by which time 23 of its passengers had died.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> Several survivors showed Crisis Group scars from where their hands had been tied, still clearly visible more than a month after the event.

<sup>265</sup> Independent fact-finding commission, op. cit.; Fourth Army region commander, Phisarn Watawongkiri, cited in Forum Asia fact-finding report.

<sup>266</sup> Crisis Group interviews with Tak Bai protestors, Narathiwat, December 2004; footage of the protest.

<sup>267</sup> Crisis Group interview with senior military official, Bangkok, April 2005; independent fact-finding commission, op. cit..

<sup>268</sup> Some trucks stopped at Sungai Kolok triangle and Tak Bai junction to pick up more men. Crisis Group interviews with Tak Bai protestors, Narathiwat, December 2004.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid; independent fact-finding commission, op. cit.; Dateline (SBS Australia) television interviews with Tak Bai protestors, 24 November 2004.

<sup>270</sup> Crisis Group interviews with Tak Bai protestors, Narathiwat, December 2004.

<sup>271</sup> Forum Asia fact-finding report; Thai Senate Foreign Relations Committee investigation, cited in "Death toll 'could be far higher'", *The Nation*, 30 October 2004.

<sup>272</sup> Forum Asia fact-finding report. In the report of the official fact-finding commission, Southern Border Provinces Peace Building Command sources claim that all trucks had reached

When all the trucks had arrived at Inkayuth, 78 protestors were dead, mostly of asphyxiation.<sup>273</sup> Many others had broken and dislocated limbs and other ailments. Soldiers quickly carried away the dead. Seventeen people in critical condition were sent from Inkayuth Camp Hospital (staffed by only one doctor and eight nurses) to Pattani Hospital in the early hours of the morning of 26 October.<sup>274</sup> Twelve more were sent later that day and eight the following day.<sup>275</sup>

Upon arrival at the camp, soldiers interviewed and took urine samples from each detainee and then gave them water and rice.<sup>276</sup> The majority (1,172) were released on 30 and 31 October 2004.<sup>277</sup> 58 were charged with possession of unlicensed weapons, coercion of officers to act or refrain from action with force and weapons, destruction of public property, assembly of more than ten people, and causing turmoil, but they were all released on bail on 12 November.<sup>278</sup> All charged were from Tak Bai district.<sup>279</sup>

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Inkayuth by 10:00 p.m. but drivers interviewed separately admitted that some did not leave Tak Bai police station until 9:00 p.m. and did not arrive until 2:00 a.m. the following day. Independent fact-finding commission, op. cit.

<sup>273</sup> Dr. Pornthip Rojanansunnan, a prominent forensic pathologist with a reputation for independence, led the autopsy team. She announced that 80 per cent of the deaths were caused by suffocation, three people had broken necks from the crush, and the rest died of dehydration. "Kriad! Sop tai poong 84 ang khad akad haijai" [Tension as death toll hit 84, who allegedly died of asphyxiation], *Matichon*, 27 October 2004.

<sup>274</sup> Statement from Dr Pornchit Chantrarasami, Director of Pattani Hospital, 5 November 2004, cited in Forum Asia fact-finding report.

<sup>275</sup> Fourteen people assessed to be at risk of kidney failure were sent for dialysis. There were only five machines at Pattani Hospital, so three were sent to Narathiwat Hospital, two to Yala Hospital and five to Hat Yai University Hospital, *ibid*.

<sup>276</sup> Crisis Group interviews with released detainees, Narathiwat, December 2004.

<sup>277</sup> Crisis Group telephone interview with deputy police commander for the Ninth Region (southern border provinces), Thani Tawitsri, January 2005.

<sup>278</sup> The 58 defendants were pressured to sign confessions by the Narathiwat governor, who told them penalties would then be less severe. All 58 signed confessions but then verbally withdrew their guilty pleas when charges were read out during the first hearing at Narathiwat provincial court on 21 February 2005. The trial was postponed until 11 April when a list of witnesses was agreed by the prosecution. The next hearing is scheduled for 8 July 2005. On 12 April, the prosecutor charged an additional suspect, Jemana Hajiduramae, a native of Jehe, Takbai. Jemana has denied all charges. Trial documents viewed by Crisis Group during interview with the lawyer for the 59, Narathiwat, April 2005; Crisis Group telephone interview with Ninth Region deputy police commissioner, Tanee Thawitsiri.

<sup>279</sup> Crisis Group interview with defence lawyer for the detainees, April 2005; Tak Bai Investigative Commission report, released

## B. POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

Several factors suggest the protest was organised, not spontaneous. One is the sheer size, with people coming from many different districts around Narathiwat, and some from other provinces, in cars and pick-up trucks.<sup>280</sup> The local police knew there would be some sort of event that day. They were not sure of the exact location until people began to arrive that morning but police and army back-up were on stand-by.<sup>281</sup>

The site appears to have been chosen with care: a small park in front of the police station that was walled on three sides and backed on to a river with only one small gate at the front, making it nearly impossible to leave once it was full.

Finally, videos of the protest show twenty to 30 men with their heads wrapped in shirts or scarves, kafiya-style, signalling each other and others in the crowd to control movement.<sup>282</sup> These people were approached by police on a number of occasions but refused to negotiate. They appeared to be discouraging people from leaving.<sup>283</sup>

Who organised the demonstration and why remain mysteries.<sup>284</sup> The organisers had not consulted with the

families of the six detainees and the detention seems to have been little more than a pretext. As with the protests in Pattani in 1975, for which the deaths of five local men at the hands of the security forces were used as a rallying cry, it is possible that one of the separatist movements organised the protests in the hope of provoking a crackdown that would embarrass the government and attract international attention.<sup>285</sup>

Militant groups certainly used anger over the deaths and the government's insensitive handling of the situation for their own purposes, and in the days following, assassinations and bombings increased markedly.

Several Buddhist civilians were killed, apparently in revenge attacks. In some cases, the killers left handwritten notes by the bodies claiming retaliation for the Tak Bai deaths. Militants beheaded a village chief on 2 November 2004, for example, leaving a note reading, "For the innocents of Tak Bai".<sup>286</sup> Leaflets were distributed in Yala advising Buddhists to leave the three provinces.<sup>287</sup>

These actions appeared to be a deliberate attempt to provoke communal violence. A right-wing militia, Blood Siam, vowed to send vigilantes to the south to avenge the death of every Buddhist, but it took no action.<sup>288</sup>

On 28 November 2004, around 10,000 Village Scouts, a nationalist militia, converged in Bangkok to rally for peace in the south.<sup>289</sup> Speakers recalled how previous governments had used Village Scouts to quell an insurgency in Nakhon Phanom in 1973 and suppress student democracy activists in 1976, and noted more would be recruited in the deep south for nationalist campaigns to drive out "separatist enemies". There are already over 70,000 Village Scouts in the region.<sup>290</sup>

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24 April 2005.

<sup>280</sup> Of 85 dead, 84 were from Narathiwat, one from Yala. Of the 1,289 detained, ten were from Pattani, one from Yala, and the rest from districts in Narathiwat. According to the commander of the army's Fourth Division, Phisam Watawongkiri, "Most of 300 people charged for causing the turmoil were not from Takbai district, but Sungai padi, Cho Airong and Bajoh districts". Fact-finding report by Bangkok NGOs.

<sup>281</sup> Crisis Group interview with police officer at Tak Bai, December 2004; As quoted in *The New York Times* on 27 October 2004, Siwa Saengmanee, a senior official of the interior ministry, told a Bangkok radio station, "If we had not set up roadblocks on various highways, there could have been 10,000 people there". Plans for a rally had apparently been under way, and security officials had prepared.

<sup>282</sup> Footage of Tak Bai protest; Crisis Group interviews with participants and eye witnesses, Narathiwat, December 2004. The lawyer for the 59 protestors on trial, Anand Thaisenit, told Crisis Group his clients claimed that a small group they assumed to be the organisers of the protest refused to negotiate with the police and tried to wreck any other attempts at negotiation. Crisis Group interview, Narathiwat, April 2005.

<sup>283</sup> Crisis Group interviews with Tak Bai protestors, Narathiwat, December 2004.

<sup>284</sup> Several military officials interviewed by Crisis Group claim that the organisers were linked to the insurgency but most declined to name them. One official revealed, however, that a man named Usman Useng, a teacher at Thammasat Foundation Islamic School and member of BRN-Coordinate who was arrested in November 2004 said during his interrogation that the Tak Bai protest was planned with the

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hope of provoking a violent reaction from security forces. He also said there was a plan for another similar protest. Crisis Group interview, Pattani, April 2005.

<sup>285</sup> PULO organised protests in November 1975. See section III D above.

<sup>286</sup> "Poo borisoot rab kroh, kah tad koh, sen mob Tak Bai" [The innocent victimised; beheading in retaliation for Tak Bai] *Khom Chad Leuk*, 3 November 2004.

<sup>287</sup> "Buddhist beheaded in South", *The Nation*, 3 November 2004.

<sup>288</sup> Blood Siam website (now blocked); descriptions of the content translated into English can be viewed at <http://2bangkok.com/right.shtml#blood>.

<sup>289</sup> The Village Scouts organisation was founded by the Border Patrol Police in 1971 as a civilian anti-communist mass organisation.

<sup>290</sup> Crisis Group interview with Panitan Wattanayakorn, December 2004; "Village Scouts meeting: rally for peace raises concern", *The Nation*, 22 November 2004. On the Village Scout movement, see Katherine A. Bowie, *A Ritual of National*

## C. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Prime Minister Thaksin's first reaction was to suggest that the deaths in the army trucks were the Muslims' own fault for fasting during Ramadan: "It's normal that their bodies could not handle it. It's not about someone attacking them".<sup>291</sup>

The commander of the Narathiwat marine task force, Traikwan Kraireuk, added: "If they were normal people -- and not fasting or on drugs, as I suspect many of them were -- they would probably not have died".<sup>292</sup> In response to criticism, Traikwan added, "It wasn't heavy-handed. I used the velvet glove. If I'd used the iron fist, they would all be dead".<sup>293</sup>

Such insensitivity sparked international as well as domestic condemnation, forcing Thaksin to concede three days later in a televised national address that "lower ranking military officers" had made mistakes and order an independent investigation. On 3 November, the Army Fourth Region commander, Lt. General Phisarn Watawongkiri, was reassigned. The Narathiwat marine commander, Traikwan Kraireuk, however, retains his post.<sup>294</sup>

Bereaved families were offered 10,000 Baht [\$250], but no military or police officer has been prosecuted.<sup>295</sup> Only a summary of the findings of the commission established in November 2004 was initially made public. The National Reconciliation Commission released an almost

full-version of the report on 24 April 2005, however.<sup>296</sup> The government refused a request by Phillip Alston, the special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions for the Office of the UN Commissioner or Human Rights, to investigate the deaths.

On 6 March 2005, the Fourth Army Region commander, Lt. General Phisarn Wattanawongkiri, his deputy Major General Sinchai Nutsathit, and Fifth Infantry Division Commander Major General Chalermchai Wirunpeth, who was in charge of the transport, were removed from their positions after being found guilty of negligence resulting in the deaths of 78 protesters.<sup>297</sup> The three now have advisory roles but are eligible to return to command positions and will not be prosecuted or face any other disciplinary measures.<sup>298</sup>

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*Loyalty: An Anthropology of the State and the Village Scout Movement in Thailand*, (New York, 1997).

<sup>291</sup> "Stanakarn pak tai lang kwan puen" [Situation in the south after the smoke], *Post Today*, 27 October 2004.

<sup>292</sup> "Thailand's bloody monday", *Time*, 8 November 2004.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>294</sup> General Phisarn insisted it was in fact his decision to leave his post, to facilitate the investigation. "There was no pressure from anyone. I felt it was better for all concerned that I leave my position while the investigation is underway". In response to the deaths, he said, "I was shocked at the rising death toll ... but I thought I did my best". "Maetap paksi kho yai tua eng" [Fourth Army Region commander volunteered transfer], *Post Today*, 3 November 2004; "Maetap Paksi pued jai" [Fourth army commander tells all], *Matichon*, 3 November 2004.

<sup>295</sup> On 24 March 2005, the government paid Bt24m (around \$600,000) in reparations to 345 families of the protestors who died or were injured at the hands of the security forces during the 25 October 2004 protest, and dropped the condition requiring victims or victims' families to waive their right to sue responsible officials in order to qualify for compensation. Deputy Prime Minister Chaturon argued that the condition was unjust and illegal. "Thaksin sung khem dab fai tai" [Thaksin emphasised extinguishing southern fire], Krungthep Turakji, 10 April 2005; "Government drops no-suit demand for victims", Bangkok Post, 10 April 2005.

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<sup>296</sup> As with the report of the investigative commission into the Krue Se deaths, photographs and witness names were censored.

<sup>297</sup> Independent fact-finding commission, *op. cit.*

<sup>298</sup> Crisis Group interview with Colonel Sompkuan, Fourth Army Division spokesman, Yala, 12 April 2005.

## VIII. EXPLANATIONS FOR THE 2004 UPSURGE

There are several explanations for why violence may have escalated at this time, none mutually exclusive. Two of the most significant are the disbanding of key government institutions and a human rights deterioration leading to a loss of faith in the rule of law. The fear and resentment created by arbitrary arrests and police brutality have been compounded by government failure to give victims and their families justice. This feeds into a well of historical grievance, which can be manipulated into sympathy and support for militant groups.

The rise of more puritanical and radical strains of Islam in southern Thailand is also often cited as an important contributor to the upsurge of violence. Although a heightened Islamic consciousness is certainly evident in southern Thailand over the last two decades, and more recent international events -- particularly Muslim anger at the invasion of Iraq and the deployment of Thai troops in that effort -- have contributed to a sense of persecution and of solidarity with fellow Muslims, it is important not to view the conflict simply as part of a global Islamic terrorism problem. Although changes in the religious outlook of Muslims in southern Thailand have contributed to the sense of alienation and grievance, the violence is primarily driven by local issues. Finally, one less convincing explanation for the emergence of violence that is nonetheless often advanced is poverty and underdevelopment.

### A. INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC INSPIRATION AND THE WAR IN IRAQ

The decision in August 2003 to deploy Thai troops to support the U.S.-led war in Iraq and their deployment the next month did provoke an angry reaction among Malay Muslims. Sympathy for Muslims in Iraq, Palestine, Chechnya, and beyond is also widespread in southern Thailand, as among most Muslim populations around the world. In some cases it produces a sense of victimhood or even a siege mentality, but this translates only in a tiny fraction of instances into support for the use of violence locally, let alone participation in that violence. Local grievances are a much more powerful mobiliser. People inclined to resort to violence may derive inspiration from spectacular terrorist attacks elsewhere, but they do not in themselves lead to copycat operations.

Many analysts also cite the growing influence of Wahhabism and the flow of money from the Middle

East as an explanatory factor but there is not necessarily a link between rigid, narrow ideology and violence.<sup>299</sup> The founder and rector of the Saudi-funded Yala Islamic College, Ismael Lutfi Japakiya, is perhaps illustrative. His beliefs are fairly puritanical, as are those of many of the scholars from the Gulf who come to his college on teaching exchanges. There is no evidence, however, that he has been involved in violence. In fact, he has been reasonably cooperative with police and is actively courted by the Bangkok political elite to lend his name to boards and projects.<sup>300</sup> He is actively involved, for example, in the government's latest conflict resolution initiative.<sup>301</sup>

Lutfi has reportedly had contact with several members of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), including Ridwan Isamuddin alias Hambali, the Afghanistan-trained head of JI's Mantiqi I, who was arrested in Ayutthaya, north of Bangkok in August 2003. He was apparently not interested, however, in instigating terrorist violence in Thailand.<sup>302</sup>

Indeed, the violence most closely associated with Islamic inspiration, the 28 April 2004 attacks, relied on elements of mystical Sufism, such as *zikir*, special prayers for days on end, the drinking of holy water and receiving of special blessings to become invisible or impervious to bullets and knives. These practices are abhorrent to Salafis.

There is some evidence to suggest that Muslim identity and Islamic consciousness are being manipulated to attract young people into separatist movements (primarily through religious schools) much more than in the 1970s. However, the emphasis of the ideological indoctrination seems still to be on historical discrimination, suppression and dispossession and the necessity to reclaim Patani Muslim land.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> Angel M. Rabassa, *The Muslim World After 9/11* (Rand, 2004), p. 406; Davis, "Thailand faces up to southern extremist threat", op. cit.; Linda J. True, op. cit., pp. 12-13; Aurel Croissant, "Unrest in South Thailand: contours, causes, and consequences since 2001", *Strategic Insights*, Vol. IV, Issue 2, February 2005.

<sup>300</sup> There is some dispute within the intelligence and security agencies about how to view Ismail Lutfi. No official interviewed by Crisis Group believed he had participated directly in violence. See also, Davis, "Thailand faces up to southern extremist threat", op. cit.; "Making sense of the muddle in the south", *The Nation*, 26 January 2005.

<sup>301</sup> Dr. Lutfi is a member of the National Reconciliation Commission established in March 2005.

<sup>302</sup> Davis, "Thailand faces up to southern extremist threat", op. cit.; Crisis Group interviews with several analysts.

<sup>303</sup> Crisis Group interviews with academics and intelligence officials; interrogation depositions of Wae Arong Who, Adinan Sarideh, Mahmud Himbu and others.

## **B. POVERTY AND UNDER-DEVELOPMENT**

There is a common misconception that poverty or even relative deprivation causes violence.<sup>304</sup> The Malay Muslim provinces are indeed among the country's poorest but this in itself does not lead to violence.<sup>305</sup> Relative poverty may contribute to a sense of injustice but the key issues driving the violence are political.

Between 1964 and 1974, the government implemented agricultural development programs in an attempt to stem the violence. The projects did marginally improve the standard of living in the south but political issues were left to fester, ultimately undermining their effectiveness as a conflict resolution strategy.<sup>306</sup> It was only during the 1980s, when political grievances were addressed, that violence was curbed.

The government has poured millions of dollars into new development projects in recent years but this seems to have had no impact on either the sense of grievance or the level of violence in the south. The development of tourism was designed to give a boost to the local economy, but much in the associated entertainment industries is forbidden in, or offensive to, Islam.<sup>307</sup> "Muslim people don't feel comfortable with sex and gambling places in their neighbourhoods. It offends our sense of dignity", explained a local community leader.<sup>308</sup>

A 12 billion Baht (\$315 million) package announced in March 2004 had to be shelved after cabinet approval because local leaders complained they had not been consulted, and the projects were inappropriate.<sup>309</sup> Most Malay Muslims could not have participated in the projects proposed in this package because they are not equipped with the requisite skills and training. Projects that benefit

ethnic Thai and Chinese residents over Malays tend to widen the gap economically and psychologically, further alienating the Malay community.<sup>310</sup>

"[The government officials] haven't changed their attitudes toward development since the 1960s", was the assessment of Arun Thaisanit, chairman of a local community network, after meeting with members of the National Economic and Social Development Board. "They make their plans in air-conditioned rooms in Bangkok but never ask if the people really want these projects". Narathiwat Tourism Industry Association President Abdulayi Awaesumae said there simply was no local demand for many of the projects: "I don't understand why there are many projects the local people don't want".<sup>311</sup>

Even well-thought out economic development policies will not be effective in dealing with the violence unless they are coupled with initiatives that address political grievances.

## **C. GOVERNMENT ARCHITECTURE REVAMPED**

A key explanation for the upsurge in violence is the decision by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra shortly after he came into office in 2001 to re-impose central control over the opposition-Democrat Party-controlled southern provinces. In Thaksin's view, the separatist insurgency had long been resolved. The ongoing shootings and bombings, he argued, were the product of residual turf wars between criminal gangs, which should be handled by the police. As a former police officer, he tended to see any instability, including complex socio-political problems such as that of the south or illicit drugs, primarily as problems of law and order.

Thaksin came into office believing that existing governance structures nationwide, but particularly in the south, were inefficient and ineffective. He also believed they served the interests of the opposition and worried that Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC) officials' loyalties would flow primarily to the Democrats and the palace, rather than to him and his government. More worrisome than SBPAC, though, was the joint civilian-police-military task force, CPM

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<sup>304</sup> See, for example, Croissant, op. cit.

<sup>305</sup> The average monthly household income in Thailand in 2002 was 3,913 Baht (\$99). It was 1,756 Baht (\$44) in Narathiwat, 2,279 (\$58) in Pattani, and 2,439 (\$62) in Yala. "Statistical reports of Changwat [province], 2004", Chanthaburi Statistical Office, National Statistical Office. Available at [http://chanthaburi.nso.go.th/Acrobat/Report\\_Stat47.pdf](http://chanthaburi.nso.go.th/Acrobat/Report_Stat47.pdf).

<sup>306</sup> Yegar, op. cit., p. 126. See also Andrew Cornish, *Whose Place is This? Malay Rubber Producers and Thai Government Officials in Yala* (White Lotus Press, 1997), on the shortcomings of economic development programs as a strategy for social integration in the southern provinces.

<sup>307</sup> Liow, "Southern discomfort", op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>308</sup> Crisis Group interview with Hama Mayunu Abdul, civil society activist and director of community radio programs in Narathiwat. Narathiwat, December 2004.

<sup>309</sup> The package was eventually approved but there is still widespread concern it will not benefit locals. See, "Development spend-up a 'waste of money'", *Bangkok Post*, 5 May 2005.

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<sup>310</sup> Crisis Group correspondence with Surin Pitsuwan, Democrat party member of parliament for Nakhorn Si Thammarat, April 2005.

<sup>311</sup> "Appeasing the South: Let us plan our own future", *The Nation*, 30 March 2004.

43, and the senior command of the Fourth Army, which he felt were stacked with opposition loyalists.<sup>312</sup>

Thaksin's preferred strategy was to replace key officials with his own people. In the south, he hoped this would address his political problems and with any luck also help the security situation. His first move was to push out SBPAC chief Palakorn Suwannarat, who was close to both Prem and the palace. Palakorn abruptly resigned in July 2001, and Thaksin assigned a former classmate, Major General Songkitti Chakkabhatra, who had never served in the south, to study and report back on the situation. His assessment was that separatism was no longer an issue; that disputes between disgruntled interest groups, including within and between the security services, were driving violence and that the sooner the security situation was normalised, the quicker these problems would be resolved.<sup>313</sup>

Some scholars also argue that the local police deliberately downplayed politically-motivated violence, presenting it as ordinary criminal activity, in order to strengthen their grip in the provinces.<sup>314</sup> Thaksin appointed Songkitti as deputy commander of the Fourth Army (covering the five southernmost provinces) in October 2001. On 1 May 2002, he dissolved SBPAC and CPM 43 by Prime Ministerial Order.<sup>315</sup>

There are three reasons why dismantling these structures was catastrophic. First, they were at the top of an important intelligence network, which then fell apart; secondly, SBPAC officials had good links to community leaders, providing a channel for people to express grievances; and thirdly, SBPAC and CPM 43 in particular, helped

maintain a delicate balance between the security and intelligence agencies operating in the south; when control was handed to the police, "the wheels began to come off in terms of order and security throughout the region".<sup>316</sup>

The SBPAC was initially established to quell the communist insurgency in the southern provinces but was also effective in managing separatist violence. Attached to the interior ministry and serving as an interface between the south and Bangkok, it formulated political, social, economic and security policies to ameliorate the conflict. Its director was the deputy interior minister but it had local board members, and many of its staff were local ethnic Malays. Non-Malay staff were given language training.

One of the Centre's most important functions was to engender a sense of ownership among local elites: ownership of the problems but also of the solutions.<sup>317</sup> Community and religious leaders were affiliated often down to the village level, and SBPAC was well known throughout the southern provinces for listening to complaints from locals concerning corrupt or incompetent officials, who, if allegations were proven, it would transfer out within 24 hours.<sup>318</sup> This reach into the community also produced important intelligence. The two bodies were instrumental in turning the violence around in the 1980s. And in the three years directly preceding dissolution, 114 former insurgents surrendered.<sup>319</sup>

When CPM 43 was disbanded in May 2002, Thaksin handed overall control for security and intelligence to the provincial police, popularly seen as a dumping ground for corrupt and ineffective officers from other regions.<sup>320</sup> The closure of CPM 43 disrupted a delicate balance between security agencies in the southern provinces.<sup>321</sup> Almost at once, latent tensions erupted

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<sup>312</sup> Duncan McCargo, "Understanding conflict in the Thai south through domestic politics", presented at the at the Ninth International Conference on Thai Studies at Northern Illinois University, 3-6 April 2005, pp. 15-17.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-19. Thaksin also maneuvered politically to unseat Prem loyalists in the bureaucracy. Also in May 2002, he appointed Wan Noor, leader of the Wahdah faction, a Muslim political coalition, and the senior member of the New Aspiration party from Yala, interior minister, in the hope he would be able to wrest control from the Democrats. However, acting as power broker for the government lost him the support of many Muslim constituents, and violence continued to spiral out of control. Wan Noor was removed from his post in March 2003. Crisis Group interview with Surin Pitsuwan; McCargo, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>314</sup> Dr. Rung Kaewdeng argued that this assessment was aligned with the interests of militant groups and some local politicians and criticised Thaksin for not probing more deeply. Kaewdeng, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-133.

<sup>315</sup> The decision was approved by the cabinet the same day. "Nueng Satawat pan-ha chai daen paktai" [Southern border problem; a decade later], *Krungthep Turakij*, 6 May 2002; "Cabinet to dissolve two security agencies", *Bangkok Post*, 1 May 2002.

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<sup>316</sup> Virtual Information Centre, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>317</sup> Crisis Group interview with Surin Pitsuwan, Democrat Party parliamentarian and former Thai foreign minister, Bangkok, December 2004.

<sup>318</sup> Crisis Group interviews with religious leaders in Yala and Pattani, December 2004; Virtual Information Center, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>319</sup> McCargo, *op. cit.* p. 26.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>321</sup> Intelligence alone, which analysts cite as the weakest link in security management in the southern provinces, is collected by units of ten separate agencies: Royal Thai Police (RTP) Region Nine (the five southernmost provinces); RTP Special Branch; RTP Central Investigation Bureau; Royal Thai Army (RTA) Fourth Army (the fourteen southern provinces); the Armed Forces Security Centre (subordinate to the Supreme Command Headquarters, Bangkok); the Internal Security Operations Command (ISCO); the Border Patrol Police (BPP); the Royal Thai Air Force and Royal Thai Navy; and, not least, the civilian National Intelligence Agency (NIA), which answers to the

into open disputes. When the National Intelligence Agency produced a report in 2004 alleging police had carried out extra-judicial killings for example, a group of officers responded by kicking down the door of its Narathiwat office.<sup>322</sup> The strongest hostility, however, is between the army and police. Army resentment was reportedly aggravated by police handling of former military intelligence assets after the January 2004 attacks.<sup>323</sup> Police actually killed dozens of former separatists who had accepted amnesty offers and were serving as military intelligence informers.<sup>324</sup> As well as stirring up resentment in the community, they robbed themselves of vital information. Informers are now being systematically targeted by snipers.<sup>325</sup>

The system under CPM 43 was not perfect but tensions were effectively managed. There was a clearer division of labour and a greater degree of coordination. It quickly became apparent that the new arrangements were not working. There have been several attempts to restructure the command and almost constant rotation of personnel.

Thaksin finally established a Southern Border Provinces Peace Building Command in April 2004, to direct and coordinate military, police and intelligence operations in the south, as well as oversee social, economic and education policies of civilian agencies.<sup>326</sup> Six months of acrimonious squabbling later, he replaced its director in what many saw as a blame-shifting exercise, while policy still came straight from his office in Bangkok.<sup>327</sup> Intelligence gathering improved in 2004 and early 2005 but more improvements are needed. If the dissolution of

CPM 43 and SBPAC did not cause the outbreak of violence, it certainly weakened the government's ability to handle it.<sup>328</sup>

Also in April 2004, Deputy Prime Minister Chaturon Chaisang submitted a proposal to resolve the conflict, having consulted intensively with southern community and religious leaders. Chaturon's seven point plan, which called for martial law to be lifted and an amnesty for some categories of separatist insurgents, had backing from senior civilian and military figures, including the Fourth Army Commander. Within days of being presented to the cabinet, however, the proposal was sidelined in favour of a more robust military response.<sup>329</sup>

#### **D. DETERIORATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE WAR ON DRUGS**

Another important explanatory factor, also exacerbated by police control, is a perception of slackening human rights standards, exemplified by the way the 2003 war on drugs was prosecuted. Police and local officials were given orders to treat convicted drug dealers and smugglers as "security threats" and to deal with them in a "ruthless" and "severe" manner.<sup>330</sup> Over seven months, some 2,275 people were killed, and thousands arbitrarily arrested, blacklisted or disappeared.<sup>331</sup> Identified as a key smuggling route, the southern border provinces were among the areas most heavily affected by the anti-drug operations, which stirred up fear and resentment.

The extraordinary powers given to the police amounted to a "carte blanche to target awkward locals for extra-judicial execution. Among those killed were longstanding

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prime minister's office. Davis, "Thailand confronts separatist violence in its Muslim south", op. cit.

<sup>322</sup> "Making sense of the muddle in the south", *The Nation*, 26 January 2005.

<sup>323</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Yala, April 2005; Davis, "Thailand confronts separatist violence in its Muslim south", op. cit.

<sup>324</sup> Supalak and Don, op. cit., pp. 304-305. The police may well have assumed these former separatists were still active. It has been suggested that they may have even deliberately targeted military informers to undermine the army's position in the south. See McCargo, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>325</sup> Crisis Group interviews with police and military intelligence officers, Pattani, Yala, December 2004, April 2005; McCargo, op. cit. p. 24; "Assistant village head killed in latest attack", *Bangkok Post*, 5 January 2005; "Army informers slain in South", *The Nation*, 15 July 2003.

<sup>326</sup> Two officials from each of twenty ministries work with the SBPPBC in Yala. Crisis Group interview with Lt. General Pitsanu, director of joint civil affairs, Fourth Army division Yala, April 2005.

<sup>327</sup> "Prab tap kae pan-ha paktai, lao kao nai kuad mai" [Tactical shift for south; old wine in new bottle], *Post Today*, 6 October 2004; McCargo, op. cit., p. 25; "Govt. task force for deep south", *The Nation*, 3 April 2004; "Thaksin shrugs off responsibility again", *The Nation*, 6 October 2004.

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<sup>328</sup> It could also be argued that insurgents had their own internal logic for beginning this campaign of violence when they did. However, the crisis has been badly exacerbated by the disastrous policies from Bangkok over the last three years, beginning with the dissolution of the SBPAC and CPM43. Crisis Group interview with Prince of Songkhla academic, Chidchanok Rahimmula, Pattani, April 2005.

<sup>329</sup> The main opposition came from hawks in the police and military, but particularly the police, in Bangkok. It was not so much the content they opposed, but the fact that Deputy Prime Minister Chaturon presented the proposal to the media before consulting with senior security officials. "He ignored the hawks and you just can't afford to do that", remarked an analyst. "He hadn't found them a way out -- a face saver. And you can't underestimate the importance of 'face' in Thailand". Crisis Group interview, Bangkok, April 2005.

<sup>330</sup> Cited in Human Rights Watch, "Not Enough Graves: The War on Drugs, HIV/AIDS, and Violations of Human Rights in Thailand", July 2004.

<sup>331</sup> Estimates range upwards of 3,000, but the government's own figures show that more than 2,000 people were killed between February and August 2003, and 51,000 arrested. Ibid.



informers with close ties to the military",<sup>332</sup> as the intensified interagency rivalry played itself out. The behaviour of the police also confirmed local suspicions that they were bent on attacking Malay Muslims, rather than protecting them. People are often more scared of the police than "terrorists" in the south, despite almost daily sniper attacks. This was reinforced after the 4 January 2004 raid when, as one man said, "it seemed like every Malay male was a suspect".<sup>333</sup> According to religious leaders, more than 100 residents of the four southern provinces were abducted and killed in the four months after 4 January.<sup>334</sup> It is difficult to verify these claims but there is a widespread perception among southern Muslims that they are true.

On 10 June 2003, three prominent Muslims were arrested on terrorism charges in Narathiwat. The arrests came hours before Thaksin was scheduled to discuss anti-terrorism cooperation with U.S. President George W. Bush. Although there is in fact plausible evidence implicating these men in a Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) plot to bomb Western embassies in Bangkok, the timing lent itself to a swirl of conspiratorial rumours in the south.

Arrests, searches and seizures increased. On 14 January 2004, a Narathiwat Muslim leader, Matohlafi Maesae, was abducted from his home in Bacho district by ten unidentified armed men. His body was recovered three days later bearing torture marks.<sup>335</sup> According to human rights lawyer and chairman of the Muslim Lawyers' Association, Somchai Neelaphajit, five suspects arrested in February were beaten and tortured by police until they confessed to treason.<sup>336</sup>

In a speech at the Santichon Foundation in Bangkok on 27 February 2004, Somchai publicly accused the police of torturing his clients. On 11 March, he submitted an open letter to five independent bodies calling on them to investigate his allegations. He disappeared the following day.<sup>337</sup> A Muslim politician in Narathiwat told Crisis Group, "People have lost faith in the law -- the police are

not here to protect us but to attack us. How can people believe in justice after what happened to Somchai?"<sup>338</sup>

The Thai National Human Rights Commission stated in April 2004, a week before the Krue Se incident:

The present problems result from the reactions of Muslim brothers and sisters who decided to stand up and fight after having accumulated grievances and frustrations over a long period....For example, police captured and tortured people to secure confessions....Many cases of missing persons have not been investigated.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>332</sup> McCargo, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>333</sup> Crisis Group interview, Narathiwat, December 2004.

<sup>334</sup> Minutes from a meeting between members of the southern provinces Islamic councils and a Bangkok human rights NGO, May 2004.

<sup>335</sup> Davis, "Thailand confronts separatist violence in its Muslim south", *op. cit.*

<sup>336</sup> See section V B above.

<sup>337</sup> Crisis Group interviews with human rights activists and colleagues of Somchai's, December 2004, including Ahmad Somboon Bualuang, former Prince of Songkhla academic, Pattani, and ChalidaTajaroensuk, director of Human Rights Protection Program at the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, Bangkok; "Missing Lawyer Somchai accused police of torture", *The Nation*, 27 March 2004.

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<sup>338</sup> Crisis Group interview with Malay local politician, Narathiwat, December 2004.

<sup>339</sup> "Interpreting the South", *The Nation*, 10 May 2004.

## **IX. PROSPECTS FOR A BROADER REGIONAL JIHAD**

There is no evidence that jihadist groups from outside Thailand, such as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), have been involved in the violence in the south. As grievances mount and the conflict escalates, however, there is a possibility that Thai groups could seek outside assistance or that individuals from JI or like-minded organisations could come to help unsolicited. If such elements enter the fray, we could begin to see either more technically proficient insurgents or the transformation of a low-level, ethno-nationalist insurgency into something more resembling a regional jihad.

There is already a network in place that could facilitate outside assistance, if the Thai groups chose to use it. Contacts between JI members and some Thai Muslims go back to the late 1980s, when they trained together in the camp run by Afghan mujahidin leader Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Abdul Fatah, from Narathiwat, and two other Thais, Abu Hafiz and Furqon, studied there under JI's head of military affairs, Zulkarnaen, in 1987.

Thirteen years later, Abdul Fatah and Abu Hafiz, apparently representing PULO, took part in at least two meetings in Malaysia of the Rabitatul Mujahidin (RM, Mujahidin League), JI's unsuccessful attempt at a regional alliance of Islamic militant groups.<sup>340</sup> At that stage, according to a participant, the two Thais were opposed to the use of violence, although Rabitatul Mujahidin as a whole was not; a JI member later claimed that the September 2000 bomb attack on the Philippine ambassador in Jakarta was based on an RM resolution.<sup>341</sup>

Other Thais joined Indonesians for training in Afghanistan in the early 1990s, including GMIP members Nasoree Saesang and Nasae Saning. An Indonesian known as Mukhtar was reported to be operating with GMIP in Narathiwat in late 2003. If true, this could be another example of bonds forged in Afghanistan.<sup>342</sup>

Hambali, the JI leader now in U.S. custody, and Mukhlas, one of the Bali bombers, appear to have had extensive contacts in Thailand -- and Hambali was eventually

arrested there in August 2003. In September 2000, according to an Indonesian police report, Mukhlas sent Mochamad Azmi, a JI member from Kelantan now in Malaysian custody, to Narathiwat with a letter in Arabic for Abdul Fatah requesting his help with arms purchases.

Azmi reportedly would get the funds from Hambali and turn them over to Abdul Fatah, who would then instruct some of his followers to look for arms. He would let Azmi know when guns had been procured, then Azmi would bring them back to Malaysia, one or two at a time. Over about seven months, Azmi brought back some thirteen revolvers and pistols, most of which were turned over to a teacher at the Lukmanul Hakiem Pesantren, a JI boarding school in Kelantan.

Azmi was also frequently called on to arrange Hambali's trips across the Malaysian border into Narathiwat, although their purpose is not clear. By late 2001, however, when a crackdown against JI had begun in Singapore and Malaysia, Thailand became a place of refuge, and Hambali's contacts were among those used to good effect.

Singaporean JI member Arifin bin Ali, alias John Wong Ah Hung was one of those who fled via Malaysia to Thailand in December 2001.<sup>343</sup> According to Singaporean authorities, he attempted to establish a JI cell in Narathiwat and confessed that he and three Thais -- Waemahadi Waedao, a medical doctor from Muang district, Narathiwat; Maisuri Haji Abdulloh, the head of Burana Islamic School, Narathiwat; and Samarn Waekaji, a soft-drinks vendor from Yala -- were planning to detonate car bombs simultaneously at the U.S., British, Israeli, Singapore and Australian Embassies in Bangkok, as well as at tourist areas in Phuket and Pattaya. Waemahadi, Maisuri and Maisuri's son, Muyahi, were arrested in Narathiwat in June 2003.<sup>344</sup> Samarn surrendered in Yala in July.<sup>345</sup> The four men were charged on 18 November 2003 with conspiring to endanger national security and membership of an unlawful group.<sup>346</sup>

<sup>340</sup> Crisis Group Asia Report No.43, *Indonesia Background: How the Jemaah Islamiyah Terrorist Network Operates*, 11 December 2002, p. 8, footnote 36.

<sup>341</sup> Deposition of Faiz Abu Bakar Bafana, 22 October 2002, in case dossier of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, Criminal Investigation Division, Indonesian Police (2003), Case No. BP/01/I/2003/Dit-1.

<sup>342</sup> Davis, "Thailand's Troubled South", op. cit.

<sup>343</sup> Singapore ministry of home affairs, "Press Statement on the Arrest of Jemaah Islamiyah Fugitive - Arifin bin Ali alias John Wong", 10 June 2003

<sup>344</sup> Arifin confessed that he also had contact with Maisuri's son, Muyahi Haji Abdulloh, but that Muyahi had not been involved in planning the attacks. "Trial Of JI Suspects: 'Extreme chaos' planned", *The Nation*, 29 November 2003.

<sup>345</sup> "Thaksin convinced of suspect's terror links", *The Nation*, 10 July 2003.

<sup>346</sup> Police Major Pirapong Duangamporn of the secret police testified "Khem korjorkor puan hariraya" [Tense, terrorists plan holiday sabotage], *Khom Chad Luek*, 19 November 2003; Supalak and Don, op. cit., p. 250; "Bomb Plot: Teacher denies role in embassy plan", *The Nation*, 16 March 2005. Waemahadi

Several other top JI leaders from Mantiqi I, the JI division covering Malaysia and Singapore, also sought refuge in Thailand as the crackdown intensified. Hambali had apparently arranged for some \$25,000, acquired from al-Qaeda for operational purposes, to be stored with a Muslim group in Narathiwat that JI members called "Jemaah Salafi" -- although it is not clear whether it refers to a specific organisation or is simply a generic reference to adherents of the puritanical form of Islam known as salafism. Jemaah Salafi acted as emergency bankers for the JI fugitives.<sup>347</sup>

Mukhlas arrived in Thailand in January 2002. Shortly afterwards, three more figures arrived, a step ahead of the Malaysian police: Wan Min, a JI leader from Johor, and two men later to become notorious for their role in spectacular bombings in Jakarta in 2003 and 2004, Dr. Azhari Husin and Noordin Mohamed Top. The next month, Hambali convened a meeting in Bangkok with Mukhlas, Hambali, Azhari, Noordin, and Wan Min in attendance, to discuss the next steps. It is not clear whether Thais were present but all participants appear to have been living in Thailand.<sup>348</sup>

In March 2002, Mukhlas decided to return to Indonesia. Wan Min was assigned to contact the Jemaah Salafi group to withdraw some JI savings. He met Mukhlas at the Yala bus terminal and handed over \$15,500. The rest of the funds held by Jemaah Salafi were transferred to Mukhlas after he reached Indonesia; they subsequently financed the Bali bombings.

In addition to the "Afghan alumni" links between Thais and Indonesians established through the late 1980s and early 1990s, a younger generation of Thais and Indonesians apparently met in Karachi and Kandahar around 2000, expanding the network. On the Indonesian side, this included Hambali's younger brother, Gun Gun.

Gun Gun was arrested in Karachi in September 2003 with a group of young Malaysians and Indonesians, who in effect constituted a JI cell. When he was asked when he last had contact with his brother, he responded that he had received an e-mail in March 2003: "My brother said in the e-mail that he was in the al-Bayan peninsula, so I guessed he was in Thailand, because I knew there was

an al-Bayan study group whose members consisted of Thai students who had been in Karachi".<sup>349</sup>

Hambali was eventually arrested in Ayutthaya, near Bangkok, more than 1,000 km from the Muslim provinces in the south. He reportedly told his American interrogators that southern Thai militants refused to help him blow up tourist spots in the country because, "they did not agree with the targets".<sup>350</sup>

JI thus has a web of contacts in southern Thailand going back almost two decades but as noted, there is as yet no hard evidence of its active involvement in the violence. That said, fears that regional or international terrorist groups may have infiltrated Thailand intensified on 17 February 2005 when a car bomb exploded outside a hotel in the border town of Sungai Kolok. Its size and sophistication were unprecedented in Thailand but are not in themselves proof of outside intervention.

It may be worth looking more closely at the pattern of JI cooperation with groups such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Abu Sayaf Group (ASG) in the southern Philippines to understand how it might develop in southern Thailand. In the Philippines, JI has assigned liaison members to work with their MILF and ASG counterparts, helping with planning, technical training, and coordination. It apparently does not attempt to influence their goals or ideology, just to make them more effective bombers. The last thing southern Thailand needs, however, is greater proficiency in mounting attacks against civilians.

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was also charged with sheltering Arifin. Waemahadi and Maisuri vigorously denied the charges when they appeared in court in December 2003 and February 2004 respectively. "JI terror suspect denies all charges", *The Nation*, 2 February 2005.

<sup>347</sup> Deposition of Wan Min bin Wan Mat, 8 January 2003, in Criminal Investigation Division, Indonesian Police Case No. BP06/II/2003

<sup>348</sup> Ibid and Deposition of Wan Min bin Wan Mat, 2 August 2004, in Criminal Investigation Division, Indonesian Police (2004), Case No. BP/07/V/2004/Densus 88.

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<sup>349</sup> Deposition of Gun-gun Rusman Gunawan Deposition, 20 January 2004, in Criminal Investigation Division, Indonesian Police (2004), Case No. BP/04/111/2004, Densus 88.

<sup>350</sup> "Targeting Thailand: Are Islamic militants behind the latest wave of attacks and bombings in the country's restless south?", *Time Asia*, 11 January 2004.

## **X. CONCLUSION**

The roots of the violence in southern Thailand lie in historical grievances and a pattern of neglect, discrimination, and efforts at forced assimilation on the part of governments in Bangkok going back almost a century. But historical grievances do not explain why the violence suddenly surged in 2004. For that, one part of the explanation is still missing -- hard evidence of who organised the January 2004 raids. Another part, however, is clear: miscalculations, inappropriate policy responses, excessive use of force, and lack of accountability on the part of the Thaksin government have turned a serious but manageable security problem into something that looks more and more like a mass-based insurgency.

In the short-term, the violence does not appear to be having any noticeable impact on the stability of the Thai government -- if anything, Prime Minister Thaksin may have benefited from his hard-line approach to the South, given the extraordinary mandate he received in the February 2005 elections.<sup>351</sup> But failure to stem the violence may have serious consequences, both domestically, in terms of generating more support for a separate Muslim state and destroying communal relations between Malay Muslims and Thai Buddhists, and regionally. Not only is it already heightening tensions between Thailand and Malaysia, the traditional refuge of Muslim leaders from the southern provinces, but it also has the potential to draw in jihadists from other countries in the region, particularly Indonesia.

Prime Minister Thaksin and his advisers would do well to take a new look at the policies of the Prem government in the 1980s and early 1990s, when Bangkok in effect handed an olive branch to the south. The insurgency did not go away but violence dropped dramatically, to the point that in 1999, when Thai Muslim leaders close to the Jemaah Islamiyah organisation were asked to take part in regional operations, they declined, on the grounds that their lives were reasonably good in Thailand, and they wanted no disruptions. Those same leaders are likely to take a harder line today.

Crisis Group interviews show that Thaksin's reliance on force and his refusal to hold top commanders accountable or to press for serious investigations into human rights abuses are pushing more and more Muslims toward

sympathy, if not active support, for those responsible for the bombings and other acts of violence, including murder, that are becoming a daily staple in Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala. Those acts are clearly crimes that the state has a responsibility to investigate and punish. But it will be harder to identify, arrest, and prosecute the perpetrators if the population in which they operate grows ever angrier and more resentful at the policies emanating from Bangkok.

One can only assume that the groups responsible for the bombings and killings have an interest in a maximally heavy-handed government response precisely so that separatist -- if not jihadist -- sentiment is fuelled. It is up to the Thaksin government to break the cycle of violence by a measured response that addresses the security issue but also acknowledges the accumulated political grievances. It should hold intensive consultations with local community leaders in an effort to open a genuine dialogue. The February 2005 election showed that worsening violence and deepening alienation in the south had no effect on Thaksin's political fortunes. In the long-term, however, it may be Thailand more than Thaksin that suffers the consequences.

**Singapore/Brussels, 18 May 2005**

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<sup>351</sup> Despite winning an impressive majority nationwide, Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai party captured no seats in the three southernmost provinces. Of 54 seats in the 14 southern provinces, Thai Rak Thai won one, in the tsunami-affected Phang Na province; the opposition Democrats took 52, the Chart Thai party one.

## APPENDIX A

### MAP OF THAILAND



## APPENDIX B

### MAP OF THAILAND'S THREE SOUTHERN PROVINCES



## APPENDIX C

### GLOSSARY

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- 4<sup>th</sup> Army Region** Military administrative region covering Thailand's fourteen southern provinces.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Police Region** Police administrative region covering Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, Satun and Songkhla.
- Abadae** Short name for Hikmat Allah Abadan, the Brotherhood of Eternal Judgement of God, the group responsible for the 28 April 2004 attacks.
- BBMP** Barisan Bersatu Mujahidin Patani, United Patani Mujahidin Front, an off-shoot of BNPP (below), which broke away in 1985.
- Bersatu** "Unity", umbrella organisation set up to coordinate the activities of the various separatist groups and factions in 1989; largely ineffective except during the 1997-1998 campaign known as "Falling Leaves", targeting state officials. Currently led by Wan Kadir Che Man, based in Sweden.
- BIPP** Barisan Islam Pembebasan Patani, Patani Islamic Liberation Front, the new name for BNPP after 1986, the year following the split-off of BBMP.
- BNPP** Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani, Patani National Liberation Front, established in 1959 to fight for the creation of an independent Islamic State in Patani.
- BRN** Barisan Revolusi Nasional, established in the early 1960s, to fight for an independent Patani state; ethnonationalist with socialist bent. Split in the 1980s into three factions, one of which, BRN-Coordinate, is believed to be directing a significant proportion of the current violence.
- BRN Congress** Armed faction of BRN that broke away in 1984, led by Che Kupeng alias Rosa Buraso, until he died in April 2005; also has expatriate leadership in Europe, but no military presence in Thailand.
- BRN- Coordinate** Faction of BRN that broke away in 1980, led by "Haji M", focused on political organising in Islamic schools; also had armed units. Now led by Masae Useng, and -- allegedly -- Sapae-ing Basoe.
- BRN Ulama** Non-violent faction of BRN comprised of Islamic clergy. Led by Wan Muhamad Wan Yusuf, in Perak, Northern Malaysia.
- CPM** Communist Party of Malaysia, many units of which were based in southern Thailand (mostly Yala's Betong province) in the 1970s and 1980s.
- CPM 43** Civil-Police-Military joint command (established to coordinate security policy in the five southernmost provinces in 1980; disbanded in 2002).
- CPT** Communist Party of Thailand.
- Eid ul Fitr** Celebration at the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.
- GAMPAR** Gabungan Melayu Patani Patani Raya, the Greater Patani Malay Association, established in 1948 to incorporate Thailand's four majority Muslim provinces into Malaya; disbanded when its leader, Tengku Ismail bin Tengku Nik, died in 1953. Many of its members then joined BNPP.
- KMM** Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia, Malaysian Mujahidin Group, established in 1995 by Afghanistan veterans including Zainol. Nik Adili Aziz joined KMM upon his return to Malaysia in 1996.
- GMIP** Gerakan Mujahidin Islam Patani, Patani Islamic Mujahidin Movement, originally established in 1986 but had petered out by 1993. Nasoree Saesang (alias Awae Keleh) reinvigorated the movement in 1995 upon his return from Afghanistan. It is committed to the creation of an independent Patani state but appears to be more closely tied in to an international Islamist agenda than BRN or New PULO. GMIP is believed to be behind arms raids in 2001, 2002 and 2003 as well as to have had some role in the 4 January 2004 attack on Rachanakarin camp.

<b>New PULO</b>	Splinter group of PULO, which broke away in 1995 under the leadership of Arong Mooreng and Haji Abdul Rohman Bazo (alias Haji Buedo).
<b>NRC</b>	National Reconciliation Commission, established March 2005.
<b>Pemuda</b>	Separatist youth movement, believed to be partially controlled by BRN-Coordinate; responsible for many of the day-to-day bombing and arson attacks.
<b>PSTI</b>	Private School Teaching Islam, a private school, partly state funded, that teaches the national curriculum as well as Quranic and Arabic language studies. Most were <i>ponohs</i> that converted after the 1961 Education Improvement Program. In Thai, a <i>rongrian ekachon son satsana Islam</i> .
<i>ponoh</i>	Religious boarding school teaching Quranic studies and the Arabic language.
<b>PULO</b>	Patani United Liberation Organisation, established in 1968 to fight for the creation of an independent Islamic state but which was more ethnonationalist than Islamist.
<i>qadi</i>	<i>Sharia</i> (Islamic law) judge.
<b>RTA</b>	Royal Thai Army.
<b>RTP</b>	Royal Thai Police.
<b>Salafism</b>	A puritanical Islamic movement that uses the practices of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions in the seventh century as a guide to how Islam should be practiced today.
<b>SBPAC</b>	Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre, established in 1981 to coordinate and monitor policy; dissolved on 1 May 2002.
<b>SBPPBC</b>	Southern Border Provinces Peace Building Command, integrated military-police command set up in April 2004.
<i>syahid</i>	Martyr.
<i>syariah</i>	<i>Sharia</i> , Islamic law.
<i>tadika</i>	Small rural religious school attached to village mosque, generally for young children.
<b>Tok Guru</b>	Head teacher (and usually owner) of a <i>ponoh</i> .
<b>TRT</b>	Thai Rak Thai, Prime Minister Thaksin's political party.
<i>ustadz</i>	Religious teacher (in a <i>ponoh</i> , PSTI or <i>tadika</i> ).
<b>Zikir</b>	Recitation of the name of Allah.
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## APPENDIX D

### ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

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The International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with over 100 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, it produces analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers. Crisis Group also publishes *CrisisWatch*, a twelve-page monthly bulletin, providing a succinct regular update on the state of play in all the most significant situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world.

Crisis Group's reports and briefing papers are distributed widely by email and printed copy to officials in foreign ministries and international organisations and made available simultaneously on the website, [www.crisisgroup.org](http://www.crisisgroup.org). Crisis Group works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions.

The Crisis Group Board -- which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media -- is directly involved in helping to bring the reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policy-makers around the world. Crisis Group is chaired by Lord Patten of Barnes, former European Commissioner for External Relations. President and Chief Executive since January 2000 is former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans.

Crisis Group's international headquarters are in Brussels, with advocacy offices in Washington DC (where it is based as a legal entity), New York, London and Moscow. The organisation currently operates seventeen field offices (in Amman, Belgrade, Bishkek, Cairo, Dakar, Dushanbe, Islamabad, Jakarta, Kabul, Nairobi, Port-au-Prince, Pretoria, Pristina, Quito, Seoul, Skopje and Tbilisi), with analysts working in over 50 crisis-affected countries and territories across four continents. In Africa, this includes Angola, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Liberia, Rwanda, the Sahel region, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda

and Zimbabwe; in Asia, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Kashmir, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar/Burma, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; in Europe, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia; in the Middle East, the whole region from North Africa to Iran; and in Latin America, Colombia, the Andean region and Haiti.

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**May 2005**

## APPENDIX E

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