

# Asia

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## North East Asia

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➔ **China/Japan** **China's live-fire drills around Taiwan spilled over into Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), while Tokyo and Beijing held first high-level dialogue since Feb 2020.** Five ballistic missiles – fired during Chinese live-fire drill in retaliation for U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's Taiwan visit (see Taiwan Strait) – 4 Aug landed in Japan's EEZ in first ever such incident; Japanese Defence Minister Nobuo Kishi described event as “grave matter”, while China said it did not recognise Japan's EEZ. Despite incident, China and Japan 17 Aug held high level security talks in first such dialogue between two countries since Feb 2020; both countries agreed to continue communication. As of 28 Aug, 113 Chinese vessels had entered Japan's contiguous zone during month, including 16 identified in Japan's territorial waters. Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force 3-9 Aug conducted military drill during U.S.-led RIMPAC joint exercise, which saw *Izumo* aircraft carrier and *Takanami* destroyer participate. PM Fumio Kishida 10 Aug appointed veteran Liberal Democratic Party legislator Yasukazu Hamada as new defence minister in Cabinet reshuffle; Hamada served as defence minister 2008-2009 under former PM Taro Aso.

➔ **Korean Peninsula** **U.S. and North Korea traded barbs over latter's nuclear weapons program, while Pyongyang rejected Seoul's new denuclearisation initiative amid U.S.-South Korea military drills.** U.S. Sec State Antony Blinken 1 Aug criticised North Korea's expansion of “unlawful nuclear programme” and accused Pyongyang of preparing seventh nuclear test; Pyongyang 3 Aug responded that it would “never tolerate” U.S. criticism on weapons tests and called Washington “kingpin of nuclear proliferation”. Visiting South Korea, U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi 4 Aug pledged to support North Korea's denuclearisation based on “extended deterrence”; North Korean state media 6 Aug denounced Pelosi as “worst destroyer of international peace and stability”. UN concluded in confidential report leaked 4 Aug that North Korea made preparations for nuclear test during first six months of 2022. In first elaboration of North Korea policy since March election, South Korean President Yoon 15 Aug asserted that denuclearisation was prerequisite for peace in North East Asia and proposed “audacious initiative” to provide economic aid and development in exchange for Pyongyang's credible steps toward denuclearisation. Kim Yo Jong – sister to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un – 18 Aug dismissed proposal as “nonsense”, saying denuclearisation “cannot be bartered” for economic cooperation and proposal was rehash of policies of conservative govt in power 2008-2013. Remarks came after South Korea, U.S. and Japan 8-14 Aug held joint missile warning and tracking exercises. North 17 Aug fired two cruise missiles from Onchon (west coast). Yoon same day said high-level talks “should not be a political show” but lead to “substantive peace”. South Korea and U.S. 22 Aug commenced largest joint exercise in years. Meanwhile, Kim Jong-un 11 Aug declared end to COVID-19 outbreak, which many local traders interpreted as sign that cross-border trade with China could soon restart. South Korean FM Park Jin and Chinese FM Wang Yi 9 Aug pledged to pursue “two-plus-two” talks and increase high-level communication on range of issues;

dispute over U.S.-supplied missile defence system deployed in south 11 Aug resurfaced, however, as Beijing sought limits on its deployment. South Korean prosecutors 19 Aug raided presidential archive as part of investigation into former Moon administration's repatriation of two North Korean fishermen in 2019.

↓ **Taiwan Strait Tensions soared as China conducted large-scale live-fire exercises around Taiwan as part of its multi-pronged response to U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to island.** As U.S. congressional delegation led by Nancy Pelosi 2 Aug landed in Taiwan, China announced live-fire air-naval drills in six strategic maritime areas around Taiwan running 4-7 Aug and later extended to 10 Aug, with over 100 planes flying in first two days. Taiwanese defence ministry 3 Aug decried exercise as akin to blockade and claimed China fired 11 ballistic missiles into waters near Taiwan and over island for first time (some of which landed in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone – see China/Japan). Additionally, Chinese aerial incursions into Taiwan's air defence identification zone skyrocketed, totalling 751 planes 1-28 Aug with 337 crossing median line; Chinese naval vessels were sighted 173 times 5-28 Aug, with many vessels also crossing median line. Responding to surge in Chinese activities, Taiwanese troops 4 Aug fired warning flares at two drones spotted near Kinmen county, 10km from China's Fujian province; 30 Aug fired warning shots at Chinese drone operating in same area. Taiwan 9, 11 Aug held live-fire artillery drills in Pingtung county and 17 Aug held fighter jet drill. Alongside military action, Taiwan govt websites suffered increased cyberattacks, and China 3 Aug banned imports of many Taiwanese goods. China 5 Aug imposed economic sanctions on Pelosi and her direct family, and same day cancelled eight planned dialogues with U.S., including theater command talks, defence policy coordination and climate change talks. U.S. 4 Aug called Chinese response overreaction and effort to "change a status quo". G7 3 Aug condemned Beijing's "aggressive military activity" and Japan, U.S. and Australia 7 Aug urged China to cease military exercises. China 15 Aug announced new round of joint combat readiness patrols around Taiwan following U.S. Democrat Senator Ed Markey's visit to island, and next day announced sanctions on ten Taiwanese political figures. Two U.S. warships, *USS Antietam* and *USS Chancellorsville*, 28 Aug transited Taiwan Strait; Beijing said it was monitoring movement in comparatively restrained response. U.S. governor of Arizona 30 Aug visited island.

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## South Asia

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➔ **Afghanistan U.S. killed al-Qaeda chief in first high-profile strike since Aug 2021 withdrawal, Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) targeted Taliban and religious minorities, and Taliban clashed with Pakistani forces.** U.S. President Biden 1 Aug confirmed U.S. had killed al-Qaeda chief, Ayman al Zawahiri, in drone strike in capital Kabul on 31 July; Washington accused Taliban authorities of violating Feb 2020 Doha agreement by providing sanctuary to al-Zawahiri, while Taliban countered U.S. conducted strike without informing them. Reports surfaced 5 Aug of widespread protests across country condemning strike. Leaked U.S. intelligence assessment 13 Aug argued al-Qaeda had not regrouped in country. Over 3,000 tribal and religious leaders 19 Aug gathered in Kandahar, including Taliban Emir Hibatullah Akhundzada, to condemn strike and call on neighbours not to cooperate with such "violations of Afghan sovereignty", as reports suggested U.S. and Pakistan neared deal on U.S. use of Pakistani airspace for

future operations. ISKP continued recruitment and lethal attacks. In early Aug, security forces arrested several ISKP cells; recent arrests of Tajiks indicated ISKP's inroads in recruiting ethnic minority groups. ISKP attacked Hazara civilians in lead-up to Ashura religious commemorations, with three attacks 3-6 Aug. ISKP suicide bombing 11 Aug killed senior Taliban-affiliated cleric Rahimullah Haqqani. ISKP 18 Aug claimed attack on Sufi mosque in Kabul. Insecurity persisted elsewhere. New armed group Watandost Front published video claiming attack on 1 Aug against Taliban forces in Herat province (west). Unknown assailants 8 Aug killed senior Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) commander Omar Khalid Khorasani in IED blast in Paktika province (east). High Resistance Council for Saving Afghanistan – anti-Taliban resistance group formed in May – 15 Aug held virtual meeting attended by Ahmad Massoud, leader of National Resistance Front (NRF), which resulted in issuance of group's constitution; NRF also announced its basic principles after meeting. Pakistani and Taliban forces 8 and 22 Aug clashed in Kunar (east) and Paktya (south east) provinces. Taliban defence minister 17 Aug rejected possibility of compromise on Wakhan Corridor amid social media rumours Pakistan might attempt to encroach on thin strip of Afghan territory in order to gain direct access to Central Asia.

➡ **Bangladesh Ruling Awami League (AL) adopted austerity measures amid energy crisis, triggering violent protests and deepening tensions with opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).** Govt 5 Aug increased fuelled prices by as much as 52%, citing global energy crisis following Russia's invasion of Ukraine (see Ukraine). In response, student organisations and BNP held rallies across country, including in capital Dhaka on 5 Aug, accusing govt of mismanagement of power and energy sectors. Activist 3 Aug died of his injuries after police 31 July fired during demonstration in Bhola district; five people, including police officer, 7 Aug were injured during BNP demonstration in Chapainawabganj district; clashes between BNP supporters and AL's student wing 12 Aug injured at least 20 people in Pirojpur district; police same day intervened in clash between demonstrators from BNP's student wings and AL supporters in Feni city, injuring at least 20. Hindu temples were vandalised in Pirojpur, Bagerhat and Kurigram districts on 1, 6 and 9 Aug, respectively. In first ever visit by UN human rights chief to country, Michelle Bachelet 14-18 Aug visited Dhaka and Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar; Bachelet 17 Aug called for more dialogue between political parties, urged govt to amend controversial laws like Digital Security Act to ensure "compliance with international human rights laws", and asked govt to investigate allegations of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings; Bachelet also expressed concern over rising anti-Rohingya rhetoric. In Ukhiya camp in Cox's Bazar, shootout between two rival groups 1 Aug killed Rohingya man. Unknown assailants 10 Aug shot dead two Rohingya community leaders in Ukhiya camp; locals held insurgent group Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army responsible. Thousands of Rohingya refugees 25 Aug gathered in camp to mark fifth anniversary of Myanmar military's crackdown. Marking occasion, UK and Germany 25 Aug confirmed they would formally join The Gambia's case against Myanmar at International Court of Justice, while the U.S. announced plans to "significantly increase" resettlement of Rohingya, including refugees in Bangladesh. UN Special Envoy to Myanmar Noeleen Hezwer 22-25 Aug met govt officials, including PM Hasina, and visited Rohingya camps; Hezwer called for increased aid for Rohingya response.

➔ **India Relations with China remained tense over military activity on unofficial border, while separatist groups in north east conducted sporadic attacks on security forces.** During routine talks on confidence-building measures in eastern Ladakh, govt and China 4 Aug discussed measures to prevent violation of each other's airspace; India complained that Chinese fighter jets came very close to Line of Actual Control (undemarcated de facto border between countries) and violated 10km buffer zone during 24-25 June annual exercises, prompting Indian Air Force to scramble its fighter jets. FM S. Jaishankar 18 Aug said: "At the moment [the India-China] relationship is going through an extremely difficult phase after what China did at the border". Meanwhile, in Assam state (north east), authorities 3 Aug demolished madrasa in Morigaon district that was being run by mufti with alleged links to Ansarul Islam, banned Bangladesh-based militant outfit. In Arunachal Pradesh state (north east), militants allegedly belonging to armed separatist groups United Liberation Front of Asom (Independent) and Yung Aung faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang) 9 Aug fired shots from across Myanmar border and injured one security forces personnel. In Tripura state (north east), militants of armed separatist group National Liberation Front of Tripura 18 Aug ambushed patrol party of security forces and killed one security forces personnel on India-Bangladesh border. National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah) 2 Aug observed 25 years since signing "Indo-Naga" ceasefire agreement; deadlock persists between govt and group over issues of separate flag and constitution, as group alleges that New Delhi reneged on Framework Agreement signed in Aug 2015.

➔ **India-Pakistan (Kashmir) Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) marked three years since India revoked its special status, as controversy persisted over electoral register.** Ahead of third anniversary on 5 Aug of India's revocation of J&K's special status and arrest of local leaders across political spectrum, govt 4 Aug released data to support its claim that militancy had decreased in last three years. Marking anniversary, Organisation for Islamic Cooperation called for "reversal of all illegal and unilateral actions" by India. In BBC interview, J&K Lt-Governor Manoj Sinha 19 Aug claimed Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, chairman of Hurriyat separatist political outfit and Kashmir's chief cleric, was "neither under house arrest or detained"; Hurriyat refuted claims. Meanwhile, J&K Chief Electoral Officer Hirdesh Kumar 17 Aug announced that "anyone who is living ordinarily" can be "enlisted as a voter in J&K", marking change from pre-2019 policy which permitted only permanent residents to vote; Kumar said govt expected 2.5mn new voters – marking 30% increase – which sparked outrage as mainstream political parties accused India's ruling Bhartiya Janata Party of manipulating electoral balance in its favour. In second such act in as many months, China 11 Aug blocked bid by India and U.S. to list Rauf Asghar, deputy chief of Pakistan-based militant group Jaish-e-Mohammad and brother of group's founder, as designated militant at UN Security Council; India's UN envoy protested decision. Security operations and militant attacks continued in J&K. Operation 5 Aug killed one security force and one militant in Kulgam; 10 Aug killed three LeT militants in Budgam district. Militants 4 Aug hurled grenade at non-local labourers in Pulwama district, killing one, and 12 Aug killed another in Bandipore district; 11 Aug sought to storm army camp in Rajouri district, leaving four militants and two soldiers dead; 13 Aug killed one security personnel in grenade attack in Kulgam district; 14 Aug killed one security force in Srinagar. Militants 17 Aug attacked two Kashmiri Pandits in Shopian district, killing

one; Kashmiri Pandit Sangharsh Samiti (KPSS), group of Pandits living in Kashmir, same day appealed to all Pandits to leave region.

➡ **Nepal Govt announced date for general election in Nov, which sparked haggling among ruling coalition parties over seat-sharing arrangements.** Cabinet meeting 4 Aug scheduled parliamentary and provincial elections for 20 Nov; 84 parties applied to Election Commission to contest polls by registration deadline on 16 Aug. Five-member ruling coalition 5 Aug established task force to determine by 16 Aug seat-sharing arrangements for upcoming polls, to ensure ruling parties do not contest same constituencies. By end of month, however, task force was unable to find agreement due to parties' demands outnumbering available seats on offer; all five parties 25 Aug presented their claims, which cumulatively totaled 234 directly elected House of Representatives seats – far above 165 total seats on offer. Leftist members of coalition reportedly considered merger to increase their bargaining power.

➡ **Pakistan Election Commission inflicted major setback to former PM Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, while Khan faced terrorism charges amid escalating rhetoric against military and officials.** In case pending since 2014, Election Commission 2 Aug unanimously found Khan's PTI party guilty of receiving prohibited funds from foreign nationals and foreign-based companies, also found Khan had filed submissions on party funding that were "grossly inaccurate and wrong" for five years. Calls from ruling party lawmakers that Khan be barred from public office grew louder after Khan 2 Aug announced he would contest nine constituencies in 25 Sept by-elections for seats of 11 PTI parliamentarians who had resigned from national assembly; petitions will be decided in court. In worrying sign of rising tensions, Khan and PTI social media activists amplified criticism of military high command. Military's media arm 5 Aug condemned "false propaganda and insensitive comments" following deaths of six high-level military officers in helicopter crash on 1 Aug. Tensions further escalated as authorities 9 Aug arrested and charged with treason Khan's Chief of Staff Shahbaz Gill after Gill previous day called on army's rank and file to refuse "illegal orders" from high command. Khan 20 Aug accused military of backing Sharif govt and police of torturing Gill; authorities next day charged Khan under anti-terror laws for threatening two top police officials and female judge who authorised Gill's police detention. FM Hina Rabbani Khar 27 Aug criticised Khan for holding anti-govt rallies during ongoing monsoon rain and floods that have submerged large parts of country, affecting 33mn people and claiming more than 1,000 lives. Negotiations between Pakistani authorities and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) suffered setback when bomb blast 7 Aug killed four TTP leaders in Paktia province; suicide attack 9 Aug killed four soldiers in North Waziristan. Reports indicated potential TTP comeback in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province: inspector general 12 Aug alleged militants reached Swat district from Afghanistan. Militants targeting vehicle of PTI provincial lawmaker 6 Aug killed four in Lower Dir; 13 Aug killed two soldiers in Dir; 16 Aug shot dead two police constables in Tank district.

➡ **Sri Lanka Govt continued repression against protesters despite international pressure and sought International Monetary Fund (IMF) assistance as way out of deepening economic crisis.** Government's crackdown on protest movement continued as police arrested dozens of political

activists, including key protest leaders, charging them with range of mostly minor offences. Notably, security forces 18 Aug dispersed peaceful march by students, whereby police used water cannons and tear gas and arrested 20, including three well-known student leaders; decision to detain student leaders under Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) was strongly criticised by western diplomats, UN and human rights groups and indicates importance attached to eliminating political opposition from streets prior to implementation of painful economic policies in coming months. Ambassadors from EU countries 10 Aug jointly reiterated that “protection of civil & human rights, above all freedom of expression & right to dissent, is of utmost importance”. President’s office 16 Aug announced that state of emergency would be allowed to lapse at end of Aug. On economic front, financial reports mid-month showed inflation hit 60.8% year-on-year in July and food costs had risen 90.9%. IMF visit 24-31 Aug appeared to finalise “staff level agreement” on policy reforms needed for estimated \$2.9bn “extended funds facility” bailout. Earlier, IMF 19 Aug reiterated that disbursement of funds “would require adequate assurances by Sri Lanka’s creditors that debt sustainability will be restored”, as worries grew about China’s willingness to accept losses on its loans. President Wickremesinghe 30 Aug announced interim budget with tax increases and other policies designed to reduce budget deficit. Meanwhile, Chinese Navy research vessel *Yuan Wang 5* with sophisticated capabilities 16 Aug made delayed call on Hambantota port, despite strong objections by U.S. and India. Chinese ambassador 26 Aug criticised “external obstruction” based on so called “security concerns”, alleged history of “aggression [against Sri Lanka] from its northern neighbor” and pledged to defend country’s “national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity”; Indian high commissioner next day criticised Chinese counterpart’s “violation of basic diplomatic etiquette” and alleged “debt driven agendas”.

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## South East Asia

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➔ **Myanmar** **Deadly clashes between regime and armed groups persisted amid uptick in assassinations in urban areas, while regional body ASEAN lamented regime’s “limited progress” on plan to resolve crisis.** Military and allied militias conducted village raids throughout month in northern Chin State, southern and western Sagaing region, northern Magway region and across Kayah State, Kayah State and Tanintharyi region, with local defence forces putting up resistance. Notably, more than dozen local defence forces in Dry Zone (centre) launched second combined offensive during month, reportedly inflicting significant army casualties. Month saw uptick in assassinations in urban areas: from 1-7 Aug, underground cells assassinated five long-serving pro-military Yangon state ward administrators and military killed three top underground cell leaders in Mandalay city. Local defence forces 21 Aug massacred eight members of family in Magway Region in apparent case of mistaken identity; defence force in Mandalay 23 Aug mistakenly killed married couple when targeting police officer with similar name. Tensions remained high between military and ethnic armed group Arakan Army (AA) with clashes escalating following deadly 13 Aug AA attack on military in Rathedaung township, Rakhine State; parties clashed several times in Maungdaw township, on border with Bangladesh. Kachin Independence Army 8 Aug launched significant attack, seizing regime outpost near Sezin village, Hpakan township, and

two nearby outposts reportedly controlled by Shanni Nationalities Army; military next day deployed helicopter gunship and two fighter jets. As of 24 Aug, fighting had killed at least four civilians and displaced some 3,000 residents. On international front, regional body ASEAN 3 Aug held foreign ministers' meeting without regime representation. Joint communique 5 Aug lamented "limited progress" and "lack of commitment" from regime to implement five-point consensus and recommended ASEAN summit in Nov assess progress to guide next steps; regime same day insisted ASEAN refrain from interference in "internal affairs." Russian FM Sergey Lavrov 3 Aug visited capital Naypyitaw in first ever bilateral visit to Myanmar, likely intended as signal of support for regime. Regime 24 Aug detained former British Ambassador Vicky Bowman and husband Htein Lin, former political prisoner, for alleged household registration error pending trial in Sept.

➡ **Philippines Insecurity persisted in south amid jihadist activity, clan violence and fighting between armed forces and communist militants.** In Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, military 5 Aug killed gunman Khamhed Akan Kambal of Daulah Islamiyah-Hassan Group, allegedly linked to Islamic State, and arrested another member in Ampatuan town, Maguindanao province. Police 16 Aug arrested former barangay chairman and two cohorts suspected of connections to Islamic State-linked Daulah Islamiyah-Maute Group in Marantao municipality, Lanao del Sur province. Gunmen 30 Aug killed police chief and his driver and wounded three others in Ampatuan town. Two rival clans 10 Aug clashed in Macabual town, Pikit municipality, killing five, including four members of Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) factions, and displacing 100 families; police and MILF deployed peacekeepers and emissaries to contain violence. Militant surrenders continued during month. Notably, five Abu Sayaff Group (ASG) fighters 3 Aug surrendered in Talipao municipality, Sulu province; 13 ASG members 5 Aug surrendered in Ungkaya Pukan town, Basilan province; and two ASG members surrendered 11 Aug in Isabela city. Meanwhile, clashes between armed forces and communist New People's Army continued; violence in Mindanao Island in south, Visayas Islands in centre and Luzon Island in north claimed at least 17 combatant and civilian fatalities and six injured. Provincial Local Govt Unit of Davao Occidental (Mindanao) and 10th Infantry "Agila" Division 18 Aug officially declared province "insurgency free". Govt forces 22 Aug initially reported gunfire and boat explosion around Samar Island that allegedly killed Benito and Wilma Tiamzon, leaders of Communist Party; as of late month, military did not confirm deaths. President Marcos Jr. 12 Aug swore into office 80 members of Bangsamoro Transition Authority few months after his election as president. In Marawi city, Lanao del Sur province, Congressman Zia Alonto Adiong 15 Aug called on President Marcos Jr. to immediately establish Marawi Compensation Board to grant financial aid for 2017 Marawi siege victims, including 85,335 internally displaced people and those whose properties were damaged during fighting.

➡ **South China Sea China conducted minesweeping and training exercises, while regional body ASEAN announced intention to proceed with Code of Conduct negotiating text.** Chinese navy 13 Aug commenced five-day minesweeping drill in South China Sea (SCS) with brigade including Type 082-II minesweepers Hejian and Chishui. China's *Shandong* aircraft carrier battlegroup 24 Aug commenced training exercises. ASEAN FMs 5 Aug called for "maintaining

and promoting peace, security, stability, safety, and freedom of navigation” in SCS during foreign ministers’ meeting, and announced aim to conclude second reading of Single Draft Negotiating Text for Code of Conduct by end of 2022. Taiwanese FM Joseph Wu 9 Aug warned China’s ambitions go beyond Taiwan, said it is “determined to link the East and South China Seas to the Taiwan Strait so this entire area would become its internal waters”. Australian Air Force chief Robert Chipman 22 Aug said Australia would continue surveillance operations in SCS despite “recent spate of unsafe incidences”, alluding to May confrontation between Australian and Chinese jets.

➡ **Thailand Constitutional Court suspended PM Prayuth Chan-ocha amid dispute over legal term limits, while govt and Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) held talks prior to coordinated attacks in deep south.**

Over 50 law professors from 15 Thai universities 16 Aug penned open letter to Constitutional Court president arguing that PM Prayuth Chan-ocha’s term ought to end on 24 Aug on basis that Prayuth became PM in Aug 2014 following coup, thus fulfilling eight-year limit. Opposition MPs 17 Aug submitted petition to House Speaker seeking Constitutional Court ruling on term’s end date. Court 24 Aug accepted petition by opposition MPs and suspended Prayuth, giving him 15 days to respond; Prayuth urged people to “respect the decision of the court”. Hundreds of protesters 21-24 Aug rallied against Prayuth’s government in capital Bangkok. Fifth round of Joint Working Group – Peace Dialogue Panel 1-2 Aug took place in Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur between main separatist group Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) and govt delegation; talks focused on proposals for Draft Terms of Reference for Public Consultation, Reduction of Bilateral Acts of Violence and Joint Working Group formed in Jan. Govt delegation proposed second reduction of violence initiative 15 Aug-30 Nov following on from 3 April-14 May Ramadan Peace Initiative, but BRN said there was insufficient time to conclude agreement. Meanwhile, violence continued in deep south. IED 2 Aug wounded two rangers on motorcycle patrol in Mai Kaen district, Pattani province. IED 15 Aug killed ranger and wounded nine others in Sungai Padi district, Narathiwat province; second IED explosion 300m from first hit responders, killing ranger and wounding seven police officers and one civilian. Militants night of 16-17 Aug staged coordinated bombing and arson attacks targeting 17 convenience stores and gas stations across Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat provinces, causing property damage and killing one in Pasemat subdistrict, Su-ngai Kolok district, Narathiwat. BRN 18 Aug issued Facebook statement claiming responsibility for attacks, expressing regret for loss of life and saying attacks were “intended to strike at the power of capitalism” that “is ruining the economies of communities”.