ASEAN SECURITY OUTLOOK

2026



ASEAN SECURITY OUTLOOK 2026





FOREWORD



H.E. Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro

Philippine's Secretary of Foreign Affairs

Our region continues to navigate an increasingly complex regional architecture. Emerging security threats, major power rivalries, persistent economic uncertainties, and the rapid pace of technological advancements have tested our region's resilience and stability. Geopolitical tensions have disrupted global trade and supply chains, strained our energy and food resources, and undermined the safety of ASEAN nationals across the world.

This geopolitical reality underpins not only the necessity of strengthening our individual national capabilities, but also reinforces the need to reaffirm sustained dialogue, mutual trust, and strengthened cooperation in the region. Against this backdrop, how ASEAN positions itself will be consequential in asserting its relevance and credibility.

Amidst all of these, ASEAN has remained steadfast in its commitment to ensuring that the region remains cohesive, adaptive, resilient, and firmly anchored on the shared principles that enable us to collectively chart our way forward in the face of these challenges.

As ASEAN Chair in 2026, the Philippines, guided by the theme "Navigating Our Future, Together," has actively steered the region by sustaining the momentum of dialogue and cooperation. The ASEAN Security Outlook (ASO) 2026 constitutes a significant part of such efforts. The ASO, since its inception in 2013, has continued to provide a vital opportunity for ASEAN Member States to exchange perspectives on the evolving regional security environment and issues of common concern, underline existing initiatives which have benefited our region, and promote mutual trust and confidence through the sharing of our respective national security and defense policies.

This year's edition carries an important milestone for the region. Following Timor-Leste's admission as a member in 2025, the ASEAN Security Outlook welcomes another chapter that provides a

glimpse to the regional security perspectives of our newest member. This year's edition also coincides with the first year of implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, providing an important reference point in understanding the regional security environment as ASEAN collectively charts its shared future over the next 20 years.

In this regard, I extend my sincere appreciation to all ASEAN Member States for your invaluable national contributions to this publication, which traverses through multiple issues that require our collective response. This stands as a testament to our shared and unyielding resolve to promote greater transparency, mutual trust and confidence, and exchange of timely and relevant information for the benefit of our peoples.

It is therefore my hope that this publication would enable us to take stock of our successes as we work towards strengthening cooperation to effectively respond not only to the currents shaping our region today, but also to future challenges that may lie ahead. The journey before us may be uncertain, but with our strong anchor of shared principles, a clear compass of our collective and steadfast resolve, and our steady vision fixed on a common purpose and horizon, I am certain that we can **Navigate Our Future, Together** with clarity and conviction, allowing us to chart a common course towards a more peaceful, resilient, innovative, dynamic, and people-centred region.

MA. THERESA P. LAZARO
Secretary of Foreign Affairs
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INTRODUCTION



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Secretary-General of ASEAN

Since the inaugural ASEAN Security Outlook (ASO) in 2013, this publication reflects ASEAN's continuing efforts to promote greater transparency among the ASEAN Member States by sharing their perspectives and concerns on the regional security environment, national defence and security policies, contributions to regional security, and views on future security challenges as well as opportunities.

The ASO 2026 likewise takes stock of ASEAN's collective contribution to regional peace, security and stability, which runs along two tracks: (1) fostering ASEAN's values, norms and principles; and (2) undertaking tangible security cooperation.

In the first track, ASEAN has upheld values, norms and principles enshrined in various documents, including the *ASEAN Declaration*, *ASEAN Charter*, *Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality* (ZOPFAN) Declaration, *Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia* (TAC), *Treaty of Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone* (SEANWFZ), *Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea* (DOC) and *ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific* (AOIP) and most recently with *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future*.

These values, norms and principles are manifested in the activities conducted by ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, Organs, and ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM-Plus, ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (AMMD), East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF), and Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF).

The ASO 2026 is also published in the context of ASEAN's transition from the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Blueprint 2025 to the APSC Strategic Plan, which forms part of *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future*. It also marks the first edition to feature a submission from Timor-Leste, which joined ASEAN as its 11th Member State in October 2025.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Security Concerns

With regard to security concerns, all ASEAN Member States shared the view that the global and regional security environment has become increasingly unpredictable and complex in recent years due to the intensification of strategic competition between major powers, the convergence between traditional and non-traditional security challenges, the adverse impacts of climate change, and the rapid advances in technology, among others.

In the context of these profound changes in the global and regional security environment, ASEAN Member States have identified a range of security concerns spanning both traditional and non-traditional security. Traditional security concerns include the strategic competition between major powers, maritime security, terrorism and violent extremism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), and the emergence and use of advanced military technologies such as autonomous weapon systems and space-based weapons.

Non-traditional security concerns include transnational crimes, cybersecurity, cybercrimes including online scams, natural disasters, climate change, food and energy security, public health emergencies, the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), security of critical infrastructure, and the spread of disinformation and misinformation.

Table 1 provides a snapshot of the identified security concerns. While the table attempts to map the primary concerns as shared by individual AMS in their respective national contributions, the information provided should not be interpreted as exhaustive.

TABLE 1

Concern/Issue	BN	CA	ID	LA	MY	MM	PH	SG	TH	TL	VN
Changes in the global and regional security environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Convergence of traditional and non-traditional security threats	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓
Competition between major powers	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Maritime security	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Territorial disputes	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓				
South China Sea			✓		✓	✓	✓				
Sea piracy and armed robbery against ships			✓		✓		✓	✓			
Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing			✓		✓		✓				
Terrorism and violent extremism	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓			
Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs)		✓	✓				✓				
Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) risks		✓					✓	✓			
Emerging technologies including artificial intelligence (AI) and autonomous systems	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		
Transnational crimes, e.g. trafficking in persons, people smuggling, irregular movement of persons, illicit drugs trafficking, arms smuggling and money laundering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Cybersecurity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		

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Table 1 *(Cont.)*											
Concern/ Issue	**BN**	**CA**	**ID**	**LA**	**MY**	**MM**	**PH**	**SG**	**TH**	**TL**	**VN**
Cybercrime including online scams	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	
Convergence of emerging technologies and transnational organised crime		✓	✓		✓				✓		
Natural disasters		✓		✓	✓		✓			✓	
Climate change	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	
Food security			✓	✓	✓					✓	
Energy security			✓							✓	
Public health emergencies		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		
Critical infrastructure security	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓			
Disinformation and misinformation	✓	✓					✓		✓		
Economic security including supply chain resilience	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Tensions and conflicts affecting ASEAN, e.g. in the Middle East, Indo-Pacific, Korean Peninsula and Myanmar			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Outer space security	✓	✓									
Environmental degradation			✓		✓				✓		
Rise of minilateral arrangements						✓			✓		
Grey-zone activities					✓						
Arms race						✓					
Interference from external (non-ASEAN) actors						✓					
Border security		✓									

As seen in the table above, ASEAN Member States generally consider competition between major powers, convergence of traditional and non-traditional security threats, terrorism and violent extremism, transnational crimes, cybersecurity, cybercrime (including online scams), and emerging technologies (including AI and autonomous systems) as shared security concerns.

The intensifying strategic competition between major powers is identified as a security concern by eight ASEAN Member States. In this context, Member States cite the impact of this competition on regional peace and stability, ASEAN unity and Centrality, and the rules-based international order, as well as on flashpoints such as Taiwan, the Korean Peninsula and the South China Sea.

Cybersecurity and cybercrime are two security concerns identified by most (seven) Member States. While the rapid digital transformation across ASEAN has boosted connectivity and digital economic growth, it has also increased exposure to cyber threats. Cyberattacks targeting critical infrastructure, government systems, businesses, and individuals have become more sophisticated, frequent, and transnational in nature.

Furthermore, four ASEAN Member States have identified the growing convergence between emerging technologies and transnational organised crime. As criminal networks exploit and utilise these technologies, cybercrimes such as online scams, digital fraud, ransomware, malware, data theft, and disinformation and misinformation become more frequent and more sophisticated, thereby undermining national security, economic resilience, and public confidence in the digital ecosystem.

As a predominantly maritime region, security of the maritime domain is a priority concern for most (seven) Member States, and several Member States also raise concerns over maritime-related issues including illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and security of critical underwater infrastructure (CUI).

IUU fishing has become more than a fisheries issue as it is closely tied to transnational organised crime and has caused severe economic losses for ASEAN maritime communities; in certain instances, IUU fishing activities became diplomatic flashpoints as they occurred within disputed maritime zones.

Meanwhile, CUI is increasingly becoming an issue of major concern given ASEAN's dependence on submarine cables and pipelines for communications and energy purposes and, according to one AMS, the lack of a regional capability for monitoring subsea features.

Natural disasters are often linked to climate change, which is an issue identified by seven Member States. The increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, rising sea levels, flooding, droughts, and environmental degradation have severely affected lives and livelihoods as well as food security, public health and economic stability.

On that note, most (seven) ASEAN Member States identified economic stability as a security concern. In particular, the conflict in the Middle East has created spillover effects across Southeast Asia as Member States experienced a surge in commodity prices, rising global inflation, fuel shortages, and significant disruptions to commerce and trade. The closing of the Strait of Hormuz and the attacks on critical energy facilities in the Persian Gulf have also affected global energy

flows, increased freight and insurance costs, and disrupted supply chains with consequential effects on trade flows and maritime traffic through the Strait of Malacca.

Lastly, a few Member States share their concerns over the security of outer space. The increasing strategic importance of outer space introduces new security considerations, as satellites and space-based services have become essential enablers for military operations, navigation, and communications, among others.

Individual National Defence Policies

The ASO 2026 provides a platform for ASEAN Member States to share their respective national policies on defence and security. A common aspect of their defence policies is the emphasis on safeguarding national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity while continuing to engage in defence and security cooperation with external partners, including through ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and mechanisms, particularly the ADMM and ADMM-Plus.

It is notable that ASEAN Member States continue to be open in sharing their national defence policies as a transparency measure and confidence-building. In this regard, several Member States shared the outlines of their respective defence white papers or national security strategies while others reaffirmed their regular submissions to the United Nations Register on Conventional Arms (UNROCA).

In this edition, one AMS shared complete figures on its defence expenditures (for 2026), including budget availability and allocation, increase in the budget from the previous year, and percentage of the defence budget from the total government budget. In addition, another AMS shared that its defence expenditure in 2026 stands at 3% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

National Contributions to Promoting Regional Security

While certain security issues may not be of particular concern for an ASEAN Member State, efforts to address these issues at the national, sub-regional, regional, and global levels are outlined in detail by each Member State. At the national level, Member States highlight the domestic implementation of ASEAN agreements and conventions, such as the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP), Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, and the newly adopted ASEAN Treaty on Extradition. Some Member States also highlight the preparation, amendment and adoption of national legislation to address their security concerns, including on climate change, natural disasters, cybersecurity, cybercrime, online scams, trafficking in persons, illicit drugs trafficking, money laundering, countering terrorism and terrorist financing, nuclear safety, and security and management of strategic goods including export controls.

At the sub-regional and regional levels, all ASEAN Member States share the importance of cooperation and collaboration in dealing with security challenges. This is manifested in both bilateral and trilateral initiatives between Member States as well as in their respective contributions to the work of ASEAN Sectoral Bodies in the areas of defence, maritime security, peacekeeping operations, transnational crime, counter-terrorism, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), non-proliferation and disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, cybersecurity, and human rights. This is also made tangible through Centres of Excellence (COEs) such as the ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence (ASCCE), which offers regional capacity-building to close gaps in cyber capabilities and support ASEAN Member States in their efforts to contribute meaningfully to international cyber discussions, the ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Center of Excellence (ACICE), which is a regional platform for defence establishments to share information, build capacity, and develop a common understanding of cyber and information threats, and the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC), which facilitates cooperation in addressing the issue of explosive remnants of war (ERW).

ASEAN Member States' contributions also include the implementation of the *Work Plan of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism* (ASEAN PoA PCRVE) or *Bali Work Plan 2019-2026*, the *ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Work Plan Against TIP* (2023-2028) or the *"Bohol TIP Work Plan 2.0,"* the *ASEAN Plan of Action in Combating Transnational Crime 2026-2036,* the *ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy (ACCS) 2026-2030*, and the *ASEAN Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS)*.

In addition, ASEAN Member States highlight their participation in the ASEAN Our Eyes initiative, which enhances strategic information exchange on counter-terrorism among ASEAN defence establishments, and the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI), which provides a permanent, rapid, reliable and secure means of communication for ASEAN Defence Ministers to manage crises or coordinate responses to emergency situations, particularly in the maritime domain, as their contributions.

Cooperation in dealing with security challenges is also undertaken and pursued with ASEAN's external partners and through ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ASEAN Plus One, ASEAN Plus Three (APT), East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and ADMM-Plus. Some of the notable developments in this regard include the conduct of multilateral exercises under the ADMM-Plus such as Exercise Trident Resolve in September 2026 and the convening of ARF activities on peace and security in outer space, urban emergency rescue, ferry safety, countering WMD terrorism, and identification of critical information infrastructure.

Meanwhile, at the global level, several Member States shared their contributions to international peacekeeping operations and peace monitoring missions, including missions conducted under the United Nations mandate in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kosovo, Lebanon, South Sudan, and Western Sahara. Others shared their contributions to counter-piracy operations beyond the region, particularly off the Horn of Africa, as well as their activities as members of international agencies such as INTERPOL.

With a view to contributing to global efforts on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the disarmament agenda, almost all ASEAN Member States have ratified and/or signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), while all have signed onto landmark treaties and conventions such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). Some Member States have also actively promoted ASEAN's common position in relevant international forums, including the United Nations General Assembly and the NPT Review Conference, consistently emphasising that the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of nuclear weapons is their total elimination.

Future Trends in Regional Security

Looking ahead, the ASO 2026 offers some perspectives regarding future trends in regional security. The regional security environment would continue to be impacted by the competition and rivalry between major powers as well as the convergence of traditional and non-traditional security threats. Climate change, natural disasters, public health emergencies, and resource insecurity would continue to test national and regional resilience. And emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous weapons systems, quantum computing, and space-based systems, would present both opportunities and challenges as countries in the region become more digitally connected.

In light of these future trends, ASEAN Member States have emphasised the importance of strengthening regional cooperation, including through ASEAN-led mechanisms, maintaining ASEAN unity and Centrality, and enhancing cross-pillar and cross-sectoral coordination, which will reinforce ASEAN's effective and collective response to current and future challenges.

On a final note, the ASO 2026 would serve as a useful and important reference on how ASEAN views the global and regional security environment and on the measures that have been undertaken to address current and future defence and security issues and challenges. It is hoped that this publication would help provide readers with views on ASEAN's collective response and efforts to achieve a resilient, innovative, dynamic and people-centred ASEAN Community by 2045.

ASEAN's Contribution to Regional Peace, Security, and Stability

ASEAN'S CONTRIBUTION TO REGIONAL PEACE, SECURITY, AND STABILITY

ASEAN's contributions to regional peace, security and stability are manifested along two tracks: (1) fostering relevant values, norms and principles and (2) undertaking tangible security cooperation. This chapter recalls those principles and dovetails them with current undertakings while also taking stock of recent developments within ASEAN towards maintaining and strengthening regional peace, stability and security.

A. ASEAN Principles, Vision, Goals on Regional Peace, Security, and Stability

For almost six decades, ASEAN has upheld and promoted the values, norms and principles enshrined in key instruments and documents such as the *ASEAN Declaration*, *ASEAN Charter*, *Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality* (ZOPFAN) Declaration, *Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia* (TAC), *Treaty of Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone* (SEANWFZ), *Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea* (DOC), *ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific* (AOIP), and *ASEAN Community Vision 2025*, as well as most recently through *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future*.

Signed on 8 August 1967, the *ASEAN Declaration* (*Bangkok Declaration*) defines the goals of ASEAN to promote regional peace, stability and prosperity. With this Declaration, ASEAN represents the collective will of the nations of Southeast Asia to bind each other in friendship and cooperation. Throughout its journey over the years, ASEAN has grown from the five original founding members to the current 11-member Association. The admission of Timor-Leste as ASEAN's 11th Member State in October 2025 is a historic milestone as ASEAN has now brought together all countries in Southeast Asia.

Promoting a Rules-Based Regional Order

The ASEAN Charter, which entered into force in December 2008, confers ASEAN with legal status and institutional framework to support its Community-building process, enshrining the fundamental principles, shared norms and values that guide the Association's work. Anchored on the ASEAN Charter and other ASEAN instruments, the ASEAN Community, comprising the three Community Pillars, was established in 2015, with the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, including the APSC

Blueprint 2025, being adopted to enhance ASEAN political and security cooperation.

Upon the conclusion of the *ASEAN Community Vision 2025* last year, ASEAN transitioned to a new, long-term vision. At the 46th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, in May 2025, ASEAN Leaders adopted *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future*, a long-term vision that would guide ASEAN Community-building for the next 20 years.

As one of the four Strategic Plans under *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future*, the APSC Strategic Plan provides the operational roadmap for ASEAN's political and security cooperation agenda across nine Strategic Goals and 178 Strategic Measures. With the implementation of *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future* and the APSC Strategic Plan commencing this year, ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Sectoral Bodies are aligning their work plans, programmes, and activities with the Strategic Measures to ensure that ongoing and planned initiatives support the priorities of the APSC pillar and contribute to a coherent, coordinated, and results-oriented approach.

Fostering Peace, Freedom, Neutrality, Amity, and Cooperation

Signed in 1971, the *Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality* (ZOPFAN) Declaration is the first document that outlines ASEAN's vision towards security cooperation for the region. It is ASEAN's foundational expression of its vision for a region free from interference by outside powers while broadening the areas of cooperation for solidarity and the concerted strength of ASEAN as a whole.

Five years after ZOPFAN (in 1976), the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) was signed. It is another key ASEAN instrument towards peace, security, and stability. The TAC has provided an enduring normative framework for relations among ASEAN Member States and has subsequently been extended to ASEAN's relations with external partners. Its core principles include mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference, peaceful settlement of disputes, renunciation of the threat or use of force, and effective cooperation. Over the past five decades, the TAC's status has evolved from a regional instrument into a framework with much wider international recognition and cooperation.

To date, there are 51 non-ASEAN countries that have acceded to the TAC, bringing the total number of High Contracting Parties (HCPs) to 62. Since 2021, when the last ASO was published, 19 additional countries have acceded to the TAC. These are: Algeria, Denmark, Finland, the Hellenic Republic, Kuwait, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Oman, Panama, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Uruguay. In addition, Cyprus, Slovakia, and Slovenia will join the growing list of HCPs upon the conclusion of the formalities of their accession. Accession of countries beyond Southeast Asia reflects their continued interest in affirming the TAC's principles and maintaining cooperative relations with ASEAN.

To ensure that accession to the TAC translates into meaningful engagement and practical cooperation, ASEAN has taken steps to strengthen the practical application of the TAC. In particular, the *Guidelines on the Modalities for Engagement of ASEAN with High Contracting Parties under the TAC*, which were adopted by the 59th AMM in July 2026, provide a structured framework for ASEAN's engagement with HCPs, especially those that do not have formal partnerships with ASEAN.

As the TAC marks its 50th anniversary this year, the priority is to maintain the relevance of its established principles while strengthening their practical implementation. This includes making more effective use of the TAC's broad network of HCPs and ensuring that its institutional mechanisms remain relevant and responsive to the evolving regional landscape. As part of the commemorative activities for this milestone, ASEAN sponsored a United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution on the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the TAC. The Resolution, which was co-sponsored by 102 UN Member States, including all five permanent members of the UN Security Council, was adopted without a vote at the 80th Session of the UNGA on 4 September 2026.

Since its adoption by the ASEAN Leaders in 2019, the *ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific* (AOIP) has become a key guiding framework for ASEAN's engagement in the Pacific and Indian Ocean regions, particularly in reinforcing the ASEAN-centred regional architecture, and providing an enabling environment for peace, stability, and prosperity. At the 48th ASEAN Summit in May 2026, the ASEAN Leaders noted the AOIP's significant role in this regard, and encouraged all ASEAN partners to continue undertaking concrete projects, initiatives and activities through workstreams under the four priority areas of the AOIP—maritime cooperation, connectivity, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and economic and other possible areas of cooperation—as well as to explore further AOIP-oriented, mutually beneficial cooperation through relevant ASEAN-led mechanisms.

Against this backdrop, implementation of the AOIP continues to gain significant momentum among ASEAN's external partners, including through the issuance of joint statements and the undertaking of specific projects with ASEAN under the ambit of the AOIP. The AOIP is also reflected as an area for cooperation between ASEAN and its formal partners in their respective Plans of Action (PoAs)/Practical Cooperation Areas (PCAs). Thus far, ASEAN has issued joint statements on the AOIP with eight Dialogue Partners, namely Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea (ROK), the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (US).

Advocating Nuclear Non-Proliferation

Promoting Southeast Asia as a region free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction remains a key priority and an important contribution of ASEAN to regional and global security, with the *Treaty on Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone* (SEANWFZ), signed in 1995, serving as the foundational framework. ASEAN Member States continue to reaffirm their commitment to the Treaty and to its full and effective implementation, including through the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the SEANWFZ Treaty (2023-2027).

A key outstanding issue regarding SEANWFZ is the signing and ratification of the Protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty by the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS). ASEAN has continued to engage the NWS, including those that maintain reservations, with a view to resolving the outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Treaty. ASEAN has also continued to explore possible approaches that could facilitate the signing and ratification of the Protocol by individual NWS that are ready to do so without reservations.

At the same time, ASEAN has sought to raise the global profile of the SEANWFZ Treaty and strengthen cooperation with other regional nuclear-weapon-free zones, including through noting proposals from the Agency for the

Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) and the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (CANWFZ) for cooperation with SEANWFZ through mutually agreed arrangements, as appropriate.

Meanwhile, ASEAN continues to explore the peaceful applications of nuclear technology, from energy to non-energy applications, such as agriculture, health, cultural heritage preservation, and solutions to plastic debris. The ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM) provides the institutional platform through which the region shares knowledge, expertise, and best practices; strengthens regulatory frameworks; and develops coordinated strategies for nuclear or radiological emergency preparedness and response. Through its Annual Meetings and continued cooperation with external partners, including with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other Dialogue Partners, ASEANTOM remains a vital mechanism for ensuring that ASEAN's growing engagement with nuclear technology proceeds safely, securely, and in a manner consistent with the region's collective security interests.

Promoting Maritime Cooperation

The South China Sea has been a key priority in ASEAN's maritime cooperation. ASEAN continues to work closely with China towards the full and effective implementation of the 2002 *Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea* (DOC) in its entirety, and the early conclusion of a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) that is effective, substantive, and in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Under the Workplan on the Implementation of the DOC, practical maritime cooperation initiatives, including capacity building on marine scientific research and marine environmental protection, and the use of hotlines for maritime emergencies, have been undertaken to build trust and create a conducive environment for the COC negotiations.

Building on the inaugural edition published in 2023, the ASEAN Maritime Outlook (AMO) serves as ASEAN's flagship publication for consolidating the region's maritime cooperation into a single, coherent narrative. ASEAN published the second edition of the AMO this year, titled "*Navigating Our Maritime Futures: Cooperation for a Stable, Sustainable and Rules-Based Maritime Sphere in Southeast Asia.*" This 2nd edition of the AMO undertakes a cumulative stocktake of ASEAN's maritime cooperation from 2023 to 2026, spanning the political-security, economic and socio-cultural pillars and extending coverage across maritime security, connectivity and transport, the Blue Economy and sustainable fisheries, marine environment and climate action, and the human dimensions of maritime cooperation.

Beyond the stocktaking exercise, the 2nd edition of the AMO highlights major trends shaping ASEAN's maritime agenda, together with key lessons on strengthening cross-pillar coordination, translating policy into measurable outcomes, and mobilising sustainable financing for the region's maritime priorities. With this publication, AMO reaffirms the region's collective resolve to navigate an increasingly complex maritime environment together, while charting a results-oriented path for the next phase of regional maritime cooperation.

B. Developments in ASEAN Security Cooperation in Promoting Regional Peace, Security, and Stability

ASEAN and Regional Security Cooperation

i. East Asia Summit

First convened in 2005, the East Asia Summit (EAS) serves as the premier Leaders-led forum for strategic dialogue on political, security, and economic issues of common interest and concern. To strengthen ASEAN cooperation in promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the region, the Declaration of the East Asia Summit on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations (Bali Principles) was adopted in 2011. As Timor-Leste became ASEAN's newest Member State in October 2025, the EAS now brings together 19 participating countries, namely the eleven ASEAN Member States and eight Dialogue Partners (Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, ROK, the Russian Federation, and the US).

The 20th EAS, which was convened in Kuala Lumpur in October 2025, adopted the *Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the Twentieth Anniversary of the East Asia Summit*. The Declaration reaffirms the commitment of all participating countries to the EAS, which sits as the apex of the ASEAN-centred regional architecture. The Declaration also expressed the agreement of all participating countries to strengthen the EAS, including through the development and implementation of joint activities and projects to advance the implementation of the EAS Plan of Action (2024-2028) in support of *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future* and ASEAN's efforts to mainstream and implement the AOIP.

ii. ASEAN Regional Forum

For more than thirty years, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has provided a platform for constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest among its Participants, with ASEAN as its primary driving force. To ensure that the ARF remains responsive to the evolving regional security environment and ensure its continued relevance, ASEAN Member States adopted the *Recommendations to Revitalise the ARF* in October 2025, which are intended to be implemented gradually. During the 33rd ARF this year, the UK was welcomed as the 28th Participant and will commence participation during the 34th ARF in 2027. This is in recognition of the UK's strong engagement with ASEAN as one of its Dialogue Partners.

Meanwhile, following the conclusion of the ARF Ha Noi Plan of Action II (2020-2025), the ARF Manila Plan of Action (MPOA) 2026-2036 was developed to chart the Forum's framework for cooperation over the next decade. Covering cooperation in disaster relief, counter-terrorism and transnational crime, maritime security, non-proliferation and disarmament, security of and in the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs), defence and peacekeeping operations, the MPOA reflects the ARF's continued commitment to strengthen confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy, while further enhancing the Forum's institutional capacity and relevance in addressing the evolving regional security landscape.

iii. Regional Defence Cooperation

In order to remain responsive and adaptive to the evolving security environment, the defence sector has continued to expand its areas of cooperation to encompass emerging security

issues. In 2025, two new areas of cooperation were introduced under the ADMM-Plus, namely artificial intelligence (AI) and critical underwater infrastructure (CUI) security. The following year (2026), Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) emerged as another area of focus, underscoring the sector's commitment to investing in the next generation. These developments build on the defence sector's steady engagement with non-traditional security issues in recent years, including Women, Peace and Security (WPS), climate change and health security. The cross-sectoral nature of these contemporary challenges has also resulted in greater interaction with other ASEAN sectoral bodies, enabling the defence sector to make a more meaningful contribution to the broader ASEAN Community-building efforts.

The defence sector has also continued to advance practical capacity-building. The year 2026 sees a total of ten exercises conducted across different platforms: i) seven exercises under the ADMM-Plus Expert Working Groups (EWGs); ii) two exercises under the ADMM; and iii) a maritime exercise with India. The most notable is the first-ever tri-EWG field training exercise, involving the ADMM-Plus EWGs on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, Military Medicine, and Cybersecurity. The integrated format allows participating ADMM-Plus militaries to simulate a more complex, cross-domain scenario, thereby strengthening their preparedness and interoperability in responding to future crises.

Capacity-building has also been supported through specialised training programmes. The Singapore-based ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence (ACICE) has conducted regular cybersecurity courses and, since 2025, has offered a course on information security. Meanwhile, the Bangkok-based ASEAN Centre of Military Medicine (ACMM) launched a Training Programme on Global and Tropical Disease Control in partnership with Mahidol University in mid-2026.

External engagements under the defence sector have likewise continued to expand. The second iteration of the ADMM-Plus EWG Observership Programme has increased both the number of Observers and the EWGs in which they participate. The current Observers are Canada, France, the UK, Germany, and Türkiye. Through the Enhanced Observership Programme, Observers will now have the opportunity to engage in a more meaningful manner, representing a gradual, step-by-step progression of Observer involvement across three phases, with each phase corresponding to a full three-year EWG cycle.

The AOIP continues to be promoted within the defence sector. A second ADMM AOIP activity, the ASEAN Maritime Cybersecurity Conference, was convened in 2025 and co-hosted by Malaysia and Australia. The defence sector is also actively collaborating with a diverse group of key stakeholders. For instance, ACICE's annual Digital Defence Symposium has emerged as a premier regular platform that brings together ASEAN and non-ASEAN senior defence and military officials, academics, think tanks, and industry leaders to discuss digital security challenges. In addition, beginning in 2025, cooperation in the defence industry has also been reinvigorated, with opportunities for ASEAN defence establishments to interact with the private sector, such as during the ASEAN-ROK Defence Industry Cooperation Conference held in July 2026.

iv. Formalisation of ASEAN Coast Guard Forum

The year 2026 also marked the formalisation of the ASEAN Coast Guard Forum (ACF), which is a step toward advancing regional maritime safety, security, and law-enforcement cooperation. As a subsidiary body under the

ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM), the ACF sits within the APSC pillar's ambit and will serve as a discussion platform on maritime security, transnational maritime crimes, safety, and environmental issues for coast guards or related agencies as designated by each ASEAN Member State in charge of maritime law enforcement.

The ACF's main focus will be on the sharing of information and best practices with a view to addressing the gaps in maritime law enforcement in the region that are not covered by existing maritime-related ASEAN mechanisms, such as the ADMM and ADMM-Plus, the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ISM on MS), ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF), Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), and ASEAN Transport Ministers' Meeting Working Group on Maritime Transport.

The ACF's establishment reflects ASEAN's recognition that effective maritime governance requires not only policy frameworks but functional, practical cooperation. The priority is to translate this institutional foundation into sustained operational cooperation across ASEAN Member States' coast guard and maritime enforcement agencies.

ASEAN and Security Challenges

i. Implementation of the Five-Point Consensus

The Five-Point Consensus (5PC) remains ASEAN's main reference for addressing the situation in Myanmar. The Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar supports efforts to advance the implementation of the 5PC. At the 59th AMM in July 2026, ASEAN Foreign Ministers discussed possible elements for assessing progress in Myanmar, in line with the 5PC which serve as a reference for ASEAN to consider further steps in its continued engagement with Myanmar.

ii. Cambodia-Thailand Border Situation

A significant development in this period was the clashes along the Cambodia-Thailand border in late July and in December 2025. ASEAN responded through continuous diplomatic engagements by the ASEAN Chairs throughout 2025 and 2026, namely Malaysia's efforts in facilitating the early de-escalation of tensions and the agreement on a ceasefire, as well as the Philippines' engagements to sustain the ceasefire and work towards advancing a durable and peaceful resolution. ASEAN remains committed to supporting all efforts, including through the good offices of the ASEAN Chair and the ASEAN Observer Team (AOT), to facilitate the implementation of agreed measures and promote lasting peace and stability between Cambodia and Thailand.

iii. Transnational Crime

ASEAN continues to strengthen its collective efforts to address transnational crime under the framework of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) and its subsidiary mechanisms, including the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC). In response to the evolving threat landscape, the AMMTC decided to expand its cybercrime priority area to include online scams as a priority and remove sea piracy and international economic crime.

These decisions are reflected in the ASEAN Plan of Action in Combatting Transnational Crime (2026-2035), which outlines eight priority areas and guides the trajectory of the AMMTC and SOMTC over the next decade. This POA is operationalised by SOMTC through its Work Programmes and Work Plans with individual

Dialogue Partners. As of 2026, SOMTC has been supported by 11 working group mechanisms, including the new SOMTC Working Group on People Smuggling and SOMTC Working Group on Money Laundering, which were established in 2024 and 2025, respectively, as well as the individual joint Working Groups with Russia and Australia.

iv. Cybercrime and Online Scams

With the expansion of the cybercrime priority area, law enforcement cooperation to deal with online scams gained momentum through the adoption of the following documents: i) *ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Combating Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Caused by the Abuse of Technology*; ii) *Vientiane Declaration on Enhancing Law Enforcement Cooperation Against Online Job Scams*; and iii) *ASEAN Declaration on Combatting Cybercrime and Online Scams in 2023-2025*. The rise of industrial-scale scam operations has also underscored the convergence of online scams with TIP, forced criminality, people smuggling, money laundering, and other cyber-enabled crimes.

In the context of rapid digital transformation and the increasing use of emerging technologies, SOMTC, since 2025, has also begun to explore cooperation against online child sexual exploitation and abuse, including its material, under both the cybercrime and online scams, as well as trafficking in persons (TIP) priority areas. In 2026, SOMTC initiated the development of the *ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Preventing Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse Materials in the Digital and Artificial Intelligence-Enabled Environment*, which is to be adopted at the 49th ASEAN Summit in November 2026.

v. Cross-Pillar Cooperation on Countering Terrorism and Against Trafficking in Persons

With regard to coordinating ASEAN cooperation against Trafficking in Persons (TIP), the implementation of the ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Work Plan Against Trafficking in Persons 2023-2028 (Bohol TIP Work Plan 2.0) is progressing, and SOMTC has developed the First ASEAN Regional TIP Report adopted at the 20th AMMTC in 2026. The Report will showcase ASEAN's collective progress and emerging trends and lessons learned in implementing ASEAN's commitments to address TIP.

SOMTC also maintains its coordinating role for ASEAN cooperation in countering terrorism, particularly through the cross-sectoral Work Plan of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (Bali Work Plan) 2019-2026.

vi. Illicit Drugs

ASEAN remains steadfast in its zero-tolerance approach towards illicit drugs and its shared commitment to achieving a Drug-Free ASEAN through the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (AMMD) and its subsidiary mechanisms. At the 69th Session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) held in Vienna in March 2026, ASEAN reaffirmed the importance of regional and international cooperation in addressing the evolving world drug problem through a Joint ASEAN Statement delivered by the Philippines as the incumbent Chair of the AMMD. The ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Drug Matters (ASOD), through its five working groups on preventive education, treatment and rehabilitation, law enforcement, research, and alternative development, facilitates the exchange of information and best practices and monitors emerging illicit drug trends.

The annual ASEAN Drug Monitoring Report remains a key initiative, supporting systematic monitoring and analysis of drug trends in the region. ASEAN also marked the inaugural ASEAN Drug Victims Remembrance Day on 26 June 2026, following its endorsement in 2025, in conjunction with the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

vii. Securing Borders

The ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of Ministries of Foreign Affairs Meeting (DGICM) advances ASEAN's border management agenda. Guided by the ASEAN Plan of Action on Cooperation on Immigration and Consular Assistance Matters (2024-2031) and its corresponding Work Plan, the DGICM has worked to facilitate the easing of cross-border mobility of people and goods in view of supporting economic recovery and boosting tourism while securing borders against the emerging challenges of transnational crime. These efforts are anchored by a number of key initiatives throughout 2025, including the entry into force of the *ASEAN Framework Agreement on Visa Exemption* and the adoption of the *ASEAN Border Management Cooperation Roadmap*.

The DGICM has also strengthened its institutional foundations through the establishment of the ASEAN Immigration Training Centre (AITC) and the ASEAN Heads of Consular Affairs Division of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs Forum, both adopted by the 20th AMMTC in 2026. The DGICM also continues to advance practical cooperation with Dialogue Partners, particularly Australia and the Plus Three countries (China, Japan and ROK), through the implementation of their respective work programmes.

viii. Legal Cooperation

The ASEAN Prosecutors/Attorneys General Meeting (APAGM) was established in September 2025 as an ASEAN Sectoral Ministerial Body under the APSC Pillar and included in Annex 1 of the ASEAN Charter. The APAGM aims to strengthen ASEAN's institutional framework for prosecutorial cooperation and the promotion of the rule of law and justice. The inaugural APAGM and its Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM-APAGM) was held on 19-20 October 2026, laying the foundation for the newly established Sectoral Body's efforts to foster dialogue and enhance prosecutorial, judicial and legal cooperation across the region, contributing to the realisation of *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future*.

ix. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Southeast Asia is one of the most natural disaster-prone regions in the world, and reducing the risks and impacts of disasters is one of ASEAN's top priorities. Climate change has made weather disturbances more extreme. At the 48th ASEAN Summit in May 2026, the ASEAN Leaders recalled the 2005 *ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response* (AADMER) and the 2016 *ASEAN Declaration on the "One ASEAN, One Response": ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region* and acknowledged that climate-induced disasters, biological emergencies, and cascading systemic disruptions are converging into a multi-hazard risk environment that requires faster, more coordinated and anticipatory regional action, including strengthened early warning systems and risk reduction measures across all ASEAN Community pillars.

To this end, the Leaders welcomed the implementation of the AADMER Work Programme

2026-2030, which places greater emphasis on whole-of-ASEAN cooperation, innovation, sustainable financing, inclusion, and partnerships. This new Work Programme leverages the operational expertise of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) and the development and implementation of national initiatives to ensure effective implementation of key tools and mechanisms, as well as the cultivation of broader partnerships essential for strengthening humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) efforts that include civilian and military coordination across ASEAN.

x. Cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence

Cybersecurity and the security implications of Artificial Intelligence have emerged as priority concerns across all ASEAN Member States. Since 2012, cybersecurity cooperation in the ASEAN digital sector is primarily coordinated by the ASEAN Network Security Action Council (ANSAC) under the ASEAN Digital Ministers Meeting (ADGMIN). There is also the ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity (AMCC) that plays a role in promoting policy coordination. Meanwhile, the ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee (ASEAN Cyber-CC) was established to serve as a cross-sectoral coordination mechanism on cybersecurity policy, bringing together relevant Sectoral Bodies across the ASEAN Community pillars.

ASEAN's ongoing efforts to strengthen regional norms and institutions on cybersecurity cooperation have resulted in the development of, among others, the ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy (ACCS) and the ASEAN Regional Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT). First developed by ANSAC in 2017, the most recent iteration of the ACCS covers the period of 2026-2030 and underscores ASEAN's commitment to strengthening cybersecurity cooperation, protecting critical information infrastructure, and promoting a safer and more trusted online environment in an increasingly interconnected digital landscape. To support the implementation of ACCS, the ASEAN Regional CERT was developed following a feasibility study in 2019, with the aim of leveraging the strengths and expertise of each ASEAN Member State's national CERT to deliver a more coordinated and effective regional incident response capability. The ASEAN CERT has since been operationalised with its physical facility launched in Singapore in October 2024, marking a significant step forward in reinforcing the region's commitment to a safer and more resilient digital future.

xi. Critical Underwater Infrastructure Security

Critical underwater infrastructure (CUI) security has emerged as a new and pressing security concern, covering submarine telecommunications cables and energy transmission infrastructure such as gas pipelines and power lines that are essential for ASEAN's connectivity, resilience, and strategic security. Discussions on CUI security have been taken up across multiple ASEAN mechanisms, including on the protection of undersea cables and the safeguarding of critical assets under the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ISM on MS) for the 2022-2026 cycle. The issue has also gained prominence within the defence sector with the adoption of the Concept Paper on CUI Security from a Defence Perspective by the 19th ADMM in 2025. The purpose of the Concept Paper is to raise awareness of CUI security as an emerging domain of relevance to ASEAN defence establishments and to suggest possible ways forward for further cooperation amongst AMS, such as by leveraging existing

regional maritime domain awareness capabilities, strong information-sharing links and potentially maritime and air assets to contribute to efforts in addressing threats to CUI.

Other Developments in Promoting Peace, Security and Stability in ASEAN

i. Human Rights as a Foundation for Peace, Security and Resilience in ASEAN

Human rights are integral to sustaining peace, security, stability, and resilience in ASEAN. The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) was inaugurated in October 2009 as ASEAN's human rights body, with a mandate to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of the peoples of ASEAN. Since its establishment, AICHR has evolved as a key regional platform for human rights cooperation, dialogue, and advocacy, guided by the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD), which enshrines, among others, the right to development and the right to peace.

The importance of the right to peace and its intersection with sustainable and inclusive development was further affirmed through the adoption by ASEAN Leaders of the *ASEAN Declaration on Promoting the Right to Development and the Right to Peace Towards Realising Inclusive and Sustainable Development* (ADDP) at the 47th ASEAN Summit in October 2025. The ADDP reaffirmed ASEAN's purposes and principles as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and reflected in *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future,* particularly the commitment to maintaining and enhancing peace, security and peace-oriented values in the region. Further, the ADDP provides an important platform for strengthening the nexus between human rights, development, and peace and security, recognising that sustainable peace and inclusive development are mutually reinforcing and essential to building a resilient ASEAN Community.

Following the adoption of the ADDP, an AICHR Working Committee was established to discuss follow-up actions with an ASEAN-led, ASEAN-owned, and whole-of-ASEAN approach. Building on previous regional consultations on the right to development, the fourth iteration of the ASEAN Consultation on the Human Right to Development was convened in Dili, Timor-Leste, in August 2026. These efforts were not simply about strengthening regional ownership of the ADDP implementation, but about seizing the opportunity for ASEAN to draw on its diversity, resilience and experience—from post-conflict nation-building to rapid and inclusive growth—to develop credible approaches that could contribute to global discourse on development and human rights, particularly at a time when multilateral consensus on these issues is increasingly contested.

Moving forward, AICHR remains committed to strengthening the culture of respect for human rights through public outreach, human rights education, constructive dialogue, and support for human rights considerations in ASEAN Community-building. In coherence with the work of relevant ASEAN organs, bodies, and entities, these efforts will further strengthen the links between human rights, development, peace, and security towards the realisation of *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future*.

Security Concerns in the Region and National Defence and Security Policies

Brunei Darussalam



I. Security Concerns in the Region and National Defence and Security Policies

As ASEAN advances towards the aspirations of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, the region faces an increasingly interconnected and multidimensional security environment. National defence and security policies must therefore evolve to address both conventional threats and emerging challenges while reinforcing regional cooperation, resilience, and ASEAN Centrality.

A. Security Concerns Common to the ASEAN Community

Traditional and Non-Traditional Security Concerns

ASEAN is entering an era of prolonged strategic uncertainty. The international system is increasingly characterised by geopolitical competition, technological rivalry, fragmented global governance and transnational security risks. These developments are reshaping the strategic calculations of ASEAN Member States, which place greater emphasis on resilience, adaptability and cooperation. ASEAN continue to be relevant for its ability to manage complex, interconnected security issues through cooperative institutions. ASEAN Centrality maintains the unity among its members and dialogue partners, while effectively managing external political and security relations amid intensifying strategic competition. Brunei Darussalam observes that based on these developments, it is vital to strengthen ASEAN-led mechanisms rather than relying solely on military deterrence.

Several enduring regional security challenges continue to shape ASEAN's strategic outlook, particularly those arising from traditional security concerns such as major power competition, maritime disputes, terrorism, and violent extremism. However, the future security environment will increasingly be characterised by the convergence of these enduring challenges with emerging and non-traditional threats. The advent of Industry 5.0 driven by human-machine teaming, artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, and advanced digital technologies is expected to transform both military operations and the wider defence ecosystem. While these innovations offer significant opportunities to enhance operational effectiveness and strategic decision-making, they also introduce new avenues for exploitation, including cyber intrusions, algorithmic manipulation, disinformation, and attacks on interconnected digital networks. If these human-machine systems are compromised, the consequences could extend well beyond military operations, degrading command and control, disrupting critical regional functions, and eroding public confidence and societal resilience.

At the same time, climate change, technological disruption, and threats to economic and critical infrastructure act as strategic threat multipliers, amplifying existing security pressures and creating an increasingly interconnected and unpredictable operating environment. In response, ASEAN Member States must strengthen not only their defence capabilities but also their institutional resilience, technological readiness, inter-agency coordination, and regional defence cooperation to enhance their collective capacity to anticipate, deter, and respond to evolving security challenges.

The growing prevalence of hybrid threats further blurs the distinction between conventional and non-conventional forms of conflict by exploiting systemic weaknesses across multiple sectors, including energy, telecommunications,

ports and maritime infrastructure, financial systems, satellite communications, and subsea cables. Disruptions to these critical systems can trigger cascading effects that undermine national security, economic stability, and regional connectivity.

In parallel, the increasing strategic importance of outer space introduces new security considerations, as satellites and space-based services have become essential enablers for military operations, navigation, communications, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and civilian infrastructure. The growing congestion of space, the proliferation of space actors, and the development of counter-space capabilities, including electronic interference, cyber operations targeting space assets, and anti-satellite technologies present emerging challenges to the stability, accessibility, and sustainability of the space domain.

Accordingly, ASEAN must adopt a comprehensive whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, reinforced by timely information sharing, cross-sector collaboration, and robust critical infrastructure protection, to strengthen regional preparedness against both physical and cyber-enabled threats. Equally important is the need to promote the responsible and ethical development, adoption, and military application of emerging technologies, including space-enabled capabilities, by ensuring appropriate governance frameworks, human oversight, accountability, and adherence to international law and established norms. Strengthening awareness, resilience, and cooperation in the space domain will become increasingly important as ASEAN Member States seek to safeguard critical services, enhance strategic autonomy, and maintain a secure and sustainable regional environment.

Equally important is the need to promote the responsible and ethical development, adoption, and military application of emerging technologies, ensuring that innovation is guided by appropriate governance frameworks, human oversight, accountability, and compliance with international law and established norms.

Nonetheless, the future security environment confronting ASEAN will be increasingly multidimensional, requiring defence institutions to move beyond traditional concepts of territorial defence towards comprehensive security and national resilience. For ASEAN, success will not only depend upon the size of its member states' armed forces, but also upon the quality of its people, institutions and partnerships.

B. Individual National Defence Policies

United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA)

As a Member State of the United Nations, Brunei Darussalam recognises the value of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA) and reaffirms its commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. It further recognises the importance of international efforts to enhance transparency in conventional arms transfers and prevent the destabilising accumulation of weapons as important confidence-building measures that contribute to regional and international peace and security. This approach is consistent with Brunei Darussalam's long-standing foreign policy of promoting regional stability, peaceful coexistence, and a rules-based international order, while upholding responsible arms control practices and transparency in accordance with relevant United Nations mechanisms.

C. National Contributions to Promoting Regional Security

The ADMM and ADMM-Plus have added value by strengthening Brunei Darussalam's defence and military capacity and capability development. In its commitment to contribute to regional security, Brunei Darussalam initiated three proposals of cooperation during its ADMM Chairmanship in 2013, which have significantly progressed at various stages. These include:

i. Logistics Support Framework

The ADMM Logistics Support Framework (LSF) aims to enhance logistics cooperation among military forces in the ASEAN region to tackle non-traditional security challenges, including Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), Search and Rescue (SAR), Peacekeeping Operations (PKO), and anti-piracy in a coordinated and effective manner. Following the validation and verification of LSF in a Table-Top Exercise (TTX) by all AMS in January 2016, the LSF was endorsed by the ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting (ADSOM). Looking ahead, Brunei Darussalam aims to integrate the LSF with other ADMM initiatives such as the ASEAN Military Ready Group (AMRG) and potentially in the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups (EWGs).

ii. ASEAN Direct Communication Infrastructure

Recognising the importance of developing an ASEAN early warning system to prevent the occurrence and/or escalation of conflicts, the ADMM has adopted the concept of establishing and maintaining the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI). ADI aims to provide a permanent, rapid, reliable, and confidential means by which any two ASEAN Defence Ministers may communicate with each other to make mutual decisions in handling incidents or emergency situations. This communication platform aims to prevent or defuse misunderstandings and misinterpretations, thereby preventing escalation and promoting quick response cooperation in emergency situations.

The ADI is being implemented in phases. The first phase, in the form of an IP-based mechanism, was launched on 24 October 2017, after the ADMM-Plus Meeting in Clark, Pampanga, Philippines. An ADI Exercise was conducted on 21 February 2019 to test the system's functionality and operationalize the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). The second phase is under discussion among the ASEAN Member States (AMS) co-chaired by Brunei Darussalam and the Republic of Philippines. In moving forward, an Integrated Project Team (IPT) on Phase 2 of ADI was established. Currently, AMS is finalising the Terms of Reference and Technical Specifications for Phase 2 of ADI. Phase 2 of ADI is expected to deliver extensive capabilities, in line with Concept Paper on Enhancing the Usage of ADI as Defence Communications Architecture in the ADMM Process, which was adopted by the ADMM in 2021.

iii. ASEAN Defence Interaction Programme (ADIP)

To sustain the friendship and networks of the next generation of ASEAN defence officials, Brunei Darussalam tabled the Concept Paper on the ADIP which is an initiative that also serves as a platform for knowledge sharing and fostering cooperation on emerging defence issues. The inaugural ADIP took place in Brunei Darussalam in 2014, with Malaysia hosting the second iteration in January 2018. The revised Concept Paper on the ADIP was approved in the 15th ADMM in June 2021 where the ADIP

fostered more diversity, equality, and mutual understanding. Brunei Darussalam hosted the third iteration of ADIP in November 2021, focusing on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Cambodia chaired the 4th ADIP in October 2022, focusing on the Youth, Peace and Security agenda, followed by Indonesia, who hosted the 5th ADIP in March 2023. Lao PDR hosted the 6th ADIP in June 2024 and focused on the militaries' roles in contributing to climate change. In 2025, Malaysia conducted the 7th ADIP. In 2026, the Philippines will host the 8th ADIP on 8-11 September 2026.

iv. ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups

The progress of the seven ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups (EWGs) in the areas of HADR, Military Medicine (MM), Maritime Security, Counter-Terrorism, Peacekeeping Operations (PKO), Humanitarian Mine Action and Cyber Security manifests the maturity of practical cooperation under the ADMM-Plus. Brunei Darussalam remains fully committed and supportive of ADMM-Plus endeavours and has worked alongside the Plus partners. This includes hosting the inaugural multinational ADMM-Plus HADR and MM Exercise in 2013 together with China, Viet Nam, Singapore, and Japan. Brunei Darussalam also co-chaired the EWG on Maritime Security with New Zealand from 2014 to 2017, culminating in the ADMM-Plus Maritime Security and Counter-Terrorism Exercise that took place in Brunei Darussalam and Singapore, and a Maritime Security Field Training Exercise in New Zealand. Brunei Darussalam, together with Australia, have concluded the co-chairmanship of the EWG in MM for the 2021-2024 cycle. Established during Brunei Darussalam's Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2021 with the theme of "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper," the EWG on MM undertook a component of Project-based Community Medical Deployment (PCMD)/Medical Aid Provision (MAP) which aims to deliver vital community healthcare services and improving coordination and logistical efficiency between military medical teams from ASEAN and Plus Countries during disaster and crisis responses.

The EWG on MM participated in a component of the Project-based Community Medical Deployment (PCMD)/Medical Aid Provision (MAP), aimed at addressing pandemic-related challenges. This initiative seeks to improve healthcare services and provide support within an underprivileged community in one of the ASEAN countries, aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Additionally, it aims to strengthen regional interoperability and civil-military coordination.

In the current cycle of co-chairmanship of EWGs (2024-2027), Brunei Darussalam is partnering with China as co-chair of the ADMM-Plus EWG on PKO. Through this partnership, both countries are focused on enhancing regional cooperation and capacity-building in peacekeeping efforts. The collaboration involves sharing best practices, conducting joint training exercises, and developing frameworks to support United Nations peacekeeping missions. This cooperative initiative aims to strengthen the effectiveness and professionalism of peacekeeping forces within the ASEAN region and beyond, contributing to regional stability and international peace.

Overall, the EWGs' work has advanced mutual understanding, promoted capacity building and interoperability in all member states. More importantly, these have contributed to deeper trust and fostering stronger military-to-military relations among the ADMM-Plus's armed forces. Further to this, the practical cooperation in the EWGs contributes to ASEAN's collective response to addressing non-traditional security challenges. Particularly on HADR, there has been increasing integration of HADR in the

broader ASEAN disaster response mechanism with efforts for closer coordination between military and civilian responders.

a. Peacekeeping and Peace Monitoring Initiatives

Brunei Darussalam also remains committed to participating in peacekeeping and peace support operations. Since 2008, the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) has been involved in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), embedded under the Malaysian Armed Forces. Throughout the seventeen years of RBAF's involvement in the UNIFIL, increasing number of female members of RBAF have served in the peacekeeping operations. Brunei Darussalam is also co-chairing the ADMM-Plus EWG on Peacekeeping Operations with the People's Republic of China. The co-chairmanship will culminate with conduct of Field Training Exercise in Brunei Darussalam in Q4 of 2026.

Further to this, Brunei Darussalam also contributes to the Mindanao peace process as a member of the Independent Decommissioning Board (IDB) alongside Turkey and Norway since 2014. Three (03) RBAF officers are currently serving in the IDB Headquarters, wherein two of them serve as Verification, Monitoring and Assistance Team (IDB VMAT) in Cotabato, Mindanao, Southern Philippines.

Initiatives at the operational theatre level offer exposure and insight into operating in conflict environments for the personnel involved. The engagements between RBAF and its foreign counterparts and organisations further enhance Brunei Darussalam's defence diplomacy. These initiatives also highlight RBAF's reputation as a professional force capable of making meaningful contributions. In the context of Brunei Darussalam, this also demonstrates substantial support for regional and global endeavours aimed at promoting peace and stability.

b. Countering Terrorism, Radicalisation, and Violent Extremism

The global reach of terrorism and the spread of violent and extremist influence remain among the most serious concerns for countries worldwide. According to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2025 highlights and key findings, the number of countries recording a terrorist attack increased from 58 to 66 in 2024, reversing nearly a decade of previous improvements and indicating a broader geographic spread of terrorism. While overall terrorism-related deaths fell modestly in 2024 compared with 2023, when excluding the impact of the October 7, 2023 Hamas-led militant attacks in Israel, widely regarded as among the deadliest single incidents in recent history, the broader trend reflects persistent lethality and a diversification in politically and ideologically motivated violence.

Looking into 2025 and early 2026, terrorist threats remained a significant challenge to global security, even as some traditional hotspots shifted or evolved. For example, extremist groups have increasingly used technological tools, including AI-enabled propaganda and recruitment methods to broaden their reach and influence online, raising new concerns for counter-extremism efforts. Additionally, geopolitical tensions and conflicts involving state and non-state actors in regions such as the Middle East and South Asia continued to contribute to instability and cyclic violence. In summary, while the overall number of recorded terrorist attacks and total fatalities have fluctuated in 2024 to 2025, the GTI and recent global incidents indicate that terrorism remains a significant and evolving threat. The persistence of lethal extremist activity, shifts in geographic impact, and the use of emerging

technologies by violent actors all underline the urgent need for nuanced, coordinated international responses to counter terrorism, radicalisation, and violent extremism through 2025 and into 2026.

Significant improvements in terrorism have been observed in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Iraq has remained outside the top ten most affected countries in the Global Terrorism Index 2025, with terrorism-related deaths continuing to decline compared with previous years. Daesh continues to be one of the deadliest terrorist groups globally, leading in both attacks and fatalities, although its overall impact has steadily decreased over the past decade. Violent conflict remains the primary driver of terrorism, with over 90% of terrorism-related deaths in 2024-2025 occurring in countries experiencing armed conflict. Nations most affected by terrorism, including Burkina Faso, Somalia, and Pakistan, remain entangled in ongoing insurgencies, civil unrest, or political instability, highlighting the persistent link between conflict and terrorist activity.

Although the terrorism threat remains relatively low for Brunei Darussalam, countering terrorism, radicalisation, and violent extremism should be framed as a comprehensive national resilience effort that integrates security, governance, social cohesion, and community engagement. This approach emphasises preventive strategies, early intervention, and whole-of-society participation to safeguard national stability, religious harmony, and public order, while preserving Brunei's values, traditions, and social fabric.

At the policy and security level, the focus continues to be on strengthening whole-of-government coordination, intelligence-sharing mechanisms, legal frameworks, and institutional capacities to detect, deter, and disrupt extremist threats. This includes reinforcing inter-agency cooperation, enhancing strategic communication, and aligning national security institutions with regional and international counter-terrorism frameworks, ensuring Brunei remains resilient against both internal and transnational extremist risks.

From a societal perspective, countering radicalisation and violent extremism in Brunei should prioritise community resilience, religious moderation, youth engagement, and digital awareness. By empowering communities, religious institutions, educational systems, and civil society actors, Brunei can strengthen its social defences against extremist narratives, prevent ideological exploitation, and promote a culture of peace, moderation, and unity as a foundation for long-term national security.

c. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

HADR remains an important and widely supported area of cooperation. It centres on strengthening coordination, joint exercises and information sharing to improve responses to natural disasters and humanitarian crises. This is based on collaboration with mechanisms such as the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance. As the frequency and impact of disasters increase, HADR continues to play a valuable role in building trust among participants and reinforcing regional resilience.

HADR continues to serve as a practical avenue for advancing confidence-building measures and operational cooperation among ARF participants. Ongoing initiatives under the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief (ISM on DR) and related defence engagements contribute to improved interoperability, rapid response capabilities, and the sharing of best practices. These efforts support the ARF's broader objective of enhancing transparency, mutual understanding, and preparedness in addressing non-traditional security challenges,

in line with its role as a key platform for regional security dialogue and cooperation.

The National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) was established as a focal point for disaster management in ASEAN and to enhance the nation's capacity for disaster management and response. The NDMC is administered under the Ministry of Home Affairs. According to the Disaster Relief Order 2006, there are two documents that guide efforts toward disaster management, namely the National Standard Operating Procedure (NaSOP) and Strategic National Action Plan for Risk Reduction (SNAP).

The NDMC looks at all aspects of disaster management ranging from prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery through policies, strategies, and practices. It serves to coordinate multi-agency cooperation along with the Fire and Rescue Department (FRD) in events that require disaster relief mitigation. In the spirit of a Whole-of-Government approach and in line with the tasks within the Defence White Paper, the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) continues to provide a significant supportive role in the contribution of assets to the NDMC.

Brunei Darussalam has actively supported regional HADR efforts and closer coordination between military and civilian responders aligned with the broader ASEAN disaster response mechanism particularly through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA Centre). On 27 October to 5 November 2024, Brunei Darussalam through the Ministry of Defence conducted a HADR mission named the Badai Taduh Operation and contributed humanitarian aid to the Republic of Philippines following the impacts of Tropical Storm Kristine. On 11 April 2025, Brunei Darussalam delivered humanitarian aid to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar following the impact of the earthquake that struck the country on 28 March 2025.

These contributions following the command of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, demonstrates Brunei Darussalam's commitment to ASEAN solidarity and people-to-people linkages within the ASEAN Community.

d. Non-Proliferation, Counter-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament

Brunei Darussalam, as a small nation, recognises the significance of upholding non-proliferation, counter-proliferation, arms control, and disarmament efforts. The country has signed various multilateral and global agreements related to non-proliferation, counter-proliferation, arms control, and disarmament, particularly those pertaining to weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Brunei Darussalam will uphold its commitment to non-proliferation, counter-proliferation, arms control, and disarmament, as it believes that reaching a consensus and universalising these agreements is crucial to ensuring peace and stability, not only within the nation but also globally.

Brunei Darussalam demonstrates its dedication by engaging in confidence-building measures and activities, expressing support as necessary, submitting reports to promote transparency, and enhancing its capabilities through technical assistance and training. In relation to United Nations Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1540, Brunei Darussalam endorsed the resolution and consistently updating the UNSCR 1540 matrix to ensure the resolution's implementation.

Brunei Darussalam is also extensively involved in regional initiatives for non-proliferation, counter-proliferation, arms control, and

disarmament, including active participation in ASEAN and ARF, as well as in the international sphere within the United Nations and its affiliated organisations.

f. Transnational Crime

Brunei Darussalam continues to face various forms of transnational crimes, though its small size and population limit some of the incentives for criminal activity. While overall cases remain relatively low, emerging trends highlight ongoing vulnerabilities, particularly in drug trafficking, contraband distribution, and financial crimes such as cross-border scams, fraud, and money laundering. Recent reports indicate a range of financial threats affecting the country, including ATM card cloning and unauthorized withdrawals (February 2026), bank scam warnings and phone/social media fraud, substantial online fraud losses involving loan, investment, and impersonation scams, and the misuse of deepfake or false identities impersonating banks or police to mislead victims. Authorities have also detained individuals acting as money mules, allowing fraud rings access to their bank accounts. In response, banks and financial institutions in Brunei have heightened financial fraud awareness campaigns to educate the public and mitigate these risks, while law enforcement continues to strengthen digital monitoring and cybercrime countermeasures.

The Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) and the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) actively participate in multilateral dialogues, meetings, and exercises under the framework of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM). Notably, Brunei Darussalam continues to support the ASEAN Our Eyes initiative, facilitating intelligence sharing among ASEAN Member States (AMS) to enhance regional defence and security awareness. In addition, Brunei Darussalam advocates the continued importance of its role in the ADMM Experts Working Group (EWG) on Counter-Terrorism (CT), where efforts to strengthen counter-terrorism cooperation are further advanced through the AMS' three-year co-chairmanship with the ADMM-Plus countries. These engagements underscore Brunei's commitment to fostering regional security partnerships, promoting transparency, and reinforcing collaborative mechanisms that enhance the collective capability of ASEAN and partner nations to respond effectively to terrorism and cross-border threats.

Brunei Darussalam remains further committed to strengthening cooperation with regional and international partners, particularly through bilateral and multilateral engagements with other ASEAN Member States (AMS), to address the cross-border nature of transnational crimes. This includes active participation in the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), which serves as the primary platform for regional collaboration and coordination. The AMMTC is implementing the final stages of the 'Work Plan of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2019–2025)' and preparing follow-up initiatives beyond 2025. Similarly, the ASEAN Plan of Action in Combating Transnational Crime (2016–2025) has strengthened regional cooperation and AMS capacity to respond promptly to cross-border crimes, including emerging financial crimes such as ATM fraud and digital scams. Complementary frameworks such as the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025 remain vital in enhancing political-security cooperation, promoting defence collaboration, and building confidence measures to address both traditional and non-traditional security threats effectively in 2025–2026, particularly those involving illicit financial activities and cyber-enabled crimes.

g. Maritime Security

Brunei Darussalam is a small coastal state that lies on the island of Borneo which is situated in the middle of the South China Sea. Although small in size Brunei has gained its fortune by having a large resource in the form of natural oil and gas which a number of companies have been exploring and extracting within its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). As oil and gas makes up a huge percentage of the country's economy, securing its maritime domain remains a top priority for Brunei Darussalam, and this task has been largely given to the Royal Brunei Armed Forces and Ministry of Defence. There are a number of security concerns that relate to maritime security from the perspective of Brunei but however, in recent years issues such as Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (IUU Fishing), Transnational Crime, Piracy and the presence of foreign vessels within its EEZ's vicinity are the top security concerns that has been envisaged by the country.

Building on these concerns, it is assessed that enhancing maritime domain awareness (MDA) is critical to effectively monitor and respond to activities within Brunei Darussalam's maritime zones. Improved MDA would enable timely detection of illegal activities, enhance inter-agency coordination, and support informed decision-making at both the operational and strategic levels. In this regard, continued efforts to strengthen surveillance capabilities and information-sharing mechanisms, alongside engagement with regional partners through platforms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, will be key to promoting collective awareness and coordinated responses to maritime security challenges.

II. Future Trends on Regional Security

Looking ahead, ASEAN's security environment is expected to be shaped less by the prospect of conventional interstate warfare and more by sustained strategic competition across multiple domains. The traditional distinction between peace and armed conflict is becoming increasingly blurred as both state and non-state actors employ hybrid tactics, exploit disruptive technologies, and target vulnerabilities in cyberspace, the information environment, outer space, and critical infrastructure. At the same time, climate change, demographic shifts, and growing competition for natural resources are likely to intensify existing security challenges, placing greater demands on both military and civilian institutions. Collectively, these developments are redefining the foundations of military power, intelligence, deterrence, and national resilience, requiring ASEAN Member States to adopt more adaptive and forward-looking defence strategies.

In response to this evolving strategic landscape, ASEAN Member States have an opportunity to transform their defence establishments into forces that are agile, technologically advanced, knowledge-driven, and well-integrated with national agencies and regional partners. Consistent with the aspirations of ASEAN Community Vision 2045, future defence investments should prioritise human capital development, digital transformation, innovation, strategic foresight, and specialised capabilities that strengthen regional resilience while leveraging the comparative advantages of individual Member States. Enhancing interoperability, information-sharing, and collective preparedness will be essential to ensuring that ASEAN remains capable of responding effectively to both traditional and emerging security challenges.

One of the most transformative technological developments is quantum computing, which has the potential to revolutionise defence and security. Its computational power could significantly accelerate cryptographic analysis, optimise military logistics and operational planning, enhance intelligence processing, and improve the modelling of complex operational environments. However, these capabilities also present significant risks, particularly the potential to compromise many of the encryption systems currently used to protect military communications, financial networks, and critical national infrastructure. Recognising these implications, many countries are investing in post-quantum cryptography and quantum-secure communication technologies to safeguard sensitive information against future threats. As technological advancements continue to accelerate in the era of Industry 5.0, ASEAN Member States should also invest in developing specialised expertise, strengthening research collaborations, and building the institutional capacity necessary to understand and respond to the security implications of quantum technologies.

Similarly, outer space has emerged as an increasingly important operational domain that underpins both civilian and military activities. Space-based assets provide critical services that support secure communications, navigation, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), precision targeting, weather forecasting, and disaster response. As reliance on these systems continues to grow, so too does their vulnerability to cyberattacks, electronic warfare, signal jamming, spoofing, and anti-satellite (ASAT) capabilities. The expanding militarisation and strategic competition in outer space underscore the importance of strengthening international norms governing responsible behaviour and preserving the peaceful use of outer space. For ASEAN, satellite-enabled technologies also offer significant opportunities to enhance maritime domain awareness, monitor illegal activities at sea, improve environmental surveillance, and strengthen disaster preparedness and humanitarian assistance. As such, developing greater awareness of space security and expanding regional cooperation in satellite applications will become increasingly important in supporting ASEAN's long-term resilience and security objectives under ASEAN Community Vision 2045.

Nevertheless, the evolving security landscape should not be interpreted as a departure from traditional security concerns. Conventional military threats, strategic competition, territorial and maritime disputes, and defence-economic considerations will continue to influence regional stability and national security. At the same time, economic resilience, including secure supply chains, technological competitiveness, energy security, and sustainable defence investment will increasingly underpin military readiness and national resilience. As a result, ASEAN Member States must balance investments in conventional defence capabilities with the development of emerging technologies and multidomain competencies to address the full spectrum of future security challenges.

Cambodia



I. Security Concerns in the Region and National Defence and Security Policies

A. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)

The Kingdom of Cambodia recognizes that humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) has become an essential pillar of regional security cooperation in Southeast Asia. As the region is highly vulnerable to natural disasters, climate change, public health emergencies, and other non-traditional security challenges, Cambodia remains committed to strengthening regional preparedness, resilience, and interoperability through active participation in ASEAN-led HADR initiatives. Cambodia believes that effective disaster response requires close coordination among military, civilian, and humanitarian agencies, as well as strong partnerships with ASEAN Member States and Dialogue Partners.

Within the framework of the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM-Plus, Cambodia actively participates in the Experts' Working Group (EWG) on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief. Through this mechanism, Cambodia contributes to the development of practical cooperation, information sharing, and capacity-building initiatives aimed at enhancing the readiness and effectiveness of regional disaster response. Cambodia also supports the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) and cooperates closely with regional mechanisms to improve disaster preparedness, response coordination, and recovery efforts.

The Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF), including the Royal Gendarmerie of Cambodia, regularly participate in ASEAN and ADMM-Plus HADR table-top exercises (TTX), field training exercises (FTX), and multinational disaster response activities. These exercises strengthen operational coordination, command and control, civil-military cooperation (CIMIC), and interoperability among participating countries. They also provide valuable opportunities to exchange best practices and lessons learned in disaster management, search and rescue operations, medical assistance, logistics, and humanitarian relief.

Cambodia also conducts bilateral HADR exercises with partner countries to enhance national capabilities while contributing to regional preparedness. These activities include the Dragon Gold Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Exercise conducted jointly with the People's Liberation Army of China and the Angkor Sentinel Exercise conducted in cooperation with the United States. Such engagements improve disaster response capabilities, strengthen mutual trust, and reinforce practical defense cooperation with ASEAN Dialogue Partners.

The Royal Gendarmerie of Cambodia plays a significant role in HADR operations by supporting emergency response, maintaining public order in disaster-affected areas, conducting search and rescue operations, facilitating humanitarian assistance, protecting critical infrastructure, and assisting vulnerable populations. The Royal Gendarmerie also works closely with civilian authorities, the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM), the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, the National Police, health agencies, and local administrations to ensure coordinated and timely responses during emergencies. These experiences have enhanced Cambodia's whole-of-government approach to disaster management and strengthened civil-military cooperation.

Cambodia's experience during the COVID-19 pandemic further demonstrated its commitment to regional solidarity and humanitarian cooperation. The Royal Government implemented comprehensive measures involving military and law enforcement agencies to support public health operations, border management, quarantine facilities, logistics, and the nationwide distribution of medical supplies and vaccines. Cambodia also demonstrated humanitarian leadership by allowing the MS Westerdam cruise ship to dock in Sihanoukville in February 2020, reflecting Cambodia's commitment to humanitarian principles and international cooperation during a global crisis.

Recognizing that future disasters are likely to become more frequent and complex due to climate change, urbanization, and emerging health threats, Cambodia continues to strengthen its national disaster management capabilities while actively supporting ASEAN's collective efforts to build a resilient and disaster-ready community. Cambodia advocates for regular multinational HADR exercises, improved early warning systems, enhanced information sharing, greater civil-military coordination, and stronger interoperability among ASEAN Member States and Dialogue Partners.

In conclusion, Cambodia remains firmly committed to promoting regional peace, security, and stability through active participation in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief cooperation. By contributing to ASEAN-led HADR initiatives, participating in multinational exercises, strengthening civil-military coordination, and enhancing cooperation with regional and international partners, Cambodia continues to support ASEAN's vision of a resilient, responsive, and people-centered community capable of effectively addressing future humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters.

B. Military Medicine

In 2026, the Department of Health under the General Department of Logistics and Finance of the Ministry of National Defence of the Kingdom of Cambodia hosted the 13th ASEAN chiefs of Military Medicine Conference (13th ACMMC) under the theme: "**Enhancing ASEAN Military Medicine Readiness and Resilience in the Face of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Threats.**"

The 13th ASEAN Chiefs of Military Medicine Conference was successfully convened and achieved its intended objectives by strengthening cooperation, exchanging experiences, sharing knowledge in the field of ASEAN military medicine, and enhancing collective preparedness to respond to disasters and various crises. The conference fostered active participation among ASEAN Member States and provided a platform for discussions on emerging global challenges with the aim of identifying collective solutions in line with the evolving security and public health landscape. It also generated valuable recommendations reflecting the shared commitment to the principle of "**One ASEAN, One Response**." The exchange of experiences and discussions on key issues further strengthened solidarity and cooperation among Member States in addressing public health challenges and disasters at the both the regional and international levels.

Furthermore, the conference encouraged Young ASEAN Military Medical Officers (YAMMO) to actively contribute ideas and innovative approaches in support of the continued development and advancement of ASEAN military medicine.

Each year, the Department of Health also places significant emphasis on reducing disease transmission, promoting health, and strengthening

health education through enhanced disease prevention, surveillance, and control measures. These efforts aim to reduce and eliminate major communicable diseases such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, avian influenza (H7N9), and dengue fever.

At the same time, ASEAN military medicine has continued to implement humanitarian assistance activities to benefit military personnel, their families, and communities across the ASEAN region. It has also strengthened human resource capacity through participation in training courses, workshops, conferences, and joint exercises conducted both domestically and internationally. In addition, continuous efforts have been made to enhance medical response and treatment capabilities to ensure timely and effective medical care, thereby safeguarding the health and operational readiness of military personnel. Based on their respective circumstances and capacities, ASEAN Member States and ASEAN Plus countries have continued to invest in modern medical equipment and further develop military medical capabilities in order to improve the quality of medical treatment and healthcare services. These efforts contribute to strengthening the resilience and preparedness of ASEAN military medicine in responding effectively to future challenges and emerging threats.

C. Transnational Crime, Border Security and Information Security

1. Overview

In 2026, transnational crime, border security and information security remain significant and increasingly interconnected challenges affecting stability, development and public safety. Criminal networks exploit differences in laws, border-management capacity, digital infrastructure, enforcement resources and information sharing to conduct drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, online scams, money laundering, cybercrime and illicit trade. These challenges are regional and international, and no country is entirely immune, regardless of its size, resources or technological capacity.

Cambodia promotes cooperation, mutual trust and timely information sharing with ASEAN Member States, Dialogue Partners and international organizations. Its approach supports ASEAN Centrality, the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and ASEAN-led mechanisms addressing regional threats. Cambodia also contributes to the ASEAN Plan of Action in Combatting Transnational Crime 2026-2035 through the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime.

2. Transnational Crime

a) Online Scams

Online scams have become one of the serious transnational security challenges facing Southeast Asia and the international community. These networks operate across jurisdictions, with organizers, financial channels, technology and victims. Assigning blame to individual countries alone is unlikely to produce sustainable solutions. States must suppress domestic criminal activity while regional and international partners cooperate to disrupt cross-border networks.

Cambodia has intensified operations against online scam centres through stronger law enforcement and inter-agency coordination. The Law on Combating Online Scams, promulgated in April 2026, criminalizes technology-enabled fraud, operation of scam centres, recruitment, unlawful use of personal data and scam-related money laundering. Cambodia has also expanded cooperation

with neighboring countries in investigations, victim identification, rescue and repatriation.

b) Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism

Money laundering and illicit financial flows remain important enablers of organized crime. Proceeds from online scams, trafficking, drug offences and other crimes may pass through bank accounts, informal networks, front companies, casinos, real estate, digital payments and virtual assets. Cambodia continues to strengthen its anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing framework through financial intelligence, regulatory reform, inter-agency coordination, risk assessments and supervision.

Although Cambodia faces a relatively low direct terrorist threat, its geographic location and regional connectivity mean that it could potentially be used as a transit point. Violent extremism and terrorist financing remain regional concerns requiring continued vigilance, information sharing and cooperation among countries. Cambodia therefore continues to strengthen intelligence sharing, border management, law-enforcement preparedness and institutional capacity while supporting regional cooperation under the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism.

c) Cybersecurity

Cambodia's expanding digital economy creates opportunities but also increases exposure to cyberattacks, ransomware, data theft, identity fraud and attacks against critical infrastructure. Public and private systems may be targeted domestically or from abroad. Cambodia continues to strengthen cybersecurity by protecting critical information infrastructure, improving incident response, coordinating institutions and promoting public awareness. It supports ASEAN cooperation through information sharing, capacity building and technical assistance. The main challenge in 2026 will be ensuring that cybersecurity capabilities develop alongside digital transformation. Priorities include strengthening specialized personnel, improving reporting mechanisms, clarifying responsibilities and protecting sensitive data.

d) Border Security

Border security is a fundamental pillar of national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and regional stability. Borders are vital gateways for trade, tourism, investment, and people-to-people exchanges, serving as important drivers of economic growth and regional connectivity. At the same time, border security is also increasingly vulnerable to both traditional and non-traditional security challenges, including human trafficking, illicit drug and arms trafficking, smuggling, terrorism, cyber-enabled crimes, illegal migration, pandemics, and the impacts of climate change and natural disasters on border communities. These interconnected challenges require a comprehensive and cooperative response among countries that share borders. Cambodia believes that maintaining peaceful, secure, and stable borders requires a balanced approach that combines effective border management with sustained dialogue, mutual trust, and respect among neighbouring countries. In the current international environment, marked by growing geopolitical tensions and multiple regional and global crises, Cambodia remains firmly committed to addressing border-related issues through peaceful means, supporting diplomatic engagement, existing bilateral mechanisms, and confidence-building measures to prevent confrontation and combat transnational crime effectively. Cambodia also recognizes the role of ASEAN-led mechanisms, as well as

international and multilateral cooperation, in promoting trust and confident-building, information sharing, capacity building, and coordinated border management. Cambodia reaffirms that all efforts to strengthen border security should be guided by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, respect for international law and the rule of law, sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of states, and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Through this principled and cooperative approach, border security can contribute not only to safeguarding national interests but also to fostering regional peace, stability, and sustainable development.

e) Information Security

The expansion of digital and social-media platforms has increased the speed and reach of misinformation, disinformation, manipulated content and hostile influence activities. False narratives weaken public trust, damage institutional credibility, intensify social divisions and complicate relations between countries. Cambodia continues to strengthen strategic communication, promote timely dissemination of accurate information, improve digital literacy and enhance institutional capacity to respond to misleading content. Information-security measures should balance national-security requirements with credible, transparent and evidence-based communication.

f) Outlook for 2026

Cambodia's security environment in 2026 will likely continue to be influenced by the growing interconnection among organized crime, digital technology, border management and information security. Online scam operations and other transnational criminal activities may decline in scale and visibility but are likely to become smaller, more dispersed and increasingly adaptive. Border incidents and misinformation may also continue to require careful and timely management. Cambodia is well positioned to strengthen its response through the effective implementation of laws and policies, sustained political commitment, professional law enforcement, stronger inter-agency coordination, improved intelligence capabilities and greater institutional accountability. At the regional level, practical cooperation, mutual trust and constructive dialogue will remain essential. Timely information sharing, coordinated investigations, mutual legal assistance, capacity building and respect for national sovereignty and international law will contribute to a safer, more stable and resilient Cambodia and Southeast Asia.

D. Non-Proliferation, Counter Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament

1. Domestic Activities and Capacity Building (National Level)

Cambodia hosted and organized numerous essential programs, workshops, and training exercises. The National Authority for the Prohibition of Chemical, Nuclear, Biological, and Radiological Weapons collaborated with national and international partner institutions, seeing active participation from inter-ministerial experts, regional countries, and international organizations.

Notably, in implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (UNSCR 1540), the Kingdom of Cambodia has been taking active measures to prepare a National Action Plan (NAP) to ensure the resolution's effective and comprehensive implementation. Alongside drafting this document, Cambodia organized a national workshop in April 2025, along with various consultative meetings, to

gather inputs and build the capacity of relevant officials across national institutions.

Concurrently, Cambodia has been strengthening its close cooperation with the Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) Program of the U.S. Department of State, engaging in joint efforts to draft the Weapons of Mass Destruction Strategic Trade Management (WMD-STM) Law. Furthermore, Cambodia has organized crucial meetings, training programs, workshops, and study visits related to the drafting of this law.

Regarding biosecurity, the National Authority for Chemical Weapons has placed a high priority on establishing robust legal frameworks. This included organizing a workshop on the biosecurity legal framework (Project 81) and one on drafting biosecurity legislation in Cambodia. Practical implementation involved the National Register of Controlled Biological Agents (NRCB), as well as the annual collection of data on biological agents and biosecurity across laboratories and relevant institutions, for compilation and reporting to the BWC-ISU.

For medical preparedness, Cambodia hosted a consultation and discussion visit to implement Project 98 of the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence (EU CBRN CoE Project 98), aimed at strengthening CBRN medical emergency preparedness and response in Southeast Asia, in June 2025. Cambodia has also identified and designated hospitals prepared to rescue victims of CBRN incidents.

Cambodia has also enhanced its capacity to prevent nuclear smuggling through close cooperation with the Nuclear Smuggling Detection and Deterrence (NSDD) office of the United States Department of Energy (US DoE), which paid a familiarization visit to Cambodia. Additionally, an inter-agency table-top exercise was organized to focus on capacity building for preparedness, monitoring, and response to incidents involving the illicit trafficking of radiological and nuclear materials.

2. Overseas Cooperation and Missions (Regional and International Levels)

The Kingdom of Cambodia has actively dispatched delegations comprising senior officials and experts to participate in numerous international forums, workshops, meetings, and training courses abroad. Under the ASEAN framework and counter-terrorism efforts, the Cambodian delegation participated in the 7th Annual Meeting of the Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological, and Radiological Defence Experts (ASEAN CBR Network) in Malaysia, and a table-top exercise on the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT).

For the prevention of chemical and biological weapons, Cambodia participated in the sixth session of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in Switzerland and an event on deliberate biothreats in Singapore. Furthermore, Cambodian delegations, including senior officials and experts, participated in multiple capacity-building programs organized by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), including the annual meeting of National Authorities, the Conference of the States Parties in the Netherlands, and workshops in India, South Korea, and Indonesia.

Cambodia also participated in the Regional Strategic Coordination Meetings of the National Focal Points (NFPs) in Laos and Indonesia, an international meeting in Belgium, the Project 106 (Table-top and field Exercises, Simulation, Training–TEST) meeting in Laos, the closing conference of Project 81 in Viet Nam, and the

regional meeting of Project 98 in Malaysia. For advanced specialized training, Cambodia sent officials to attend a CBRN Train-the-Trainer Course on operations and evaluation in Slovakia, a course on Industrial Safety in Port Areas, and a Regional Radionuclide Workshop and Integrated Training for National Data Centres (NDCs) in Malaysia.

In this spirit, the Kingdom of Cambodia maintains a steadfast stance. It remains committed to actively engaging with the international community, organizations, institutions, and development partners in preventing the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Through the continuous capacity building of specialized officials, the strengthening of legal frameworks (particularly advancing the draft WMD-STM Law and the biosecurity legal framework), the formulation of the National Action Plan for implementing UNSCR 1540 (2004), and the enhancement of cooperation on CBRN emergency response. Cambodia will continue to make full contributions to mitigating threats to ensure peace, stability, and security, both regionally and globally, in accordance with the principles of multilateralism and the Charter of the United Nations.

E. Defence Digital Transformation and Cybersecurity

The Ministry of National Defence of the Kingdom of Cambodia assesses that the regional security environment continues to evolve amid increasingly complex traditional and non-traditional security challenges. The rapid advancement of digital technologies, increasing dependence on interconnected information systems, and the emergence of disruptive technologies have transformed the defence environment while creating new vulnerabilities to cyber threats. Malicious cyber activities, including cyber espionage, Advanced Persistent Threats (APTs), ransomware, Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) attacks, supply chain compromises, cyber-enabled information operations, and attacks against critical information infrastructure pose increasing risks to military command and control systems, defence communications, intelligence networks, and operational readiness. At the same time, the development of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), cloud computing, big data, autonomous systems, quantum technologies, and space-based capabilities, presents both opportunities and new challenges for defence establishments.

Recognizing these developments, the Ministry of National Defence continues to strengthen cyber defence as an integral component of national defence while supporting the Royal Government of Cambodia's digital transformation agenda. These efforts are aligned with the Defence White Paper 2023, which outlines Cambodia's strategic vision for strengthening national defence capabilities through 2030. The White Paper identifies cybersecurity as a strategic priority and establishes six key pillars for the development of national cyber capabilities: strengthening the cyber legal framework, promoting an integrated whole-of-government approach, developing a skilled cyber workforce, enhancing cyber capacity development, expanding international cooperation, and promoting research and development in cybersecurity. These strategic priorities guide the Ministry of National Defence in strengthening cyber resilience, accelerating secure digital transformation, and enhancing the operational effectiveness of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces.

In support of the Royal Government's Pentagonal Strategy–Phase I and Digital Government Policy, the Ministry of National Defence continues to modernize its defence

digital ecosystem through the development of secure digital infrastructure, modernization of secure defence data centre capabilities, enhancement of secure defence communication systems, and improvement of defence information systems and the protection of defence information infrastructure. The Ministry also continues to strengthen cyber governance, enhance cyber situational awareness, improve cyber incident response capabilities, implement cyber risk management practices, and develop professional cyber personnel through education, specialized training, technical exchanges, and regional capacity-building programmes. In addition, the Ministry continues to strengthen secure military communication networks and digital information systems to ensure resilient command and control capabilities in an increasingly complex operational environment. Collectively, these initiatives enhance command and control, improve operational readiness, strengthen the resilience of defence information systems, and provide a secure digital foundation for future defence operations.

The establishment of the Digital Security Committee in 2024 has further strengthened national coordination among relevant authorities responsible for cybersecurity, cybercrime, cyber defence, and international cyber cooperation. In accordance with its mandate, the Ministry of National Defence actively contributes to this whole-of-government mechanism by strengthening national cyber defence capabilities, protecting defence information infrastructure, and supporting coordinated national efforts to enhance cyber resilience and digital security.

Cambodia actively supports practical defence cybersecurity cooperation through ASEAN-led mechanisms and regional defence dialogue platforms. The Ministry of National Defence continues to actively participate in initiatives under the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), including the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI), ASEAN Our Eyes (AOE), the ASEAN Cyber Defence Network (ACDN), and the ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence (ACICE). Cambodia also contributes to regional cooperation through the ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee (ASEAN Cyber-CC), the Japan–ASEAN Cybersecurity Capacity Building Programme, the ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and the Use of Information and Communications Technologies (ARF ISM on ICT Security), the Seoul Defence Dialogue Cyber and Space Security Working Group, the Digital Defence Symposium, and the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Future Conflict Workshop. In addition, Cambodia has actively participated in professional development programmes on cyber norms, cyber incident response, and countering disinformation and misinformation. These engagements have strengthened professional exchanges, enhanced technical expertise, promoted confidence-building measures, and facilitated the sharing of operational experience and best practices among regional defence establishments.

During the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Cybersecurity (EWG-CS) 2024–2027 cycle, Cambodia and Australia, as Co-Chairs, have continued to advance practical regional cybersecurity cooperation under the ADMM-Plus framework. Throughout the cycle, the Co-Chairs have successfully convened the 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th ADMM-Plus EWG on Cybersecurity Meetings, together with the Virtual Preparatory Meetings (VPMs), the Initial Planning Conference (IPC), the Middle Planning Conference (MPC), the Final Planning Conference (FPC), and the Tabletop Exercise (TTX) in preparation for Exercise Trident Resolve. These activities have strengthened

policy dialogue, interoperability, information sharing, confidence-building, and practical cooperation among ASEAN Member States and Plus Countries in addressing evolving cyber threats.

A major deliverable of the current EWG-CS cycle is Exercise Trident Resolve, which will be conducted in Indonesia from 20 to 26 September 2026. From the cybersecurity perspective, the exercise provides a practical opportunity to validate cyber incident response planning and procedures, strengthen interoperability, improve information sharing, and enhance coordination among participating defence establishments in responding to complex cyber incidents. The exercise demonstrates ASEAN's continued commitment to strengthening collective cyber resilience through practical multinational cyber defence cooperation.

In addition, Cambodia and Australia, in cooperation with the ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence (ACICE), have developed the ADMM-Plus EWG on Cybersecurity Web Portal as a collaborative platform for information sharing, coordination, knowledge exchange, and institutional collaboration among ASEAN Member States and Plus Countries. The Web Portal supports year-round cooperation through the secure sharing of meeting documents, planning resources, lessons learned, best practices, and reference materials, thereby supporting continuous collaboration throughout the EWG-CS cycle and strengthening regional cybersecurity cooperation and institutional resilience.

Through these activities, the Co-Chairs have strengthened mutual trust, enhanced practical cooperation, and promoted the exchange of operational experience among ASEAN Member States and Plus Countries.

Collectively, these efforts demonstrate Cambodia's commitment to strengthening defence digital transformation, modernizing defence information technology, enhancing cyber resilience, and promoting practical defence cooperation under ASEAN-led mechanisms. Cambodia remains committed to working with ASEAN Member States and Dialogue Partners to build a secure, resilient, and interoperable regional cybersecurity environment.

II. Future Trends on Regional Security

A. Defence Digital Transformation and Cybersecurity

The Ministry of National Defence assesses that cyberspace will continue to evolve as a critical operational domain with increasing implications for defence and regional security. The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, cloud computing, autonomous systems, big data, and space-based capabilities will continue to transform military operations, command and control, intelligence, logistics, and defence planning. While these technologies provide significant opportunities to enhance operational effectiveness and interoperability, they also introduce new vulnerabilities that may be exploited through attacks targeting military information systems, critical defence infrastructure, cyber espionage, hybrid operations, and disinformation campaigns.

To address these evolving challenges, Cambodia believes that ASEAN should continue to strengthen practical defence cybersecurity cooperation through the ADMM and ADMM-Plus by promoting trusted information sharing, expanding multinational cyber exercises, enhancing cyber confidence-building measures, developing professional cyber workforces, strengthening cyber capacity-building, and encouraging collaboration on emerging and disruptive technologies. Practical exercises such as Exercise Trident Resolve, together with continued cooperation through regional initiatives including the ASEAN Cyber Defence Network (ACDN) and the ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence (ACICE), will further strengthen regional preparedness, interoperability, and collective cyber resilience.

Looking ahead, the Ministry of National Defence will continue to modernize defence digital capabilities by strengthening secure digital infrastructure, enhancing defence information systems, improving cyber governance, developing professional cyber expertise, and reinforcing the resilience of military communications and critical defence infrastructure. Cambodia remains committed to working closely with ASEAN Member States and Dialogue Partners to promote responsible State behaviour in cyberspace in accordance with international law and the United Nations framework on responsible State behaviour in cyberspace, while advancing practical defence cooperation that contributes to regional peace, security, stability, and prosperity.

The Ministry of National Defence will continue to strengthen partnerships with ASEAN Member States and Dialogue Partners to promote innovation, capacity building, and practical cooperation in defence cybersecurity. Cambodia reaffirms its commitment to ASEAN Centrality and to strengthening practical defence cooperation that contributes to regional peace, security, stability, and prosperity.

B. Promoting Peace through Historical Education, Defence Diplomacy and Regional Cooperation

Cambodia has continued to make active contributions to promoting regional peace, stability, and security by upholding the principles of the peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and the ASEAN Charter, while reinforcing ASEAN Centrality and multilateral cooperation. Drawing upon its successful experience in ending decades of protracted armed conflict and achieving complete national reconciliation and unity,

Cambodia has promoted the sharing of ideas, experiences, and knowledge on national reconciliation, conflict prevention, and sustainable peacebuilding through education, research, and regional cooperation. These efforts have contributed to fostering mutual trust, enhancing shared understanding, and maintaining a peaceful and stable regional environment.

In this regard, Cambodia has continued to develop and promote the Win Win Memorial as a symbol of peace, the peaceful settlement of conflicts, and successful national reconciliation. Beyond being a historical landmark, the Win Win Memorial serves as a centre for education, research, and knowledge sharing on Cambodia's experience in peacebuilding, national unity, and conflict prevention. Through the establishment of museums, exhibitions, educational programmes, study visits, and exchanges with national and international visitors, the Win Win Memorial promotes the values of peace, tolerance, reconciliation, and the peaceful settlement of disputes, thereby contributing to confidence-building and the promotion of sustainable peace within ASEAN and beyond.

At the same time, Cambodia has promoted the development of historical museums and military history education to preserve, collect, research, and disseminate historical records, artefacts, and lessons relating to national defence, nation-building, and Cambodia's journey towards enduring peace. Through museums, educational programmes, academic research, and public outreach activities, Cambodia has enhanced awareness among youth, members of the armed forces, researchers, and the wider public of the lessons of history, the value of peace, and the importance of respecting international law and resolving disputes through peaceful means. These initiatives have contributed to strengthening a culture of peace, enhancing shared understanding, and building mutual trust among ASEAN Member States.

In addition to preserving and promoting national history, Cambodia has advanced regional cooperation in military history through the ASEAN Military History Institutions' Cooperation (AMHIC). This initiative aims to strengthen cooperation among ASEAN military history institutions by promoting collaborative research, knowledge exchange, the preservation of military historical heritage, and public education. By sharing historical experiences and lessons learned, Cambodia believes that a deeper understanding of the region's shared history will strengthen mutual understanding, reinforce confidence-building, prevent future conflicts, and promote a culture of peace among ASEAN Member States.

Furthermore, Cambodia has remained actively engaged in the Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions (NADI), which serves as an important Track II mechanism supporting the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM). Through strategic research, policy dialogue, and the formulation of policy recommendations on emerging regional security issues, NADI plays a significant role in generating strategic ideas and providing valuable policy inputs to support ADMM deliberations and decision-making. As an active member of NADI, Cambodia continues to contribute to strengthening strategic dialogue, confidence-building, knowledge sharing, and defence cooperation in support of maintaining lasting peace, stability, and security in the ASEAN region.

C. Strengthening ASEAN Resilience through Defence Education

The regional security environment in 2026 continues to evolve amid the convergence

of traditional and non-traditional security challenges. Strategic competition, rapid technological advancement, cyber threats, transnational organized crime, climate change, misinformation, disinformation, public health emergencies, and the growing influence of non-state actors increasingly shape the Asia-Pacific security landscape. These interconnected challenges transcend national borders and highlight the importance of strengthening resilience, promoting mutual trust, and enhancing practical cooperation among ASEAN Member States.

In responding to these challenges, ASEAN continues to demonstrate the enduring value of its Centrality by providing an inclusive platform for dialogue, confidence-building, and regional cooperation. Guided by the ASEAN Charter, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), and the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, ASEAN remains committed to promoting peace, stability, mutual respect, and sustainable development through consensus, respect for sovereignty, non-interference, and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Preserving ASEAN unity remains fundamental to maintaining regional peace and prosperity.

From Cambodia's perspective, sustainable security depends not only on capable defence forces but also on resilient institutions, strategic leadership, sound policymaking, and strong regional partnerships. Defence education therefore represents a strategic investment in preparing future military leaders with professional competence, strategic foresight, critical thinking, ethical leadership, and the ability to address increasingly complex security challenges. As technological innovation continues to transform the character of conflict, professional military education should also strengthen understanding of artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, autonomous systems, space technologies, digital information environments, and resilience against misinformation, disinformation, and foreign information manipulation.

Climate change has likewise emerged as a significant security concern for Southeast Asia. More frequent natural disasters, environmental degradation, food and water insecurity, and climate-induced displacement continue to affect national resilience and regional stability. Strengthening cooperation in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), disaster preparedness, civil-military coordination, and climate security research will enhance ASEAN's collective capacity to anticipate, respond to, and recover from future crises while supporting sustainable development.

Addressing today's multidimensional security challenges requires a comprehensive and cooperative approach that integrates both traditional and non-traditional security dimensions. Maritime security, counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, transnational organized crime, trafficking in persons, protection of critical infrastructure, and health security all require closer collaboration among defence establishments, civilian agencies, academic institutions, and Dialogue Partners. Such cooperation reinforces regional resilience while preserving trust, stability, and ASEAN Centrality.

Within this context, defence education institutions have an increasingly important role in supporting ASEAN's long-term security objectives. Beyond educating future military leaders, they provide platforms for strategic dialogue, policy research, leadership development, confidence-building, and academic exchange. Expanding cooperation through joint research, faculty exchanges, student mobility, scenario-based exercises, and curriculum development will strengthen mutual understanding

and contribute to a more resilient regional security community.

As Cambodia's premier institution for higher defence education, the Cambodian National Defence University (CNDU) remains committed to supporting these shared objectives. Through its active participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum Heads of Defence Universities Colleges Institutions Meeting (ARF HDUCIM), CNDU contributes to confidence-building by promoting strategic dialogue, academic cooperation, and professional exchanges among defence education institutions. In parallel, CNDU supports the continued development of the ASEAN Defence Educational Institutions Collaboration (ADEIC) as a complementary platform that enhances educational cooperation, collaborative research, curriculum development, faculty exchanges, and professional networking in support of ASEAN defence cooperation.

Looking ahead, strengthening linkages between defence education institutions and existing ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM-Plus, can further reinforce the educational, research, and leadership dimensions that underpin practical defence cooperation. Continued investment in people, knowledge, innovation, and trusted partnerships will help cultivate a new generation of military leaders equipped with regional awareness, strategic thinking, and a shared commitment to ASEAN's principles, while supporting evidence-based policymaking and long-term regional resilience.

To further advance ASEAN's collective security agenda, the Cambodian National Defence University respectfully recommends: (1) strengthening cooperation among ASEAN defence education institutions through expanded faculty exchanges, joint research, curriculum development, and professional military education programmes; (2) enhancing ASEAN's strategic foresight through collaborative research and scenario-planning on emerging issues, including artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, climate security, hybrid threats, and critical technologies; and (3) promoting a whole-of-ASEAN approach by strengthening cooperation among defence institutions, civilian agencies, academia, and Dialogue Partners to improve preparedness for both traditional and non-traditional security challenges while reinforcing ASEAN Centrality and supporting the implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045.

CNDU reaffirms its commitment to supporting Cambodia's defence policy and contributing to ASEAN's shared aspiration for a peaceful, secure, resilient, and prosperous region through defence education, strategic research, and international cooperation.

D. Counterterrorism

In today's multipolar global environment, marked by rapidly shifting political currents, the Kingdom of Cambodia is closely monitoring the growing risk of radicalization and terrorism enabled by greater global connectivity and the increasing accessibility of artificial intelligence technology. To prevent and respond effectively to this growing threat, the National Counter Terrorism Special Forces has continued its initiative to deepen international and regional cooperation on counter-terrorism.

Cambodia has long participated actively in ASEAN mechanisms to prevent and respond to radicalization and terrorism through the sharing of analytical information and statistics. In recent years, Cambodia has significantly expanded its monitoring and intervention operations to strengthen land border security against transnational crimes, including weapons smuggling and online scam operations, which may directly

or indirectly finance radicalization and terrorist activities.

Cambodia continues to strengthen relevant enforcement authorities at both the national and international levels, with an emphasis on information sharing, risk and threat analysis, and operational response. At the same time, Cambodia is advancing its artificial intelligence capabilities and national cyberspace security to improve its ability to detect and prevent the spread of radicalization and terrorism.

Cambodia will continue investing in modern counter-terrorism solutions, particularly artificial intelligence for early detection and warning, while prioritizing interoperability with ASEAN partners.

Shaped by a history of hardship and perseverance, Cambodia deeply understands the value of peace, stability, and security. Cambodia remains committed to the ASEAN Vision on Security, Stability, and Integration, working to mitigate the risks of radicalization, terrorism, and transnational crime for the safety of the people of ASEAN.

E. Peacekeeping Operations

The Royal Gendarmerie of Cambodia plays a significant role in UN Peacekeeping Operations by focusing on expanding its specialized technical contributions to UN peacekeeping, driving female deployments, and strengthening regional tripartite training programs, aiming to shift from merely providing troops to institutionalizing niche regional capabilities.

F. Specific Regional Focuses and Operational Outlooks Include:

1. **Specialized Forces and Capabilities:** Cambodia is concentrating on UN Peacekeeping operations like engineering, medical support, drone technology, and humanitarian demining. Further, The Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF), including the Royal Gendarmerie of Cambodia, regularly participate in ASEAN and ADMM-Plus HADR table-top exercises (TTX), field training exercises (FTX), and multinational disaster response activities. These exercises strengthen operational coordination, command and control, civil-military cooperation (CIMIC), and interoperability among participating countries.
2. **The ASEAN Peacekeeper Corps Network (APCN):** Cambodia will continue efforts to formalize the APCN to promote regional connectivity, interoperability, and the exchange of expertise among all Member States. From ASEAN Peacekeeping Centres Network (APCN), which coordinates peacekeeping training and interoperability among Member States, Cambodian delegates will continue to regularly participate in regional APCN summits and host key workshops aimed at advancing regional peacekeeping capabilities.
3. **Female Empowerment:** Cambodia is heavily aligning with the UN Gender Equality Strategy by targeting and sustaining higher deployments of uniformed women troops in UN missions. Cambodia has also emerged as a regional leader in the UN's Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, currently ranking 13th globally and 2nd in ASEAN for deploying female peacekeepers. Between 2006 and 2026, the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) deployed nearly 1,000 women across 10 countries.
4. **Triangular Partnerships:** Ongoing training initiatives—such as the Triangular Partnership Programme for peacekeeping—reflect the region's commitment to continuous capacity-building.

a) **UN Triangular Partnership Programme (TPP):** Cambodia will continue to advance the TPP programs hosted in Cambodia, this initiative involves partnerships between the UN, Cambodia, and nations like Japan, Canada, Australia, and South Korea. Cambodia coordinates engineering and Counter-Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) training.

b) **TRIANGLE in ASEAN:** Cambodia will continue to participate in the platform backed by Australia and Canada and implemented by the ILO, this decade-long program (ending late 2025) maximizes the contributions of labor migration in Cambodia, Thailand, and Malaysia. It operates Migrant Worker Resource Centres (MRCs).

5. **Regional Peace and Security:** While ASEAN itself does not conduct independent peacekeeping operations, Cambodia works closely with member states to foster regional peace and security. This includes Cambodia utilizes the Win-Win Policy for internal peacebuilding models and participating in ASEAN Observer Teams during regional border disputes. As the region is highly vulnerable to natural disasters, climate change, public health emergencies, border disputes, and other non-traditional security challenges, Cambodia remains committed to strengthening regional preparedness, resilience, and interoperability through active participation in ASEAN-led initiatives.

Indonesia



I. Security Concerns in the Region, National Defense and Security Policy

A. Security Concerns Common to the ASEAN Community

Indonesia views regional security outlook as multidimensional, shaped by intensifying great power rivalry, growing strategic uncertainty, and the increasing intersection between traditional and non-traditional threats. Global geopolitical developments, ongoing conflicts, and nuclear modernization of nuclear heighten risk of escalation with implications for Southeast Asia's peace and stability.

Maritime security challenges are increasingly affected by spillover effects from external tensions. Rising instability abroad intensifies pressures in Indonesian waters, particularly through the rerouting of tanker traffic into alternative sea lanes. Escalating global tensions have increased foreign naval presence, testing freedom of navigation. The Indonesian Maritime Information Center (IMIC) report highlights a notable 30-percent increase in traffic through the Sunda Strait in 2026, as vessels shift away from the Malacca Strait. This surge not only raises the risk of maritime crimes and accidents but also introduces new layers of security concerns.

Traditional threats, such as smuggling, illicit drug trafficking, IUU fishing, and trafficking in person continue to evolve. IMIC data recorded peaks in 2025 (91 smuggling cases, 83 wildlife trafficking incidents, 61 IUU fishing cases). While early 2026 figures show declines, smuggling and ecosystem damage remain high-priority concerns, with 20 cases of marine degradation. As the world's largest archipelagic state, Indonesia must safeguard over 17,000 islands and maritime zones against IUU fishing, piracy, terrorism, and jurisdictional encroachments, requiring vigilance, law enforcement, and cooperation.

While often seen as fisheries management issue, IUU fishing is closely tied to transnational organized crime, including TIP, forced labor on fishing boats, and fraudulent vessel documents. Because of this, Indonesia prosecutes IUU fishing not just as administrative matters but as serious criminal offenses. Through cooperation with UNODC's Global Maritime Crime Program, Indonesia strengthens efforts to combat maritime crime and safeguard its seas.

Concurrently, dynamics and elevated maritime activities in the South China Sea present challenges to regional stability, broadening the scope for miscalculation and misunderstanding. In this context, it is important to uphold ASEAN centrality in managing regional dynamics, fostering trust, and ensuring that disputes are addressed through the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, particularly UNCLOS 1982.

Indonesia reaffirms the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety, and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea and recognizes the benefits of having the South China Sea as a sea of peace, stability, prosperity, and sustainable development. In this regard, Indonesia underscores the importance of the full and effective implementation of the DOC in its entirety.

As such, Indonesia remains committed to the early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct (COC), consistent with international law, particularly the 1982 UNCLOS. To this end, Indonesia stresses the importance of maintaining an environment conducive to the negotiations, including in the South China Sea, while continuing to advance practical measures to reduce tensions and the risk of accidents, misunderstandings, and miscalculation.

On another note, cybersecurity has emerged as a strategic challenge. The rapid digital transformation across ASEAN has boosted connectivity and digital economic growth, but it has also expanded the scope of cyberattacks. Current threats go beyond conventional cybercrime, encompassing attacks on Critical Information Infrastructure (CII), ransomware, data theft, digital supply chain breaches, misuse of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and rising online scams that undermine regional economic stability and security, and targeting victims across multiple jurisdictions, making them inherently transnational in nature.

Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and People Smuggling have become increasingly complex, driven by digital platforms, encrypted communication applications, and online recruitment. Networks exploit social media and cross-border financial systems to facilitate online scams, Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC), and other forms of cross-border exploitation. These developments require stronger, and integrated cooperation that prioritizes victim protection and effective cross-jurisdictional law enforcement.

Furthermore, the illicit drugs trafficking remains a serious threat with syndicates exploiting maritime routes, logistics, and digital platforms. Money laundering, fueled by financial innovations and crypto assets, enables wider transnational crimes, including drug trafficking, TIP, cybercrime, corruption, and terrorism financing, requiring enhanced detection, cross-border cooperation, and stronger corporate liability frameworks.

Terrorism and violent extremism, amplified by digital technologies, on the other hand, continue to challenge regional security. Terrorist groups exploit social media, encrypted platforms, AI, and virtual assets to drive radicalization, propaganda, recruitment, financing, and cross-border coordination. Effective responses must balance prevention and enforcement.

In the same vein, Indonesia also considers food security an integral component of human security and sustainable development. Climate disruptions, supply chain volatility, and geopolitical tensions affect food availability, affordability, and accessibility and stability across the region.

Whilst increasing concern over energy security, the growing interest in developing nuclear power program, including Nuclear Power Plants (NPPs) and Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), underscores the importance of strengthening nuclear safety, security, and safeguards. These efforts are essential to ensure that nuclear energy is used exclusively for peaceful purposes. At the same time, complex supply chains and emerging technologies heighten the risk of the misuse of sensitive items, dual-use goods, and raise proliferation risks, underscoring the importance of strategic trade controls and UNSCR 1540 implementation.

B. Individual National Defense Policies

Indonesia's defense policy is directed towards safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity through the development of an adaptive, responsive, and credible defense posture. This is carried out by improving operational readiness, strengthening unit capabilities, modernizing defense equipment, and reinforcing an integrated command and control system.

The overarching framework for Indonesia's National Security and Defense Policy is governed by the principles of the Total People's Defense and Security System *(Sistem Pertahanan dan Keamanan Rakyat Semesta/ Sishankamrata)*.

- **Definition & Scope:** State Defense encompasses all efforts to defend state sovereignty, the territorial integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, and the safety of the entire nation from threats and disturbances.
- **Total Defense System:** The defense system involves all citizens, territories, and national resources, prepared by the government, and organized in a total, integrated, directed, and continuous manner.
- **Military and Non-Military Integration:** The defense system consists of military Defense to counter military threats (with the Indonesian National Armed Forces/TNI as the main component) and non-military Defense to counter non-military threats (with non-Defense government institutions as the main elements).
- **Defensive Active Doctrine:** The Defense system holds a "defensive active" principle rooted in the nation's struggle values: love peace but love independence more.

C. National Contribution to Promoting Regional Security

Nonproliferation and Disarmament

Indonesia, as part of its commitment to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) non-proliferation, is party to key international treaties such as the NPT, TPNW, CTBT, CWC, BWC, and SEANWFZ. It also seeks to uphold multilateralism and strengthen global disarmament through balanced NPT implementation, universalization of the TPNW, acceleration of CTBT entry into force, and expansion of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Indonesia continues to support the implementation of the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty. Indonesia stands ready to intensify efforts between ASEAN and the Nuclear-Weapon States (NWS) to resolve all outstanding issues, with a view to securing the earliest possible signing and ratification of the SEANWFZ Protocol by the NWS. Indonesia reaffirms that non-proliferation policies must not undermine the inalienable right of States to acquire, access, import, or export nuclear materials, equipment, and technology for peaceful purposes.

Moreover, Indonesia remains firmly committed to advancing complete nuclear disarmament, strengthening the global nuclear non-proliferation regime under the NPT, promoting the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and supporting the implementation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Indonesia also continues to actively promote ASEAN's common position in relevant international forums, including the United Nations General Assembly and the NPT Review Conference, consistently emphasizing that the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of nuclear weapons is their total elimination.

Indonesia continues to contribute to the regional objectives on nuclear safety, nuclear security and safeguard for peaceful purposes through the implementation of safeguards in accordance with the standards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), strengthened national oversight of nuclear material by the Nuclear Energy Regulatory Agency of Indonesia (BAPETEN), and the enhancement of the physical protection framework for nuclear installations and nuclear material, including through national legislation on the Physical Protection System for Nuclear Installations and Nuclear Material.

Indonesia will continue to actively support regional capacity-building through technical cooperation, training program, and knowledge-sharing platforms, including the Asia-Pacific Safeguards Network (APSN), while also

maintaining an active role within the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM), particularly in the field of radiological and nuclear security.

Recognizing the persistent threat of illicit trafficking of radioactive and nuclear materials, Indonesia is also strengthening its National Nuclear Security Detection Architecture (NSDA). As part of this effort, Indonesia is expanding and upgrading its network of Radiation Portal Monitors (RPMs) at strategic locations, including major seaports, airports, land border crossings, and industrial areas. In parallel, BAPETEN, in close coordination with relevant national authorities, is finalizing a comprehensive national threat assessment based on the inventory of licensed radioactive sources, nuclear materials, and their transportation patterns.

Indonesia is developing a comprehensive Strategic Trade Management (STM) policy framework, encompassing the development of oversight mechanisms for the export of nuclear dual-use goods, the preparation of regulatory frameworks governing nuclear dual-use items, and strengthened inter-agency coordination for export control implementation. Indonesia also advocates a balanced and inclusive regional approach to Strategic Trade Management that facilitates legitimate trade while ensuring effective controls over strategic commodities and technologies in accordance with international obligations under the NPT, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

Defense Cooperation

Indonesia continues to promote strategic dialogue and practical cooperation among ASEAN Member States and ADMM-Plus countries by focusing on strengthening cooperation, interoperability, and coordination among military medical services and enhancing collective readiness and regional capacity in responding to health emergencies, disasters, and humanitarian crises.

As part of the three-year work plan, Indonesia will be hosting the Combined Field Training Exercise among the EWG on Military Medicine, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief and Cyber Security in September 2026 in Banten, Indonesia, simultaneously with the Project-based Community Medical Deployment/Medical Aid Provisions (PCMD/MAP) as the capstone activity of the co-chairmanship.

Indonesia champions the initiative of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) from a Defense Perspective during its Chairmanship in ASEAN in 2023 as a Defense cooperation initiative that creates opportunities for ASEAN to collaborate with countries outside the region to enhance maritime security cooperation. This initiative was first implemented through the Maritime Cooperation and Connectivity Conference (MCCC): An Implementation Project of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) from a Defense Perspective, held in Jakarta from 2–5 December 2024. Through this initiative, Indonesia reinforces ASEAN's role as an open, inclusive, non-aligned and contributing to the maintenance of regional and global peace, security, and stability.

Indonesia also promotes transparency, confidence-building measures (CBMs), and capacity-building initiatives to address Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) threats in ADMM mechanism. These efforts are aligned with Indonesia's 2025–2029 General Defense Policy, which recognizes CBRN threats as part of both military and non-military security challenges requiring enhanced national preparedness and international cooperation.

Terrorism and Violent Extremism

Indonesia is contributing to initiatives such as the *Good Practice Guide on Rehabilitation and Reintegration of FTFs*, co-proposing projects with Russia on radicalization and terrorism financing, and the *ASEAN Declaration on the Use of Sports* adopted in 2025. It also strengthens inter-agency synergy, enhances oversight of terrorism financing, including virtual assets, and supports drafting the *ASEAN Handbook on Non-Profit Organizations*. These efforts reflect Indonesia's balanced approach, combining law enforcement, prevention, rehabilitation, and community empowerment.

At the national level, Indonesia has launched the second phase of the *National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism that Leads to Terrorism* (RAN PE) 2026-2029.

This updated Action Plan adopts a thematic approach anchored in the concept of human security, with nine priority areas, ranging from national preparedness and community resilience to protection of women. In parallel, Indonesia is also advancing efforts to strengthen early detection and crisis response. This initiative is intended to enhance coordination across relevant institutions and serve as a fusion center in assessing threat levels and managing responses to terrorism-related crises.

Recent analysis by BNPT's *Indonesia Knowledge Hub (I-KHub)* highlights evolving terrorism trends between 2023 and 2025. The findings highlight both progress and emerging challenges that shape the current threat landscape, namely:

1. Persistent and adaptive threat despite zero completed terrorist attacks;
2. Sustained terrorist activity and support networks;
3. Dominance of ISIL-affiliated networks;
4. Consistent targeting patterns;
5. Demographic profile of perpetrators;
6. Women's involvement in supporting roles;
7. Three patterns of digital-terror nexus;
8. Recidivism and prison radicalization risks;
9. Adaptive terrorism financing; and,
10. Geographic spread and digital exposure.

Regionally, Indonesia serves as the Voluntary Lead Shepherd (VLS) for ASEAN SOMTC's counter-terrorism priority area. Indonesia has led the implementation of its regional CT initiatives under the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism (2018-2026), and its Implementation Work Plan, the Bali Work Plan (2019-2026). Currently, Indonesia is also leading the development of the successor document to the ASEAN Plan of Action on Preventing and Countering the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism, as well as the Bali Work Plan, both of which are set to conclude in 2026.

Indonesia also contributes through the ASEAN Our Eyes (AOE) under the ADMM framework, exchanging strategic information to prevent and counter the threats of terrorism, radicalism and violent extremism. Indonesia hosted the 10th ASEAN Our Eyes Working Group Meeting in June 2026 in Yogyakarta. These efforts are aligned with Indonesia's 2025–2029 General Defense Policy, which emphasizes an integrated and collaborative approach to addressing both conventional and non-conventional security threats.

In international context, Indonesia initiated the ECOSOC resolution on the "Treatment of Children Associated with Terrorist Groups, Including Children Who are Recruited and Exploited by Those Groups," adopted in the 33rd CCPCJ Meeting, Vienna, 17 May 2024 with 36 countries co-sponsoring it.

Measures Against Terrorist Financing

Indonesia is a member of FATF since 2023. In terms of technical compliance, on May 28, 2025, FATF officially upgraded Indonesia's rating for Recommendation 7 (Targeted Financial Sanctions related to proliferation) from Partially Compliant (PC) to Largely Compliant (LC). It reflects continued progress in aligning with international standards. Building on this achievement, Indonesia is expected to reach full compliance status, with the endorsement at mid-2026 FATF Plenary.

This milestone underscores that Indonesia's financial oversight mechanisms and Financial Intelligence Unit functions are increasingly aligned with international standards.

In July 2025, FATF adopted two key reports. The first, *Comprehensive Updates on Terrorist Financing Risks* represents the most extensive global assessment of terrorist financing risks to date. It provides toolkits and risk indicators to help countries strengthen mitigation efforts and highlights key trends such as shifting geographical threats, decentralized financing by small cells and lone actors, and the growing use of digital platforms.

The second report, *Complex Proliferation Financing Sanctions and Evasion Scheme* updates FATF guidance to support Global Network members and the private sector in countering proliferation financing. Between 2024 and 2025, Indonesia also contributed to the Risk, Trends, and Methods Group (RTMG), providing case studies on terrorist financing trends involving the misuse of virtual assets, e-commerce, and social media.

Regionally, Indonesia has been active in advancing collaborative counter-terrorism financing (CTF) efforts through the ASEAN SOMTC mechanism. In partnership with the European Union and supported by the ESIWA+ program, SOMTC Indonesia is developing the *ASEAN Handbook on Preventing and Mitigating the Abuse of Non-Profit Organizations for Terrorism Financing*. A regional workshop co-hosted with Thailand and the EU in November 2025 further contributed to the draft, which will be circulated among ASEAN Member States for finalization and endorsement. Once adopted, the Handbook will be published on the ASEAN Secretariat website, providing practical guidance for regulators and non-profit organizations across the region.

Transnational Crime

Indonesia has been active in addressing transnational crimes under the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) framework, focusing on trafficking in persons (TIP), money laundering, illicit drug trafficking, cybercrime, and online scams. During its ASEAN Chairmanship in 2023, Indonesia initiated the *Labuan Bajo Declaration on Advancing Law Enforcement Cooperation in Combating Transnational Crime*, adopted at the 17th AMMTC, strengthening cooperation among law enforcement agencies across the region.

In addressing **cybercrime and online scams**, Indonesia continues to emphasize the effective use of existing ASEAN instruments, such as the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons (ACTIP), the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, and the newly adopted the ASEAN Treaty on Extradition, and police-to-police cooperation, as key mechanisms to strengthen regional collaboration in tackling online scams.

Building on this framework, Indonesia, through SOMTC actively contributes to the revision of the SOMTC Working Group's Terms of Reference, expanding its focus from cybercrime alone to include online scams. At the

operational level, Indonesian National Police (Polri) continues to reinforce law enforcement cooperation through active participation in ASEANAPOL, INTERPOL, and other multilateral forums. Indonesia also introduced the *Indonesia Anti-Scam Center* (IASC) as a best practice and proposed it as part of ASEAN Study Visit site to foster knowledge exchange.

Recognizing that online scams are often interlinked with other crimes such as trafficking in persons and money laundering, Indonesia underscores the importance of cross-pillar and cross-sectoral coordination, while ensuring victim protection remains central, balancing strong law enforcement with safeguarding victims' rights.

In combatting **trafficking persons**, Indonesia plays an active role through SOMTC Working Group on TIP, supporting the 2026–2028 Work Program with a focus on technology-driven trafficking, regional data systems, and effective ACTIP implementation. Through SOMTC WG on TIP, Indonesia proposed the ASEAN Standard Victim Assessment Form to harmonize victim identification, strengthen legal certainty, and reduce trauma. These efforts reflect Indonesia's commitment to a victim-centered approach that combines law enforcement with protection, recovery, and rights fulfillment. In 2023, Indonesia also initiated the *ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Combating TIP Caused by Abuse of Technology*, adopted at the 42nd ASEAN Summit, underscoring concerns of increasing abuse of technology in facilitating trafficking TIP and collective efforts to address it.

Indonesia co-established the *Bali Process* with Australia in 2002, now comprising 49 members and 28 observers, serving as a unique platform for dialogue and cooperation against people smuggling and trafficking. It serves as the only Regional Consultative Process (RCP) that brings together the participation of countries of origin, transit, and destination.

On **cybersecurity**, Indonesia supports the implementation of the ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy (ACCS) 2026–2030 as a regional framework to strengthen resilience, build trust, and foster closer cooperation among ASEAN member states. Aligned with ACCS 2026–2030, Indonesia National Cyber and Crypto Agency (BSSN) continues to, among others, enhance national capacity, improved detection and incident response, and deeper collaboration with national and international stakeholders.

BSSN also plays an active role in ASEAN cybersecurity cooperation mechanisms, including the ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee (ASEAN Cyber-CC), ASEAN Network Security Action Council (ANSAC), ASEAN–Japan Cybersecurity Working Group (AJCWG), and ASEAN–Japan Cybersecurity Policy Meeting (AJCPM). Through these forums, Indonesia promotes stronger collaboration in threat information sharing and capacity building.

On tackling **money laundering**, Indonesia plays an active role in strengthening ASEAN's response to money laundering through the SOMTC Working Group on Money Laundering (WG on ML). Indonesia also supports collaboration via the ASEAN Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions (DNFBPs) Forum as a platform for best practice sharing and welcomes capacity-building initiatives such as the ASEAN–India Investigation of Economic Offences Training Program and the ASEAN Financial Intelligence Analyst Course (FIAC).

On **illicit drug trafficking**, Indonesia participate actively in ASEAN mechanisms, including the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD), the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (AMMD), and the implementation of the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs 2016–2025, promoting a balanced approach that integrates

supply and demand reduction, preventive education, treatment, rehabilitation, and international cooperation.

As the current chair of ASOD Preventive Education Working Group and co-chair of ASOD Plus Australia Consultation, Indonesia has actively contributed to provide policy recommendations across ASEAN. Within the framework of SOMTC, Indonesia has consistently promoted stronger synergy among member states in combating narcotics-related crime, that include enhancing information exchange, operational cooperation, strengthen border control, improve the detection of new psychoactive substances (NPS), and close coordination with related mechanisms such as AMMD, ASOD, ASEANAPOL, INTERPOL, UNODC, and other international partners.

Indonesia also continues to advance the "follow the money" approach in addressing drug trafficking by strengthening financial investigations, asset tracing, and coordination among law enforcement agencies and relevant institutions. In addition, Indonesia actively shares experiences and best practices on dismantling clandestine laboratories, intercepting maritime drug smuggling, addressing the misuse of logistics services, and countering the exploitation of digital technologies by narcotics syndicates.

In multilateral level, as a CND member for 2024–2027, Indonesia helps oversee implementation of international conventions on narcotic drugs and provides input on the control of narcotics, psychotropics, and their precursors.

Finally, in November 2025, Indonesia signed the **ASEAN Treaty on Extradition**, marking a significant milestone in ASEAN's collective efforts to combat transnational crime and strengthen regional legal cooperation. Indonesia is currently in the process of completing domestic procedures to ratify the ASEAN Treaty on Extradition so that the regional framework can take effect and benefit ASEAN Member States in its effort to combat transnational organized crime, including cybercrime and online scams.

Indonesia's Maritime Security Efforts

Indonesia continues to strengthen maritime security by enhancing defense capabilities, safeguarding national sovereignty, and reinforcing surveillance of strategic sea lanes. Through the ADMM and ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security, Indonesia promotes cooperation to improve i.e. domain awareness, information-sharing, interoperability, and capacity-building, contributing to regional stability.

Indonesia also continues to strengthen mari time cooperation with neighboring countries such as through trilateral Malacca Strait Patrol and coordinated patrols with the Philippines. These initiatives are complemented by broader collaboration with numbers of maritime law enforcement agencies, aimed at enhancing operational coordination and building mutual trust. By coordinating patrols, information sharing, and capacity building measures, Indonesia not only safeguards maritime safety and security but also upholds the principles of international law, particularly UNCLOS 1982.

Domestically, through *Bakamla* (Coast Guard) expanding maritime surveillance and institutional capacity. Coordinated patrols, stronger information-sharing, and community participation are key elements of this effort. This is facilitated through *Bakamla* RI's volunteer network, the *Relawan Penjaga Laut Nusantara* (RAPALA), which empowers citizens to play an active role in safeguarding national waters.

Maritime security is further upheld through close coordination among *Bakamla*, the Indonesian Navy and related agencies. In the North Natuna Sea, Indonesia continues to assert its sovereign rights in accordance with UNCLOS 1982 and actively monitors activities and enforce Indonesia's sovereign rights in its Exclusive Economic Zone.

At regional level, Indonesia actively supports and contributes to the adoption of the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Maritime Cooperation at the 48th ASEAN Summit in May 2026, underscoring the importance of maritime cooperation across all pillars and related sectoral bodies of ASEAN. This milestone serves as a foundation for ASEAN to advance maritime collaboration in all sectors, including the establishment of the ASEAN Coast Guard Forum (ACF) that will strengthen collective responses to evolving maritime security challenges and reinforcing the principles of regional stability.

Within the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Indonesia has advanced maritime security cooperation through its rotational co-chairmanship of the Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (2022–2026), including hosting the 17th ISM in Jakarta on 28-29 April 2026 with India and the United States. Its leadership highlighted the cross-sectoral nature of maritime security, addressing emerging challenges such as AI-enabled systems, cyber vulnerabilities, unmanned vessels, and threats to critical infrastructure, while linking maritime security to the Blue Economy including the convergence of IUU fishing, and sustainable ocean governance. Participants agreed to review the ARF Work Plan on Maritime Security in line with the Manila Plan of Action 2026–2036 and recommendations to revitalise the ARF, with closer coordination among ASEAN maritime mechanisms to enhance efficiency, responsiveness, and relevance. These efforts aim to strengthen regional maritime stability and reinforce the broader security architecture amid complex geopolitical dynamics.

Indonesia's Commitment to UN Peacekeeping

Indonesia remains committed to strengthening its contribution to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs). This commitment is reflected not only in the deployment of peacekeepers but also in continuous capacity-building, professional training, and enhanced international defense cooperation. Indonesia has further developed the capabilities of Indonesian Peacekeepers by improving their education and operational readiness in accordance with UN standards.

Currently, Indonesia is the world's 6th largest Troops & Police Contributing Country (TPCC), with 1,963 personnel (including 168 women) serving across seven UN peacekeeping missions: UNIFIL, MONUSCO, MINUSCA, MINURSO, UNISFA, UNMISS, and UNFICYP. Indonesia remains committed to sustaining and expanding its role as a net contributor to global peace and security, with special focus on empowering female peacekeepers as "agents of peace" and "agents of change," in line with UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 253.

At regional level, Indonesia continues to support and contribute to the regional cooperation in peacekeeping through the ASEAN Peacekeeping Centre Network and ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on PKO. As the initiator of the ASEAN Peacekeeping Centre Network, Indonesia continues to promote collaboration among the peacekeeping center network in ASEAN. This year, Indonesia will host the ASEAN Peacekeeping Exercise in October and November 2026.

Indonesia's Role in Promoting Human Rights

Indonesia views the promotion and protection of human rights as an integral part of maintaining peace, security, and stability in Southeast Asia. Constructive dialogue, stronger institutions, and regional cooperation on human rights help build public trust and strengthen ASEAN's resilience.

In 2026, Indonesia assumed the Presidency of the United Nations Human Rights Council, reflecting international confidence in its role as a bridge-builder and constructive multilateral partner. Under the theme "A Presidency for All," Indonesia has promoted dialogue, impartiality, inclusivity, consensus-building, and the effective participation of all regional groups. At the same time, it continues to support ASEAN coordination and the articulation of common positions in Geneva.

Indonesia has also advanced ASEAN's engagement with the UN system. Under its ASEAN Chairmanship in 2023, Indonesia initiated the first dedicated AICHR-UN Dialogue on Human Rights in Geneva, building on AICHR's annual cooperation with the OHCHR Regional Office for Southeast Asia. The Dialogue brought together AICHR representatives, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, OHCHR, UN treaty bodies, and Special Procedures to discuss a wide range of issues, including civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, the right to development, business and human rights, climate change, the rule of law, and civic space.

Equally important, Indonesia played a leading role in institutionalizing the ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue. As ASEAN Chair in 2023, Indonesia advanced the proposal for an ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on the ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue, which was adopted at the 43rd ASEAN Summit in Jakarta in September 2023. Indonesia subsequently chaired the Fifth ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue in 2023, jointly chaired the Sixth Dialogue with Lao PDR in 2024, and co-hosted and co-chaired the Seventh Dialogue with Malaysia and Thailand in 2025. Indonesia is also preparing to convene the Eight ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue in 2026 continuing its role in sustaining an ASEAN-led platform for candid, open, honest and constructive exchanges.

The Dialogue allows ASEAN Member States to exchange information on national human rights developments, implementation of international human rights instruments, and emerging regional challenges, with the meaningful involvement of national human rights institutions, civil society, and other stakeholders. By regularizing this Dialogue, Indonesia has helped strengthen mutual confidence, encourage peer learning, and support cooperative responses to human rights challenges.

On environmental and development rights, Indonesia was the co-proponents of the ASEAN Declaration on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment and the ASEAN Declaration on Promoting the Right to Development and the Right to Peace which was adopted in 2025. Indonesia has also advanced practical cooperation on human rights-based policing. In January 2026, AICHR Indonesia convened the Second ASEAN Dialogue on Human Rights and Policing in Jakarta, bringing together police institutions, government agencies, national human rights institutions, civil society and academia from the region. The initiative promoted professionalism, integrity, accountability, and the application of the principles of legality, necessity, and proportionality in law enforcement.

Indonesia has further played a significant role in mainstreaming a human rights-based and victim-centered approach to trafficking in persons. Through AICHR's cooperation with

SOMTC, AICHR Indonesia was the key initiator for the development and implementation of the ASEAN Guideline on the Implementation of the Non-Punishment Principle for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Persons. The Guideline provides practical direction to ensure that trafficking victims are not penalized for unlawful acts they were compelled to commit as a direct consequence of their exploitation, including in cases of forced criminality and online scams.

Through these initiatives, Indonesia has sought to move ASEAN human rights cooperation beyond norm-setting toward implementation, institutional effectiveness, evidence-based policymaking, and practical impact. These efforts reinforce AICHR's role as ASEAN's overarching human rights body and strengthen Indonesia's position as a regional and global advocate for constructive, inclusive, and results-oriented human rights cooperation.

Disaster Management

As a disaster-prone country located along the Ring of Fire, Indonesia places disaster risk reduction (DRR) at the core of its national agenda. In 2023, during its ASEAN Chairmanship, Indonesia initiated the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Sustainable Resilience, which established resilience as a framework to strengthen climate and disaster preparedness for sustainable development.

Building on this momentum, Indonesia serves as Chair of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) in 2026 under the theme *"From ASEAN to Global: Strengthening Local Communities' Preparedness and Leadership for Sustainable Resilience."* In this role, Indonesia leads the development of the AADMER Work Program 2026–2030, aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) and the *One ASEAN One Response approach through the AHA Centre*.

As part of its chairmanship, Indonesia hosted the 7th AADMER Partnership Conference in Jakarta on April 2, 2026, which secured pledges of about USD 25 million from 27 partners and organizations. These commitments focus on strengthening early warning systems, promoting local approaches, addressing the climate–disaster nexus, integrating gender equality and social inclusion (GEDSI), and enhancing the capacity of the AHA Centre. Contributions include technical assistance, capacity building, expert deployment, and other forms of support to ensure effective implementation of the AADMER Work Program.

In addition, Indonesia has initiated the *Regional Conference on Humanitarian Assistance* (RCHA)—the only state-led, 1.5-track platform in the Asia-Pacific region—bringing together governments, international organizations, and civil society to advance humanitarian cooperation.

II. Future Trends on Regional Security

Indonesia views future regional security as increasingly complex, shaped by both traditional conflicts—such as border disputes, military build-ups, and tensions in the South China Sea—and non-traditional challenges. The rise of digital technologies, cross-border connectivity, and global geopolitical dynamics are driving new threats, including cybercrime, online scams, illegal trafficking, money laundering, and terrorism financing, all of which exploit artificial intelligence, virtual assets, and encrypted platforms.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) adds both opportunities and risks. It can strengthen law enforcement and predictive analytics, but also enable cyberattacks, disinformation, and advanced fraud. Emerging technologies like quantum computing further heighten vulnerabilities, underscoring the need for ASEAN to prepare for Post-Quantum Cryptography (PQC) through best-practice exchanges and capacity-building. Beyond digital threats, ASEAN must also address pressing non-traditional issues such as energy and food security, which intersect with economic resilience and region's stability. To build long-term resilience, ASEAN must adopt integrated strategies that combine sustainability, resource management, and disaster preparedness.

Moreover, Indonesia emphasizes that effective responses to transnational crime and security challenges must be built on interoperable ecosystem of law enforcement cooperation by strengthening information-sharing, digital evidence exchange, cross-border financial investigations, and responsible use of AI.

Looking ahead, Indonesia encourages ASEAN to reinforce operational cooperation through timely information exchange, joint investigations, controlled delivery, and enhanced law enforcement capacity. At the same time, ASEAN must enhance cross-pillar and cross-sector coordination, adopt a comprehensive, cross-sectoral approach to non-traditional security challenges. These efforts will be essential to safeguard peace, stability, and prosperity in the region.

Lao PDR



I. Security Concerns in the Region and National Defence and Security Policies

A. Security Concerns Common to the ASEAN Community

The regional and international geopolitical and geoeconomic landscape continues to experience uncertainty and complexity, which have directly impacted the livelihoods of our peoples in the region. In addition, traditional and non-traditional security issues, such as the escalation of armed conflicts in some regions, cybersecurity threats and online scams, natural disasters, and food insecurity, continue to threaten peace, security and stability in the region and around the world. Nowadays, information and communication technology (ICT) plays a major role in shaping society, including in economic digitalisation. People are increasingly dependent on the internet for communication, commerce and other aspects of their lives. Thus, cybersecurity, particularly the prevention of online scams, has become an essential aspect of modern society.

The regional and international landscape remains complex and unpredictable, with ongoing tensions and conflicts in various parts of the world, including the situation in Myanmar, the Korean Peninsula, the Indo-Pacific and the Middle East, among others. The situation in the Middle East continues to be a grave concern for the international community and carries significant global implications beyond the immediate humanitarian crisis. Escalating tensions and instability in the region may adversely affect the global economy, particularly through disruptions to international trade routes, supply chains and financial markets. In this regard, all parties concerned must exercise utmost restraint, cease all acts of violence and work together to resolve the conflict through peaceful means, dialogue and diplomacy, which remain the only viable path to overcoming the current crisis and preventing the conflict from widening further.

B. Individual National Defence Policies

Overview of National Security and Defence Policy

Since the proclamation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in 1975, the Lao government has consistently pursued two strategic tasks of national defence and development with the participation of entire Lao multi-ethnic people in conjunction with socio-economic development and international cooperation in accordance with its foreign policy of peace, independence, friendship and cooperation.

To achieve these tasks, the Lao PDR firmly adheres to the policy of People's Comprehensive National Defence and Security so as to safeguard national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, to protect national interests and the entire Lao multi-ethnic people, and to ensure national security and social order, with a view to creating a favourable environment for the socio-economic development of the nation. Importantly, the Lao PDR's consistent policy is neither to participate in any military bloc or alliance, nor to allow foreign military bases in the territory of the Lao PDR, since its armed forces are for self-defence only.

C. National Contributions to Promoting Regional Security

The Lao PDR is fully committed to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, the ASEAN Charter and international law, and, pursuant

to its foreign policy of peace, independence, friendship and cooperation and the People's Comprehensive National Defence and Security Policy of self-defence, the Lao PDR has intensified its relations with friendly countries and regional and international organisations around the world through deepening and widening existing cooperation as well as exploring new possible areas of cooperation based on the principles of mutually beneficial cooperation and mutual understanding, trust and confidence. The Lao PDR is also open to the establishment of relations and cooperation with other friendly countries in accordance with its foreign policy.

To date, the Lao PDR has established diplomatic relations with 154 countries and actively participates in sub-regional, regional and international frameworks such as ASEAN and ASEAN-initiated or ASEAN-led frameworks, including ASEAN Plus One, APT, ARF, ADMM Plus, EAS, AMMTC, ASEANTOM and ASEAN CBN, as well as the United Nations, the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), ASEANAPOL, INTERPOL, the Moscow Conference on International Security, and the Shangri-La Dialogue, among others.

The Lao PDR has been working with the regional and international communities to address a myriad of current challenges of common concern and interest, based on its capacity and in accordance with universally recognised principles and norms.

a. Crime Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime

Terrorism and transnational crime remain a pressing threat to national, regional and global security. For its part, the Government of the Lao PDR always attaches great importance to attempts at and multilateral cooperation in the fight against terrorism and transnational crimes. To date, the Law on Extradition (2012), the Law on National Public Security (2014), the Law on Anti-Trafficking in Persons, the Law on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (2020), the Law on Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Financing of Terrorism (2024), and other legislation have been put in place. More importantly, the Penal Code replaces the Penal Code (2005) and the provisions contained in other laws determining criminal offences and penalties, and the Criminal Procedure Law has been amended to criminalise all acts of terrorism and transnational organised crime which cause the loss of life and property, and undermine public security and order, and national integrity.

The Lao PDR reaffirms its commitment to anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism. In this regard, the National Coordination Committee for Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Financing of Terrorism has been established, and the Law on Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Financing of Terrorism has been enacted thus far. This provides a firm foundation and legal framework for the Lao PDR, especially for the concerned law enforcement sectors, to undertake AML/CFT work rigorously. In addition, sub-legislation under the AML/CFT Law, such as the Decree on Withholding, Seizing or Freezing Funds Related to Terrorists and Financing of Terrorism No. 553/Gov, dated 4 September 2025; the Directive on Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Prosecution; and directives of the Head of the General Police Department of the Ministry of Public Security, have been issued to address money laundering and terrorist financing-related issues.

Given the global and transboundary nature of these issues, the Lao PDR has pursued cooperation with countries, regional and international organisations. At the bilateral front, the Lao PDR has worked closely with

immediate neighbouring countries, including through bilateral cooperative mechanisms, namely the Lao-Cambodia General Border Committee, the Lao-China Joint Border Inspection Committee, the Lao-Myanmar Provincial/Regional Border Committee, the Lao-Thai General Border Committee, and the Lao-Viet Nam Border Committee, to ensure safety and security in border areas as well as to jointly address border-related issues.

In the digital era, digital technology plays a crucial role in shaping society, and people rely on information and communication technology. The Lao PDR is one of those countries facing emerging cybercrime, particularly an increased number of online scam cases in the region. Therefore, it is imperative to enhance cooperation to jointly address online scams through increased cooperation on cross-border law enforcement, information sharing, and capacity-building for law enforcement officials. The Government of the Lao PDR has been working closely with neighbouring countries, as well as at sub-regional, regional and international levels, and with regional and international organisations to prevent and combat cybercrime. In doing so, a number of legal frameworks have been issued and amended, namely the Law on Data Protection (2017), the Law on Prevention and Combating Cybercrime (2015), the Law on National Public Security (2014), the Law on E-Transactions (2012), and the Law on Telecommunications (2011), and the Cybersecurity Law and National Cybersecurity Strategy are in the process of being drafted. The Ministry of Public Security, led by the General Department of Police, and the Ministry of Science and Technology (Department of Cyber Security, Lao Computer Emergency Response Team – Lao CERT) are the main operational government agencies addressing this issue. Furthermore, the Anti-Online Fraud Unit was established in November 2025, comprising working groups from relevant sectors. This unit functions as a coordinated mechanism to investigate, resolve, prevent, and raise awareness about online fraud. Additionally, a hotline (1533) has been set up to offer advice, handle investigations, and assist victims in resolving fraud-related issues.

b. Non-Proliferation, Counter-Proliferation, Arms Control, and Disarmament

Underscoring the great importance of disarmament and non-proliferation in ensuring durable international peace and security, the Lao PDR is supportive of multilateral disarmament efforts under United Nations frameworks, reflected in its being a party to a number of international conventions, including the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Amended Small Quantities Protocol (ASQP), and the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material in 2023.

In addition, the Lao PDR is a State Party to a number of regional and international instruments on disarmament and non-proliferation, such as the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ Treaty), the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), among others.

The Lao PDR recognises the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in nuclear non-proliferation and the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Lao PDR became a member of the IAEA in 2011 and signed the IAEA Additional Protocol

in November 2014. In 2019, the Lao PDR adopted the Law on Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety, which lays down the standards for radiation protection and safety, including measures to prevent and mitigate risks and danger to lives and the environment.

To address the serious impact arising from unexploded ordnances (UXOs) in various provinces, the Lao PDR, as a State Party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (the Oslo Convention), has been actively promoting this universal Convention in order to prevent further victimisation of humankind. The Lao PDR was honoured to assume the Presidency of the Third Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (3RC CCM), which was held in Vientiane from 14 to 18 September 2026. Our Presidency will prioritise a set of strategic goals that reflect the urgency of the moment and the humanitarian promise of this Convention, such as: reaffirming the spirit of humanitarian disarmament that gave birth to this Convention and advancing its universalisation; accelerating practical, measurable steps for survey and clearance, victim assistance, and risk education, guided by evidence and tailored to the needs of affected communities; mobilising enhanced international cooperation and assistance, ensuring that no affected State, particularly those with the heaviest legacies, is left behind; and strengthening the link between cluster munition clearance and sustainable development, especially in areas such as poverty reduction, food security, and education.

In addition, the Lao PDR has acceded to the CCW and is a Party to Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War. The Lao PDR was among the first countries in the world to adopt its own national Millennium Development Goal, MDG9, in the early 2000s, and recently launched its own national SDG entitled "SDG18: Lives Safe from UXO". Addressing the UXO impact remains a top priority for the Lao Government. However, UXO clearance, victim assistance and mine-risk education remain challenging for the Lao PDR to fully implement due to the fact that these operations are highly complex processes which require sufficient resources, as well as human and technical capacities. Therefore, it is very important that all countries, international organisations and INGOs continue to support and assist the UXO/Mine Action Sector in the Lao PDR.

The Lao PDR encourages the role of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC) as a centre of excellence in increasing efforts to address explosive remnants of war (ERW) and facilitate cooperation between interested ASEAN Member States and relevant institutions, including the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

c. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Humanitarian assistance is very essential considering the frequent occurrence of natural disasters nowadays. The Lao PDR is one of those countries frequently hit by natural disasters. As such, in order to address and mitigate the impact of natural disasters, the Lao PDR places importance on and contributes to regional and international cooperation in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) based on its capacity and in accordance with the principle of request or consent of the affected countries.

The Lao PDR is a Party to the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the two Additional Protocols, as follows: Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field, 12 August 1949; Convention (II) for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded,

Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea, 12 August 1949; Convention (III) relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, 12 August 1949; Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 12 August 1949; the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977; and the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), 8 June 1977.

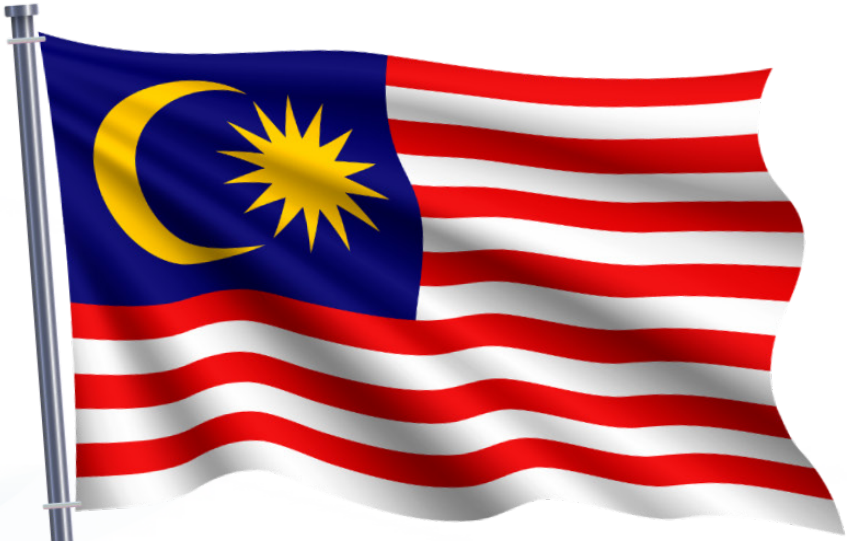
Within the ARF framework, the Lao PDR successfully co-chaired with China the 5th ARF Workshop on Urban Search and Rescue, held via videoconference from 21 to 25 November 2022. The Lao PDR also successfully completed its co-chairmanship with Canada and China of the ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief for the 2018–2023 cycle. In addition, the Lao PDR, Malaysia and the People's Republic of China jointly hosted the 3rd ARF Workshop on Urban Emergency Rescue from 17 to 21 September 2026 in Nanning, China.

d. ICTs Security

The Lao Government has established the Department of Internet Security under the Ministry of Science and Technology. This department is tasked with developing and implementing policies and initiatives aimed at protecting critical information infrastructure, reducing cyber threats, and enhancing cybersecurity awareness. Cooperation with international partners, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and ASEAN Member States, has been an important element in upgrading the Lao PDR's cybersecurity capabilities.

The Lao PDR continues to face challenges in ensuring strong ICT security. The rapid digital transformation and growth of the internet have led to an increase in internet threats such as malware, phishing and data breaches. Limited resources and expertise in cybersecurity compound these challenges, emphasising the need for continued capacity building and investment in advanced technologies. To address these problems, the Government has prioritised public-private partnerships, regional cooperation and the use of international support to create a resilient cybersecurity ecosystem. Through active participation in ASEAN initiatives and discussions, the Lao PDR is committed to sharing best practices and cooperating in joint efforts to combat cybercrime, contributing to a safe digital environment in the region.

Malaysia



I. Security Concerns in the Region and National Defence and Security Policies

A. Security Concerns Common to the ASEAN Community

The regional security environment is becoming increasingly complex, fluid and uncertain, shaped by the convergence of traditional and non-traditional threats, intensifying geopolitical competition, rapid technological change, and the growing security implications of climate change. These developments have direct implications for Malaysia's sovereignty, territorial integrity and national interests, underscoring the importance of strengthening national resilience, preparedness and credible partnerships in preserving regional peace, security and stability. Navigating this evolving and increasingly interconnected landscape calls for a coordinated, whole-of-nation approach that draws on strong institutions, close regional cooperation, and sustained investment in resilience across all sectors.

Maritime Security

Malaysia's maritime security environment continues to be shaped by its strategic location at the confluence of the Indian and Pacific Oceans. As a maritime nation situated along some of the world's busiest Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs), particularly the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea, Malaysia's security and prosperity remain closely linked to the safety, stability and freedom of navigation in the maritime domain.

The regional maritime security landscape has become increasingly complex and multidimensional. Traditional threats such as piracy, armed robbery at sea, smuggling, illegal fishing and transnational organised crime remain persistent challenges. At the same time, emerging concerns are becoming more pronounced, including grey-zone activities, the proliferation of unmanned and autonomous systems, cyber threats targeting maritime infrastructure, and risks to critical underwater infrastructure such as submarine cables and offshore energy facilities. These developments underscore the importance of enhancing Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), strengthening deterrence and response capabilities, and deepening regional cooperation to address evolving maritime challenges.

Malaysia remains mindful that increasing strategic competition among major powers continues to shape the regional security environment, including in the South China Sea. Malaysia continues to emphasise the importance of maintaining peace, security and stability in the South China Sea, and of resolving disputes by peaceful means in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Furthermore, Malaysia is closely monitoring the potential spillover effects of ongoing conflicts in the Middle East. Any disruption to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz could affect global energy flows, increase freight and insurance costs, and disrupt supply chains, with consequential effects on trade flows and maritime traffic through the Straits of Malacca.

Terrorism

Terrorism and violent extremism continue to pose serious non-traditional security challenges to regional peace and stability. Although Malaysia's domestic security environment remains stable, evolving geopolitical developments and ongoing conflicts in various parts of the world continue to create opportunities for

terrorist and extremist groups to exploit grievances, disseminate propaganda and inspire acts of violence.

The growing use of digital platforms, encrypted communications and emerging technologies has transformed the threat landscape by facilitating online radicalisation, recruitment and the spread of extremist narratives. Malaysia remains particularly vigilant against self-radicalised individuals, lone-actor threats, and the convergence of terrorism with transnational organised crime and cyber-enabled activities.

Malaysia continues to adopt a comprehensive approach encompassing prevention, enforcement, rehabilitation and reintegration. The Government remains committed to strengthening intelligence-sharing mechanisms, enhancing border security, disrupting terrorist financing networks, and advancing Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) initiatives through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. Recognising terrorism as a transnational threat, Malaysia supports regional and international cooperation through information sharing, capacity building and practical collaboration to address terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations.

Cyber Security

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has generated significant economic and social benefits, while simultaneously increasing exposure to cyber threats. Cyberattacks targeting critical infrastructure, government systems, businesses and individuals have become more sophisticated, frequent and transnational in nature.

Malaysia remains concerned by the increasing frequency and sophistication of ransomware attacks, cyber espionage, online fraud, data breaches and the malicious use of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and autonomous systems. These threats have the potential to undermine national security, economic resilience and public confidence in digital systems, while also complicating the future operating environment of defence and security institutions.

Malaysia continues to strengthen its national cyber security ecosystem through enhanced governance frameworks, capability development, public-private partnerships and international cooperation. The implementation of the Cyber Security Act 2024 has strengthened the protection of Critical National Information Infrastructure (CNII) and Malaysia's overall cyber resilience. In parallel, Malaysia is advancing the Malaysia Cyber Security Strategy 2025–2030, which is intended to build on earlier national efforts by strengthening coordination across government, industry and society, while reinforcing preparedness, resilience and response in the face of a rapidly evolving cyber threat environment.

Malaysia supports practical cooperation at the regional and international levels, including information sharing, capacity building, incident response coordination and the promotion of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. Malaysia remains committed to fostering a secure, stable, accessible and peaceful cyberspace in accordance with international law and agreed norms of responsible conduct.

Climate Change

Climate change remains one of the most pressing challenges facing the international community and continues to have far-reaching implications for regional security and sustainable development. The increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, rising sea levels, flooding, droughts and

environmental degradation have heightened risks to human security, food security, water resources, public health and economic stability.

As a maritime and tropical nation, Malaysia remains vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. These impacts have the potential to exacerbate existing socio-economic challenges, increase humanitarian assistance and disaster relief requirements, disrupt livelihoods and critical infrastructure, and place additional pressure on national resources, operational readiness and long-term resilience.

Guided by national policies and international commitments, Malaysia continues to advance efforts in sustainable development, disaster risk reduction, environmental conservation and the transition towards a low-carbon economy. Malaysia also recognises the importance of regional and international cooperation in addressing the security implications of climate change, including through ASEAN-led mechanisms and other multilateral platforms to strengthen resilience, preparedness and response.

B. Individual National Defence Policies

Overview of National Security and Defence Policy

Malaysia's national security and defence policy is guided principally by the Defence White Paper (DWP), published in 2019 as the country's first comprehensive defence policy document. The DWP outlines Malaysia's perspectives on national, regional and global strategic trends, sets out the National Defence Framework, and serves as a long-term blueprint for defence planning in pursuit of Malaysia's aspiration to remain a secure, sovereign and prosperous nation. The DWP is complemented by the Mid-Term Review of the Defence White Paper (MTR-DWP), launched in September 2025, which assesses implementation progress and updates Malaysia's defence priorities in light of an increasingly complex and uncertain security environment.

The DWP acknowledges Malaysia's geostrategic importance as a maritime nation with continental roots, flanked by the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean on one side, and the Straits of Malacca and the Indian Ocean on the other. It also emphasises a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach towards defence, recognising that national resilience and preparedness extend beyond the responsibilities of the armed forces alone.

Malaysia's defence strategy under the DWP is centred on three pillars, namely Concentric Deterrence, Comprehensive Defence and Credible Partnerships.

Concentric Deterrence underpins Malaysia's defence across the land, maritime, air, cyber and electromagnetic domains. It is structured around three concentric geographic areas: the *Core Area* (comprising Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak, alongside territorial waters and airspace); the *Extended Area* (covering the Malaysian Maritime Zone [MMZ], strategic waterways, airspace and critical lines of communication); and the *Forward Area* (extending beyond the Extended Area to locations where Malaysia's national interests are involved).

Comprehensive Defence reflects Malaysia's whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to national defence, in line with the spirit of Total Defence.

Credible Partnerships underscores the importance of bilateral and multilateral defence cooperation in contributing to Malaysia's defence readiness, addressing shared security needs, and promoting regional peace and stability.

The MTR-DWP reaffirms Malaysia's commitment to strengthening defence readiness, resilience and self-reliance, while sharpening focus on emerging challenges such as geopolitical competition, cyber threats, grey-zone activities, disinformation, unmanned and autonomous systems, and the implications of advanced technologies for future warfare. It also places renewed emphasis on the need for the Malaysian Armed Forces to evolve into a more integrated, technology-enabled and future-ready force capable of operating effectively across multiple domains.

Malaysia also places increasing emphasis on strengthening self-reliant defence capability through the National Defence Industry Policy, which seeks to enhance the role of the domestic defence industry in support of national defence preparedness, long-term capability development, technological advancement, industrial resilience, and a more sustainable national defence ecosystem.

Furthermore, Malaysia is advancing the Defence Capacity Blueprint 2026–2030 aimed at strengthening defence human capital and overall workforce capacity. The Blueprint focuses on building a dynamic, patriotic and highly skilled defence community through improvements in professional competency, patriotism, and talent development in science, technology and the defence industry, thereby enhancing Malaysia's overall defence preparedness in an increasingly complex and uncertain security environment.

The implementation of Malaysia's defence policy is further supported by the National Defence Strategic Plan 2026–2030, which sets out a comprehensive and forward-looking five-year strategic direction to strengthen defence preparedness in navigating an increasingly complex, challenging and uncertain security environment. Anchored on the DWP, the Plan aligns defence priorities, institutional reforms and implementation measures with the broader objectives of the DWP and MTR-DWP, while also supporting coherence with the 13th Malaysia Plan, the National Security Policy and the Malaysia MADANI agenda.

Taken together, the DWP, the MTR-DWP and their supporting implementation instruments reflect Malaysia's commitment to maintaining a credible, adaptive and resilient defence posture. Through the three pillars of Concentric Deterrence, Comprehensive Defence and Credible Partnerships, and supported by efforts to strengthen defence industry, human capital and strategic planning, Malaysia's defence policy remains focused on safeguarding national sovereignty and interests, enhancing preparedness and self-reliance, and contributing meaningfully to regional peace and stability through ASEAN-led and other multilateral mechanisms.

Supporting National Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540

Malaysia remains committed to the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540 and to strengthening national measures to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), their means of delivery, and related materials. In this regard, Malaysia continues to strengthen its legal, policy and institutional framework, particularly in the area of biological security and the implementation of obligations under the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC).

The Science and Technology Research Institute for Defence (STRIDE) under the Ministry of Defence serves as the principal technical agency for matters related to the BWC and supports national efforts in biosecurity, biorisk management and biothreat reduction. Malaysia

is also advancing measures to strengthen the implementation of its obligations under the BWC. These efforts are complemented by the National BWC Policy 2023, which provides the strategic policy framework to strengthen national coordination, implementation and enforcement in relation to biological security and related non-proliferation measures.

Malaysia also continues to enhance technical preparedness and inter-agency capacity through training, workshops and cooperation programmes on laboratory biosecurity, biological incident response, Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) emergency preparedness, and oversight of emerging biotechnologies, in support of national implementation of UNSCR 1540.

C. National Contributions to Promoting Regional Security

Counter-Terrorism

Since its establishment in 2003, the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) continues its efforts in preventing terrorism and violent extremism through soft approaches. The people-centered approach is fundamental to SEARCCT's capacity-building, research and public awareness programmes to strengthen national and regional responses to evolving terrorism threats.

Promoting a People-Centred Approach to Counter-Terrorism

With the rapid development of terrorism and radicalisation in the digital space, SEARCCT recognises the importance of Whole-of-Government (WOG) and Whole-of-Society (WOS) approach in enhancing awareness, digital literacy skill and capacity building in order to further improve inclusive prevention, early intervention, community resilience, and the development of Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) mechanisms.

In June 2025, SEARCCT organised the SEARCCT International Conference 2025 (SIC 2025) under the theme *"Emerging Trends in Terrorism and Violent Extremism"*. The conference examined emerging threats such as hybrid extremist narratives, algorithm-driven radicalisation, and psychosocial drivers including identity crises and social isolation, while highlighting the need for adaptive policies and stronger multi-stakeholder cooperation.

In addition, SEARCCT organised the National Symposium on Building Youth Digital Resilience (*Simposium Peringkat Kebangsaan Di Negeri Sabah - Membina Ketahanan Digital Belia"*) in May 2026. The symposium provided a platform for dialogue and knowledge-sharing on evolving digital security challenges, including misinformation, online radicalisation, algorithm-driven echo chambers, the exploitation of gaming platforms, and risks associated with artificial intelligence (AI). SEARCCT continues to conduct programmes aimed at addressing the evolving terrorism and violent extremism landscape through strategic and coordinated initiatives.

The Department of National Unity and National Integration (JPNIN), under the Ministry of National Unity, Malaysia, has launched comprehensive initiatives supporting ASEAN's strategic commitment to counterterrorism and violent extremism. These efforts are people-centred, aligning with the ARF principles of preventive diplomacy, inclusive engagement, and community-based resilience. JPNIN prioritizes community-led counter-terrorism strategies, activating grassroots mechanisms, civic education, and interfaith dialogue to address extremism's root causes and strengthen social cohesion.

One of the key mechanisms is the mobilisation of the *Rukun Tetangga (KRT)* communities. With over 8,615 KRT units nationwide, KRTs serve as grassroots structures that foster harmony and act as early warning systems for potential social conflict. These community groups actively involve in building inter-ethnic and inter-faith trust, thereby preventing isolation and marginalisation that may lead to radicalisation. Through social activities such as communal feasts, traditional games, mutual assistance campaigns (*gotong-royong*), voluntary neighbourhood patrols and inclusive community dialogues, KRT units create environments that facilitate cross-identity interaction and reduce the risk of extremist influence.

To further build community resilience, JPNIN through the National Institute for Integration Research and Training (IKLIN), has collaborated with the Special Branch of the Royal Malaysia Police (PDRM) to conduct targeted training programmes. These include the Workshop on the Development of Unity Issue Management and Detection Module and the Progressive RT Issue Detection Course, both designed to equip community leaders, mediators, and patrol members with the precise skills needed to detect early indicators of radicalization and deliver effective counter-narratives.

In education, JPNIN has structurally institutionalized civic and patriotic education across Malaysia's academic landscape to build long-term cognitive resistance to extremist ideologies. At the primary and secondary school levels, the establishment of *Kelab Rukun Negara* (KRN) provides value-based learning aimed at fostering a deep sense of national belonging and mutual respect among youth. This educational continuum extends into tertiary institutions through the *Rukun Negara* Secretariat (SRN), which serves as a vital university-level platform to instil core civic values and facilitate the early prevention of radical thought among young adults.

A notable initiative under JPNIN is the *Jejak Harmoni* (Harmony Trail) programme, which promotes interfaith and intercultural understanding through experiential learning by guiding participants from diverse backgrounds through various religious sites, cultural institutions, and historical landmarks to cultivate deeper mutual empathy and break down socio-cultural biases.

JPNIN also implements the National Unity and Security Townhall series provides an open, non-traditional platform for direct engagement, allowing community leaders, civil society representatives, youth, public servants, and enforcement agencies to openly share field experiences, raise immediate concerns, and collaboratively propose actionable security and unity solutions.

Promotion of Inter-Civilisation Dialogue

Beyond security measures, JPNIN also plays an instrumental role in facilitating interfaith and intercultural dialogue, recognising that peaceful coexistence is fundamental to national and regional stability.

One of the cornerstone initiatives is the celebration of World Interfaith Harmony Week, observed annually in the second week of February, in accordance with United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/65/5. This global event is adapted locally to encourage constructive dialogue among Malaysia's diverse religious groups. This is further supported by the Dialog Harmoni program, which creates safe, inclusive spaces for open conversations regarding sensitive social, religious, and cultural issues by emphasizing shared universal values like compassion and social responsibility. To engage younger,

digital-first audiences, JPNIN launched the *Bicara Harmoni* podcast, an accessible digital audio platform that offers informal yet informative discussions on ethnic relations, religious diversity, and contemporary civic values.

Ultimately, JPNIN's multifaceted initiatives represent a highly holistic, non-military, and community-rooted model for preventing violent extremism and enhancing national resilience. By proactively reducing distrust, fostering inclusive counter-narratives that reject hatred, and reinforcing a balanced national identity based on mutual respect, these programs address security threats at their origin. This comprehensive framework fully embodies the spirit of the ARF through its emphasis on early prevention and whole-of-society participation, positioning Malaysia's approach as a valuable reference model for both regional and global social harmony.

Strengthening Measures through Coordinated National and Regional Efforts

As the competent authority, BNM oversees and administers the Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing, Anti-Restricted Activity Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act 2001 (AMLA). This includes BNM's role as the country's financial intelligence unit (FIU) and the supervisory authority to the reporting institutions[1] relating to money laundering, terrorism financing and proliferation financing (ML/TF/PF). BNM collaborates with various domestic and regional stakeholders to ensure sustained reforms, credible enforcements, and strong whole-of-nation collaboration in combatting ML/TF/PF.

On the national front, Malaysia formulates, coordinates, implements and monitors its national AML/CFT/CPF strategy through the National Coordination Committee to Combat Money Laundering (NCC), a national inter-agency platform, ensuring a robust national AML/ CFT/CPF framework aligned with international standards and best practices.

In 2025, national efforts were intensified towards the preparation for the mutual evaluation (ME) conducted by Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Malaysia's ME report was successfully adopted at the FATF Plenary in October 2025, with Malaysia being upgraded to the highest follow-up category in the ME. This reflects the country's strong progress in strengthening its AML/CFT/CPF regime since the last evaluation in 2015.

Key initiatives undertaken to reinforce the national AML/CFT/CPF framework and safeguard the integrity of the financial system include:

a. Amendments of AMLA, which came into effect on 1 March 2026. These have strengthened the alignment with the latest FATF standards and methodology. The amendments also addressed operational challenges in the freezing, seizure and forfeiture of illicit proceeds, while enhancing the effectiveness of investigation and prosecution efforts, as well as improving clarity on compliance by reporting institutions.

b. BNM conducted thematic review across the banking industry, assessing the adequacy and effectiveness of transaction monitoring and sanctions screening systems. The focus for designated non-financial businesses and professions (DNFBPs) includes the on-site supervision in high-risk sectors (i.e. lawyers, dealers in precious metals or precious stones, and registered estate agents). BNM also supports Companies Commission of Malaysia and the Malaysian Institute of Accountants in their supervision of their respective sectors.

c. BNM reviewed measures implemented under the National Fraud Portal (NFP)[2] with Payments Network Malaysia Sdn. Bhd. (PayNet) and industry players as an effort to improve effectiveness of fund tracing and fraud detection. These have enabled broader coverage to more entities and data set, enhancing tracking of illicit funds.

d. BNM hosted the Supervisory College for regional supervisors for banking sector, with representatives from regional authorities including Otoritas Jasa Keuangan Indonesia, Monetary Authority of Singapore and the Bank of Thailand. This platform facilitates timely sharing of ML/TF/PF emerging risks and vulnerabilities in the region and cross-border cooperation and coordination among supervisors in multiple jurisdictions.

e. The International Conference on Financial Crime and Terrorism Financing (IFCTF) 2025, which was hosted by The Asian Institute of Chartered Bankers (AICB) and Compliance Officers' Networking Group (CONG), covered a broad range of key topics, including enhanced due diligence, global financial crime risks, emerging fraud typologies, and updates to AML/CFT/CPF and TFS requirements.

Sharing of Financial Intelligence

BNM, through its FIU, works closely with domestic law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and foreign FIUs to support ML/TF/PF investigations, such as money laundering, fraud, corruption, smuggling and organised crime, through joint taskforces such as those coordinated by the National Anti-Financial Crime Centre (NFCC) and the Multi-Agency Task Force (MATF).

Domestically, industry-wide sharing sessions[3] were held to clarify expectations and provided guidance on submitting quality suspicious transaction reports (STRs). Additionally, the FIU also shared several red flags and typologies reports with reporting institutions, which led to better articulation and detection of evolving crimes and more comprehensive analysis in STR submissions.

At the international level, the FIU actively shared financial intelligence with foreign FIUs and such sharing led to investigations by foreign authorities. Overall, about 70% of total disclosures made to domestic LEAs and foreign FIUs relate to high-risk crimes and national security matters.

Regional Collaboration Efforts

As ASEAN Chair in 2025, Malaysia spearheaded efforts to foster greater common understanding among member states of ML/TF/PF threats, vulnerabilities and emerging risks. This enabled members to better align regional priorities in combating financial crimes while advancing sustainable development through transparent and resilient financial systems.

BNM continued to support the Ministry of Home Affairs at the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) during the year, particularly in the establishment of the Working Group on Money Laundering (WG on ML)[4] and the issuance of the first ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Combating Money Laundering. On 21 April 2026, BNM and the Ministry of Home Affairs co-hosted the inaugural SOMTC WG on ML meeting in Kuala Lumpur. The ASEAN member states exchanged views on national policies and key challenges in combating ML in the region, agreed in principle to the Terms of Reference and upcoming initiatives to provide

a clear expectation on the governance, operational framework and direction of the WG on ML moving forward. Overall, the successful convening of the inaugural meeting marks a key milestone in advancing regional AML cooperation within the ASEAN.

Regionally, BNM also partnered with various stakeholders and private sector to advance regional and industry cooperation through capacity building initiatives, conferences, and forums. These collective efforts allowed the country to better respond to potential financial crimes and reinforce the resilience and integrity of the financial system. In particular, BNM hosted the inaugural ASEAN DNFBPs Supervisor Forum in 2025, attended by 120 participants from across the region. The forum enabled the exchange of best practices in managing ML/TF/PF risks and addressing supervisory gaps. It also explored opportunities for joint supervision, highlighted cross-border risks, and showcased the use of supervisory technology (SupTech) to enhance supervisory effectiveness. These engagements strengthened coordination and supported earlier identification of red flags, emerging threats, and character vetting processes.

Non-Proliferation and Disarmament

Malaysia maintains a principled and consistent position in support of the general and complete disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, with nuclear disarmament as the highest priority, and continues to strengthen national capacity and regional engagement in areas related to biological security, biosafety and WMD risk reduction. Meaningful progress in disarmament can only be achieved through a multilateral, rules-based process grounded in international law—the continued existence and modernisation of nuclear weapons not only heighten international tensions but increase the risk of proliferation, including to non-State actors.

Disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy must therefore be advanced in a balanced and comprehensive manner, in accordance with the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), with transparency and confidence-building—through adherence to full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards—remaining essential to harnessing the benefits of peaceful nuclear technology.

At the 2025 Third NPT PrepCom (28 April–10 May 2025), Malaysia reiterated its deep concern over the lack of substantive progress in fulfilling disarmament obligations under Article VI of the NPT, supported proposals for strengthening the review process—including a structured and inclusive dialogue on national reporting by nuclear-weapon states (NWS)—and reaffirmed its position that doctrines such as nuclear sharing and extended deterrence are incompatible with the Treaty's spirit.

Malaysia also underscored the importance of preserving the credibility and effectiveness of the NPT through the full, balanced and non-discriminatory implementation of all three pillars of the Treaty. Malaysia further reaffirmed that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) complements and reinforces the NPT's disarmament pillar; as an early signatory and consistent supporter of the TPNW, Malaysia continues to advocate for its universalisation and implementation, and engaged in TPNW intersessional discussions on verification (Article 4), including as Co-Chair of the Informal Working Group on Article 4 together with the Philippines, in preparation for the First TPNW Review Conference in November 2026.

On biological and chemical weapons, Malaysia continues to fully adhere to its obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), with the Ministry of Defence serving as Lead Agency for the Convention's implementation and the Science and Technology Research Institute for Defence (STRIDE) acting as its technical agency. Between 2019 and 2025, STRIDE organised and participated in a range of national, regional and international programmes covering biological incident investigation, laboratory biosecurity, BWC implementation, and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) emergency preparedness and response, contributing to regional initiatives such as the ADMM-Plus Chemical, Biological and Radiological (CBR) Conference and the Network of ASEAN CBR Defence Experts. Malaysia has also worked closely with partners including the United States Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), the United States Department of State, Sandia National Laboratories, INTERPOL and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism on laboratory biosecurity self-assessment, infectious substance shipping, oversight of biotechnologies, and preparedness against deliberate biological events.

Recognising the importance of States Parties reviewing their constitutional processes to implement Article IV of the BWC, Malaysia is in the process of finalising a comprehensive BWC Bill that would reinforce existing legislation such as the Arms Act 1960, Customs Act 1967 and the Strategic Trade Act 2010 (STA 2010). Malaysia is similarly committed to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), with the National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention of Malaysia (NACWC)—established in September 2006 under the CWC Act 2005—serving as the national focal point for liaison with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

On export controls, Malaysia enacted STA 2010 on 5 April 2010 (in force from 1 January 2011) to fulfil its obligations under UNSCR 1540 (2004), providing for control over the export, transhipment, transit and brokering of strategic items—including arms and related materials—and other activities that could facilitate the design, development or production of WMDs and their delivery systems.

The Strategic Trade Act Review 2025 (STAR 2025), launched in 2023, is a comprehensive review of STA 2010 aimed at strengthening enforcement, streamlining regulatory processes and aligning Malaysia's export control framework with international best practices, which will benefit industry and regulators alike by facilitating legitimate trade and reinforcing Malaysia's position as a trusted and responsible global trade partner.

This is complemented by the Malaysia Strategic Trade Control Community (MYSTCC), an initiative by the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI) that brings together industry players, researchers and organisations with strong Internal Compliance Programs (ICP) to exchange best practices and provide input to Government on strengthening compliance with the Act. Malaysia also remains supportive of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), having played a constructive role in the negotiations leading to its conclusion, on the basis that it strengthens national policies on conventional weapons while recognising the legitimate right of States to use arms judiciously for security, self-defence, research and trade.

Malaysia is separately working to enact the Atomic Energy Bill, which will allow it to ratify and accede to international instruments on nuclear safety and security—including the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and its Protocol, the IAEA Additional Protocol, and the International Convention on the Suppression

of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT)—further strengthening Malaysia's non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.

Regionally, Malaysia continues to advocate for the early signing and ratification of the Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) by the NWS, underlining its importance as a disarmament and non-proliferation instrument for ASEAN. Malaysia remains committed to engaging all NWS, including those with reservations, and will intensify efforts to resolve outstanding issues in line with the Treaty's objectives and principles. Moving forward, Malaysia will continue working closely with ASEAN Member States to strengthen regional contributions to global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, reaffirming its support for the SEANWFZ Treaty's integrity and encouraging continued engagement with NWS towards signing and ratifying its Protocol.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)

The Southeast Asia region continues to experience increasingly frequent and complex disasters driven by climate change, rapid urbanisation, environmental degradation, and population growth. The growing intensity and unpredictability of disasters have further underscored the importance of strengthening regional disaster preparedness, anticipatory action, and coordinated response mechanism.

ASEAN continues to play a central role in advancing regional cooperation on disaster management through the legally binding ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management, and the Declaration on "One ASEAN One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region". These frameworks continue to guide ASEAN Member States in fostering a more disaster resilient region through enhanced coordination, solidarity, and collective response.

In supporting the implementation of these declarations particularly the AADMER, the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) serves as ASEAN's operational coordination hub for disaster monitoring, preparedness, emergency response, information sharing, and regional capacity building. The AHA Centre also plays a key role in facilitating the operationalisation of regional mechanisms such as the ASEAN Joint Disaster Response Plan (AJDRP), the Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP), and the ASEAN Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA), thereby strengthening ASEAN's collective capacity for timely and coordinated disaster response operations.

ASEAN Member States are currently implementing the AADMER Work Programme 2026-2030, which places emphasis on anticipatory action, risk-informed development, logistics interoperability, strengthening regional response capacity, and enhancing multi-sectoral coordination across the disaster management cycle. In line with the implementation of the current AADMER Work Programme, ASEAN continues to strengthen civil-military coordination under the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) through the Technical Working Group on Civil-Military Coordination. These efforts support enhanced interoperability, preparedness planning, logistics coordination, simulation exercises, and coordinated emergency response among civilian authorities, military actors, health authorities, and relevant sectoral bodies.

ASEAN also continues to strengthen regional rapid response capabilities through the ASEAN Emergency Response Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT), which consists of trained disaster management professionals from ASEAN Member States deployed to support emergency assessment, coordination, information management, and operational liaison during disaster response operations. ASEAN-ERAT deployments continue to support the AHA Centre and affected Member States in facilitating timely regional coordination and enhancing interoperability during emergencies and humanitarian operations across the region.

Malaysia continues to support regional civil-military coordination initiatives in disaster response including through the ASEAN Militaries Ready Group on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (AMRG on HADR) under the ASEAN Defence Sector, of which Malaysia was the main proponent in its establishment. During the response to Tropical Cyclone Mocha, the AMRG on HADR was activated, marking a significant milestone in the operationalisation of the mechanisms and in strengthening practical civil-military coordination and operational support for regional disaster response efforts.

Malaysia also continues to strengthen its contribution to ASEAN-ERAT. To date, Malaysia has increased its pool of ASEAN-ERAT members to 40 trained personnel. In addition to deployment support, Malaysian ASEAN-ERAT members also contribute as facilitators, speakers, and mentors in regional training and capacity building programmes organised under ASEAN disaster management mechanisms.

Malaysia further manifests its commitment to regional HADR cooperation through active participation in ASEAN-led exercises, projects, and operational mechanisms including the ASEAN Regional Forum Disaster Relief Exercise (ARF DiREx), ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise (ARDEX), the listing and earmarking of national assets and capabilities under the AJDRP, the assessment and review of regional disaster emergency response mechanism under the SASOP.

At the national level, disaster management in Malaysia is guided by NADMA Directive No. 1: Policy and Mechanism on National Disaster Management which establishes an integrated framework for disaster management at the Federal, State, and District Levels. Malaysia has also launched the National Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Policy 2030 on 10 October 2024 as the country's overarching strategic framework to strengthen disaster risk governance, institutional resilience, and risk-informed development planning in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015-2030, AADMER, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement.

In further strengthening Malaysia's disaster governance framework, the Malaysian Cabinet on 8 April 2026 agreed to the establishment of the National Disaster Management Council (*Majlis Pengurusan Bencana Negara, MPBN*) as the country's highest policy making platform for disaster management and risk reduction. The establishment of MPBN is aimed and enhancing strategic coordination, strengthening whole-of-government disaster governance, and improving national preparedness in addressing increasingly complex disaster risks.

In terms of HADR operations at the regional and international levels, Malaysia continues to contribute actively through its Special Malaysia Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team (SMART), an INSARAG-classified Heavy Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team. In March 2025, Malaysia deployed SMART to Myanmar within

24 hours following the 7.7 magnitude earthquake that struck Sagaing region. The deployment, conducted under the callsign MAS01 MyTeam Relief Operations, was undertaken in accordance with the AJDRP and SASOP.

SMART deployed 50 personnel and 33 tons of equipment and humanitarian assets to Myanmar via the Royal Malaysian Air Force A400M aircraft. The team conducted USAR operations across multiple worksites under challenging operational conditions, including extreme temperatures and continuous aftershocks, successfully recovering victims and rescuing one survivor alive from under the rubbles.

Malaysia also continues to strengthen civil-military coordination in HADR operations through integrated planning, simulation exercises, interoperability initiatives, and capacity building involving NADMA, the Malaysian Armed Forces, Royal Malaysia Police, Fire and Rescue Department, and relevant technical agencies.

For regional humanitarian logistics preparedness, Malaysia continues to host the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) and the DELSA in Subang, Selangor. These facilities continue to support rapid mobilisation of humanitarian aids and strengthen regional emergency logistics capabilities.

At the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) level, Malaysia continues to support practical cooperation on disaster management and emergency response through confidence building measures, information sharing, capacity building initiatives, and civil-military coordination exercises aimed at strengthening regional preparedness and response capabilities.

Moving forward, Malaysia will continue to commit to working closely with ASEAN Member States, ARF participants, Dialogue Partners, and relevant international organisations towards strengthening regional disaster preparedness, anticipatory action, coordinated emergency response, and resilience-building efforts in the region.

Maritime Security

Malaysia is geographically located at one of the most strategic and important international shipping routes—the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea. The country's maritime boundaries encompass a significant portion of these waters, making it a crucial player in regional and global maritime affairs, and maritime security is therefore a central pillar of Malaysia's overall security framework, given its extensive coastline and strategic location.

The safety, security, and stability of the maritime environment are essential not only to Malaysia's national interests but also to regional and global prosperity, and Malaysia is deeply committed to working closely with neighbouring nations and participating in international discussions to make its seas safer—not just for itself, but for all maritime communities in the region and beyond.

In line with the ARF Statement on Cooperation Against Piracy and Other Threats to Maritime Security, Malaysia, through the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) and other relevant agencies, pursues a comprehensive and coordinated approach to address both traditional and emerging maritime challenges through strengthened national coordination, regional cooperation, information sharing, and practical operational measures.

Malaysia recognises the importance of regional and international cooperation in upholding maritime security and the principles of international law, particularly within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and continues to implement

measures and actions in collaboration with regional and international partners to combat piracy and other maritime threats.

Malaysia continues to strengthen a whole-of-government approach involving the Malaysian Armed Forces, the Royal Malaysian Navy, the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency, the Royal Malaysia Police and other relevant agencies to enhance maritime governance, improve operational coordination and strengthen Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) across the Malaysian Maritime Zone (MMZ). This includes bolstering surveillance capabilities, investing in advanced technology, and conducting regular patrols within and beyond the MMZ, alongside intensified joint operations among enforcement agencies to ensure a coordinated response to threats such as piracy, armed robbery at sea, smuggling, illegal fishing and other transnational maritime crimes.

Malaysia remains firmly committed to practical regional cooperation in safeguarding key waterways. In the Straits of Malacca, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand have worked closely since 2004 under the Malacca Straits Patrol (MSP), an arrangement that has contributed significantly to maritime surveillance, information sharing and coordinated operational responses along one of the world's busiest maritime routes.

Malaysia also supports the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA), a collaborative effort with Indonesia and the Philippines signed in 2016 to address cross-border maritime threats—including piracy, armed robbery against ships and maritime terrorism—in the Sulu and Sulawesi (Celebes) Seas. The TCA provides a framework for regular dialogue and coordination among the three countries, including the sharing of intelligence on vessel movements, suspicious activities and criminal networks, as well as coordinated sea and air patrols by naval and coast guard assets to strengthen surveillance, deterrence and response in the designated maritime areas.

Malaysia and Indonesia have separately strengthened cooperation on fisheries-related maritime issues through the 2012 Memorandum of Understanding in Respect of the Common Treatment of Fishermen by Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies of Malaysia and the Republic of Indonesia (MoU Common Guidelines). Under the MoU, both countries have agreed that fishermen who encroach into maritime boundary areas are to be inspected and requested to leave, except where illegal fishing gear such as explosives or electrical and chemical devices is used. The two countries monitor and review implementation of the MoU through a dedicated Review Meeting mechanism, having convened 11 series of Review Meetings to date, ensuring the guidelines continue to be honoured and respected by maritime law enforcement agencies on both sides.

Malaysia is also giving increasing attention to emerging maritime security challenges, including the growing use of unmanned and autonomous systems—such as Unmanned Aerial, Surface and Underwater Vehicles—which may be exploited for unauthorised surveillance or intelligence gathering. Malaysia continues to strengthen its capacity to detect, monitor and respond to such developments, while remaining attentive to wider geopolitical dynamics that may affect maritime trade routes, energy flows and supply chain resilience.

Beyond operational measures, Malaysia values dialogue with countries that share its interest in promoting maritime stability, and has established bilateral platforms across various tracks of diplomacy to promote cooperation on maritime-related matters. These mechanisms are designed to align with Malaysia's neutrality and impartiality on regional issues, ensuring

Malaysia is not embroiled in major power rivalry.

At the regional level, Malaysia upholds ASEAN Centrality as the foundation of regional maritime dialogue, participating actively in mechanisms such as the ASEAN Maritime Forum, the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum, the East Asia Summit, and the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security—engagement that allows Malaysia to voice its own perspectives while better understanding the concerns of other nations, building confidence and strengthening collective efforts in maintaining regional and international maritime security.

Moving forward, Malaysia will continue to strengthen its maritime security capabilities, enhance MDA, leverage technological innovation and deepen regional cooperation to address an increasingly complex maritime security environment. Malaysia remains committed to a rules-based maritime order, freedom of navigation and overflight, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and full respect for international law—particularly UNCLOS—as essential foundations for maintaining peace, stability and prosperity in the maritime domain.

Endnotes

1. Reporting institutions are defined in the First Schedule of AMLA. It includes financial institutions, non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs), and designated non-financial businesses and professions (DNFBP).

2. The NFP is an integrated platform to strengthen the operational capabilities of the NSRC. It automates the end-to-end process of handling scam reports and tracing of stolen funds by the NSRC.

3. Sessions conducted with banks, non-bank e-money issuers, money services businesses, capital market intermediaries and Labuan entities.

4. The WG on ML is expected to further strengthen regional cooperation through enhanced information sharing, exchange of best practices, and closer alignment of ASEAN's AML/CFT/CPF strategies with international standards.

Myanmar



I. Security Concerns in the Region and National Defence and Security Policies

Security Concerns Common to the ASEAN Community

1. The Asia-Pacific region, home to more than half of the world's population, holds significant strategic importance. It serves as a major hub for international trade and its large population exerts considerable influence across various sectors, particularly in security. The region is also experiencing increasing global attention and emerging trends. Challenges to global stability and security have direct implications for the Asia-Pacific's economic and security environment. In this context, ASEAN member states, located within the region, play a pivotal role in promoting and maintaining regional stability and security.

2. ASEAN occupies a geopolitically strategic position, connecting the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. Now some external powers have recognized ASEAN as a crucial part of the Indo-Pacific region and are seeking to expand their influence within it. Consequently, these powers have engaged with ASEAN Member States in ways that prioritize their own interests and objectives. Such engagement may, at times, lead to deviations from ASEAN's original goals and unified stance. In particular, the formation of blocs in the Indo-Pacific can generate differing responses and disagreements among ASEAN Member States. Similarly, external actors may initiate issues that risk undermining ASEAN consensus, provisions, and unity.

3. In the ASEAN region, efforts must be made to reduce the dominance of external powers and gradually eliminate one-sided influence that could affect regional peace and stability. When ASEAN Member States expand relations with these powers, it is crucial to remain independent and ensure that the unity and amity of the ASEAN Community are not compromised. Similarly, when unilateral actions by external powers may affect the security and interests of the region, all ASEAN Member States should respond in a unified manner. Through such collective action, the impacts on ASEAN centrality and decision-making can be mitigated, while reinforcing the importance of ASEAN's independent stance.

4. Superpowers have sought to expand their political and military influence by intensifying competition over economic projects in the Indo-Pacific region. It is essential to remain aware of the potential for external influence in the region and of interventions in the internal affairs of regional countries under the pretext of human rights, democracy, and humanitarian concerns.

5. In addition, maritime operations in the region are conducted to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific. The ASEAN region has become a significant arena for power competition, which could impact the unity and security of ASEAN Member States. In this context, ASEAN Member States should prioritize the security, stability, and interests of the region in accordance with the ASEAN Charter, ASEAN Vision, and established consensus, particularly in light of increasing influence from external powers. The interference of external powers can be effectively mitigated through a united ASEAN stance on regional security.

6. When the ASEAN Community faces unforeseen conflicts in the region, it is essential to prioritize peaceful solutions

over military measures. Diplomatic approaches must be given precedence in addressing disputes in the South China Sea and conflicts between neighbouring countries. Furthermore, it is imperative to adopt an ASEAN-centered approach as the primary strategy for managing regional tensions. In this regard, all ASEAN Member States should focus on preventing the outbreak of wars and conflicts, which can seriously undermine the socio-economic development of the region's peoples. Only through such efforts can the peoples of ASEAN fully enjoy amity, prosperity, and enhanced cultural exchange. Therefore, any crisis or conflict that may arise within the ASEAN Community must be resolved peacefully through cooperation and dialogue.

7. On the other hand, ASEAN member states must adhere to the principles described in Chapter (1), Article (2) of the ASEAN Charter and ensure mutual respect. Moreover, member states should avoid actions such as interfering in the internal affairs of other member states and opposing existing governments. Thus, ASEAN solidarity would be strengthened.

8. In current geopolitical situation, there is a gradual increase in the arms race in the East Asian region, particularly reflected in the acquisition, deployment, and modernization of advanced weapon systems. Similarly, within the ASEAN region, the procurement of modern weapons and technologies for national security and sovereignty is steadily rising, contributing to the overall intensification of regional arms competition. Moreover, some countries are prioritizing military solutions through cooperation with major powers. In this context, States pursuing the installation of weapons and military build-up must carefully consider the potential consequences of relying on military approaches.

9. As an ASEAN Community, it is imperative for all ASEAN Member States to make concerted efforts to minimize external influence in the region, prioritize peaceful resolution of any arising conflicts, uphold ASEAN-centered decisions and agreements, and monitor developments that may contribute to regional arms races. Only through such collective efforts can ASEAN preserve and promote the prosperity, unity, and development of the peoples of the region. Myanmar will also continue to make every effort to strengthen the ASEAN Community and enhance the security and socio-economic well-being of its peoples.

National Security and Defence Policy

10. Myanmar Tatmadaw upholds the three main national causes as national policy and remains fully responsible for national security and defence. With regard to the defence of the country, Article 42 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (2008) clearly stipulates that:

    (a) The Union shall not commence aggression against any nation.

    (b) No foreign troops shall be permitted to be deployed in the territory of the Union.

11. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar lays down the following National Defence Policies to safeguard the national interests of the Union as well as those of its citizens:

    (a) To prevent all acts detrimental to the three main national causes which are non-disintegration of the Union,

non-disintegration of the national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty.

(b) To formulate the National Defence with the People's War Strategy centered at Tatmadaw as pillar depending on the synergy of entire people.

(c) To valiantly and effectively prevent foreign aggression and interference in the internal affairs of the Union, deploying various ways and means while avoiding interference in the internal affairs of other nations.

(d) To employ a defence system that has oriented towards friendly relations with other nations in accord with the five principles of peaceful co-existence.

(e) Not to permit forming military alliance with other nations and the deployment of any foreign troops in the territory of the Union.

(f) To cooperate with international community in non-traditional security issues and anti-terrorist affairs and to render assistance when calamities occur in the Union.

Holding a Free and Fair Multi-party Democratic Election

12. For the purpose of holding a free and fair multi-party democratic election, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar conducted a nationwide household census from 1 to 15 October 2024. In the 2025-2026 general election, six major political parties contested at the national level, while 51 parties competed for representation at the State and Regional levels. The election was conducted in three phases, with over 24.22 million eligible voters. Of these, 13.14 million cast their votes, representing 54.22 per cent of the electorate. As a result of the successful conduct of the election, the respective parliaments, composed of duly elected representatives of the people, are functioning. A new government has been duly constituted and is proceeding along the democratic path.

National Contributions to Regional Security

13. In support of regional security across multiple dimensions, Myanmar actively participates in and contributes to various inter-regional organizations and institutions. Myanmar became a member of ASEAN in 1997, and in the same year, it also joined the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). In 2014, Myanmar successfully assumed the Chairmanship of ASEAN for the first time since its membership. As an ASEAN Member State, Myanmar has been actively participating in dialogues and workshops organized by the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) since its establishment in 1994, which brings together countries from both within and outside the region.

14. Myanmar perceived that any act of terrorism remains a significant challenge to security in the region, particularly within ASEAN. Myanmar had decisively opposed the terrorist groups designated by some of ASEAN countries and will be continue to oppose. Similarly, ASEAN member states should oppose terrorist organizations designated by the Myanmar government. Regarding counter-terrorism measure, Myanmar was a member of the team of formulating the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism (ACCT) and also a signatory nation of the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters. Myanmar co-chaired the ADMM Plus Expert

Working Groups (EWGs) with Russia on Counter Terrorism for 2020-2023 period. Myanmar is very concerned about the potentiality of making the sovereign land of a country as a safe haven of any terrorist group, and always cooperating with the like-minded countries to make sure that no terrorist group can station in the region.

15. For the eradication of narcotic drug production and trafficking, Myanmar has participated in the annual Meetings of the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD), even prior to becoming a member of ASEAN, in its capacity as an observer. Since attaining membership in the regional organization, Myanmar has continued to implement the relevant resolutions adopted at these meetings. For narcotic drugs control, Myanmar has signed an MOU with China, Lao PDR, Thailand, Viet Nam and Cambodia in 1993, and MOU for Centre of Information Sharing in Asia-Pacific with ASEAN member states and the Republic of Korea in 2014. Myanmar is closely cooperating with countries within the Greater Mekong Sub Region as well as with ASEAN member states in striving to combat narcotic drugs.

16. Additionally, joint efforts have been undertaken with the Yangon-based United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) of Thailand, and the National Narcotics Control Commission (NNCC) of China. Border Liaison Offices (BLOs) have also been established along the borders between Myanmar and China, Laos, and Thailand. These Border Liaison Offices serve as key centres for the exchange of information related to combating narcotic drugs. Myanmar has also signed bilateral agreements with India, Bangladesh, Viet Nam, the Russian Federation, Lao PDR, China, Thailand, and the United States of America to jointly combat narcotic drugs. In order to strengthen the enforcement of national anti-narcotic measures, the Department of Narcotic Drugs Elimination was restructured as Myanmar Police Force Narcotic Drug Suppression Division in 2013.

17. With regard to nuclear non-proliferation, Myanmar has signed the Additional Protocol to the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ) and continues to actively implement the Action Plan to Strengthen the Implementation of the Treaty on the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ).

18. Furthermore, Myanmar actively participates in regional efforts to counter terrorism through engagement in relevant forums, workshops, and conferences, in cooperation with other ASEAN Member States and the international community. ASEAN Member States shall continue to enhance bilateral and multilateral relations, and further strengthen defence and security cooperation, in order to effectively address the challenges posed by terrorism. Enhanced coordination among countries will contribute to addressing these challenges and strengthening collective responses. Moreover, closer relations among ASEAN Member States will support the effective implementation of counter-terrorism measures.

19. Myanmar hosted 12th ASEAN Navy Young Officers' Interaction 2025 (12th ANYOI) on 28 April to 1 May 2025 in Yangon.

II. Future Trends on Regional Security

20. As ASEAN is enclosed in the Asia-Pacific region, the security threats to the region are also challenges for ASEAN. International terrorism, production of WMDs, arms smuggling, transnational crimes, illegal drug producing and smuggling, human trafficking, maritime security, natural disasters, climate change, epidemic of infected diseases and illegal migration are the challenges not only for the region but also for the global security.

21. Act of terror is still remained as one of the most challenging measures to the sustainable security in the ASEAN region even though sustainable security in fact focuses on four interconnected, long-term drivers of insecurity: climate change, competition over resources, marginalisation of the majority world, and global militarisation. The underlying root causes for such acts of terror are affiliated with the stimulus such as politics, nationalism and religion. Regardless of type of terrorism, human resources and modernized technologies will compulsorily be required in order to conduct counter terrorism.

22. As the impacts of the security threats grow among ASEAN member states, all member states compulsorily have to share the information related to counter terrorism. Any type of terrorism is to be the concerns of any country, and the common security threat for ASEAN member states, the deeper cooperation among ASEAN militaries become necessary. Preventive measures and intelligence services should be sorted out as a high priority, additionally accompanying activities such as enhancing cooperation, reciprocal assistance in technology and training sectors, bilateral and multilateral support among countries and creating blockage in interconnection among terrorist extremist groups.

23. The acts of terror become the prominent threat in 21st century, and these terrorist activities are carried out by the individual groups or non-state actors. Some terrorist organizations are able to establish their connection not only with other organization within the country, but also with those from other countries and regions. Consequently, the cooperation among ASEAN member states is necessarily required for conducting counter terrorism, otherwise the Safe Havens for the terrorist organizations will also be existed occurring their continuous attacks around the world.

24. ASEAN member states have to enhance the bilateral and multilateral relations and deepen military and security cooperation to respond to the challenges relating to acts of terror which we are now confronting and support us building our future nations as to be peaceful, tranquil and developed. Coordination among countries will surely support for dissolving the problems and enable to confront the challenges. Moreover, the betterment of the relationship among the ASEAN militaries will ensure the successful implementation processes of counter terrorism.

25. With regards to the role of ASEAN armed forces, the contributions of the armed forces based on the principles of coordination and cooperation to the stability and peace of the region are critically required. In responding to the regional security challenges by the cooperation and principles of joint actions, the role of ASEAN armed forces should continue emphasizing on a more stable and secure region. Moreover, the non-traditional security threats such as natural

disasters, terrorism, maritime security and transnational crimes, epidemics, food and energy security, human security, cybercrimes, climate changes and global warming are still regional concerns and the ASEAN armed forces should continue conducting the information sharing, capacity building, joint exercises and trainings.

26. ASEAN member states should continue enhancing peace and stability of the region in cooperative manner, encourage the states to sign the additional Protocol of the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ), cooperate more in the areas of traditional security challenges and non-traditional security challenges that will impact regional peace and stability such as the risk of extremists and terrorists, disaster management and information security, drug trafficking, human and arms smuggling, transnational crimes, illegal migration, money laundering, sea piracy and maritime security, climate change, and epidemics like Zika, Ebola, and COVID-19 virus.

The Philippines



I. Security Concerns in the Region and National Defence and Security Policies

A. Security Concerns Common to the ASEAN Community

The security challenges facing the region are numerous and multifaceted. These include the intensification of great power competition; preexisting geopolitical hotspots such as Taiwan, South China Sea, and Korean Peninsula; terrorism, radicalization, and violent extremism; cyber scams; piracy; trafficking in persons, illicit drugs, and arms; illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUUF); and disinformation and misinformation. The adverse impact of climate change and the outbreak of infectious diseases increasingly affect regional resilience. Rapid advancements in emerging and disruptive technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI) and autonomous systems, present both opportunities and risks to critical infrastructure and information security.

Recent developments in the Middle East, including threats of closing the Strait of Hormuz and the attacks on critical energy facilities, have triggered an unprecedented energy crisis affecting the region. This situation led to a surge in commodity prices, rising global inflation, significant disruptions to commerce and trade, and undermined the safety of overseas ASEAN nationals and the volatility of the global economy.

Maritime insecurity remains one of the most prominent concerns for ASEAN. Extensive claims and competing interests over maritime resources have made the maritime domain a theater for strategic maneuvering, diplomatic tensions, and economic competition. Developments in the South China Sea, East China Sea, and the Taiwan Strait directly impact the operational environment, while raising serious concerns regarding the maritime environment, commercial shipping, and the accessibility of sea lines of communication (SLOCs).

ASEAN lacks a cooperative framework to protect the integrity of critical undersea infrastructure (notwithstanding a robust regional maritime monitoring capability for the development of a responsive common maritime operating picture). While the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) offers limited guidance on subsea infrastructure security, these have yet to be responsive to current technological realities or the increasing risks associated with heavy regional shipping traffic.

A lack of a regional capability for monitoring subsea features also runs parallel to the need to fill regional monitoring blind spots to properly identify hazards and address non-traditional threats that also impact water columns and pockets of high seas.

Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing (IUUF) remains a persistent and pervasive issue for the ASEAN Community. This illicit activity threatens the economy of the ASEAN maritime zones, resulting in severe economic losses and jeopardizing regional efforts in forwarding sustainable fisheries. As a primary driver of overfishing, IUUF poses significant dangers to 30% of the world's fish stocks, undermining regional coastal fishing communities that rely on the stability of fish and other marine sources of livelihood for grassroots blue economies. Furthermore, these IUUF activities are potential diplomatic flashpoints, especially around disputed maritime regions.

Southeast Asian transnational organized crime uses the seas to conduct their operations alongside other offshoots in the illicit regional economy. These include illicit drug trafficking,

fuel smuggling, illegal trade of protected species, money laundering, and human trafficking.

Cybersecurity concerns common to the ASEAN region encompass ransomware and state-sponsored cyber threats targeting critical infrastructure, alongside frequent data breaches and privacy violations affecting its citizens. Furthermore, digital platforms are increasingly leveraged to spread disinformation and online influence operations. The region also faces significant information and communications technology (ICT) supply chain vulnerabilities in systems utilized by ASEAN Member States, which are compounded by existing gaps in regional cyber incident response coordination among member states.

The potential expansion of nuclear energy and other peaceful nuclear applications within ASEAN reaffirms the need to maintain robust nuclear security and safeguards measures, commensurate with the risks associated with nuclear materials, facilities, and activities. Common nuclear and radiological security concerns in the ASEAN region include the illicit trafficking or unauthorized movement of nuclear and radioactive materials, loss or theft of radioactive sources, and the potential malicious use of nuclear or radioactive materials.

The increasing movement of radioactive and nuclear materials, including naturally occurring radioactive material, across borders, also highlights the need for effective detection, verification, information sharing, and cooperation among ASEAN Member States, particularly among nuclear regulatory authorities, customs, law enforcement, and other relevant agencies. Differences in national regulatory maturity further underscore the need for capacity building, harmonized approaches where appropriate, and sustained regional dialogue on safety, security, safeguards, waste management, and the prevention of diversion.

B. Individual National Defense Policies

The National Security Policy (NSP) 2023-2028, adopted on 10 August 2023, contains the guiding principles and defines the strategic direction of the Philippines under the current administration. The NSP complements the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028, as well as contributes to the realization of the long-term national dream as envisaged in *"Matatag, Maginhawa at Panatag na Buhay"* by 2040. The NSP identifies 'regional and international peace and stability' as one of the core national security interests. In pursuit of this, the Philippines continues to work towards building an inclusive regional security architecture that fosters dialogue among states, while strengthening cooperation and multinational engagement in addressing shared security challenges.

The National Security Strategy (NSS) 2024, adopted on 20 December 2024, provides the roadmap for the implementation of the NSP. The NSS defines the strategic directions and lines of action towards achieving the country's national security vision. It serves as the overall anchor for all security-related plans and programs of the Philippines to be implemented at all levels of the government and society.

Responding to the realities of the complex and evolving security environment, Defense Secretary Gilberto C. Teodoro, Jr. announced the Comprehensive Archipelagic Defense Concept (CADC), to be implemented by the Department of National Defense (DND) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).[1]

Furthermore, the National Defense Strategy (NDS) 2025 codifies the AFP's strategic reorientation from internal security operations to

external defense and deterrence. This shift places emphasis on the protection of the Philippine archipelagic, maritime, cyber, and other critical domains; enhancement of resilience against traditional and non-traditional security threats; strengthening deterrence; as well as the promotion of a rules-based international order.

For fiscal year 2026, the total new appropriations available for the DND amount to PhP 305.87 billion.[2] More than one-half (54.68 percent) or PhP 167.25 billion is allocated for personnel services; about PhP 95.472 billion will go to maintenance and other operation expenses; while PhP 43.148 billion will be used for capital outlay. The approved defense budget has increased by 12.48 percent from the PhP 271.92 billion in the previous year.[3] The defense budget also makes up for 4.5 percent of the total government budget of PhP 6.793 trillion for 2026.[4]

The five major recipients of program funds under the 2026 operations budget are land forces defense, air forces defense, naval forces defense, joint force operations, and joint force capability.

In line with its commitment to regional peace and stability, the Philippines' ASEAN Chairship in 2026, under the theme "Navigating Our Future, Together," is guided by three main priorities, or the "three P's"—*Peace and Security Anchors*, *Prosperity Corridors*, and *People Empowerment*. The first priority, Peace and Security, underscores the Philippines' commitment to championing peace and regional stability through dialogue, adherence to international law, and strengthened cooperation to address both traditional and non-traditional security threats. As 2026 marks the 20th Anniversary of the establishment of the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), the Philippines reaffirms the significance of the ADMM as a platform for advancing dialogue, promoting confidence building, and enhancing practical cooperation among ASEAN Member States and Dialogue Partners in the realm of defence and security. In line with its commitment to advance defense and security cooperation in the region, the Philippines hosted the 20th ADMM and 13th ADMM-Plus in Cebu on 28-29 October 2026.

Consistent with these national and regional priorities, the Philippines shall sustain active engagement in international, regional, and multilateral mechanisms to promote Philippine national interests and strengthen cooperation in addressing shared security challenges.

C. National Contributions to Promoting Regional Security

The Philippines assumed the ASEAN Chairship in 2026 at a time of profound regional and global challenges. This year, ASEAN continues to wrestle with the political crisis in Myanmar, the Cambodia-Thailand border dispute, the situation in the South China Sea, and the ramifications of the ongoing war in the Middle East, and the persisting non-traditional security challenges in sub-regional areas. Nevertheless, the Philippines has remained steadfast in its commitment to maintain a rules-based, outward-looking ASEAN that promotes lasting peace, security, and stability in the region.

In pursuit of this vision, the Philippines has actively spearheaded initiatives and advanced key deliverables during its Chairship. Mindful of the new geopolitical realities, the Philippines, as Chair, underscored that ASEAN's relevance and credibility are consequential in navigating the future. In this regard, the Philippines continues to emphasize the importance of peaceful dialogue, respect for international law, and constructive engagement in addressing

outstanding issues affecting the country's sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction within its territory and all its maritime zones, including in the West Philippine Sea and in North Borneo (Sabah), in the interest of maintaining regional peace and stability.

Demonstrating ASEAN's Unique Covening Power

The Philippines leveraged ASEAN's unique convening power by bringing together ASEAN Member States and External Partners to exchange views on pressing regional and international developments, advance practical cooperation, and collectively respond to challenges affecting regional peace and security. This was particularly evident during the 59th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Post-Ministerial Conferences, and Related Meetings (59th AMM-PMC) on 18-23 July 2026 in Manila.

The 59th AMM adopted various outcome documents, including the *Joint Communiqué of the 59th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting*, which reflects ASEAN's common positions and priorities on issues affecting the region. This document is a product of a series of negotiations among the 11 ASEAN Member States. Moreover, the Foreign Ministers also adopted the *ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Statement on the Evolving Situation in the Middle East*, which expressed the region's collective call to parties concerned to exercise utmost self-restraint, refrain from actions that may further aggravate the situation, and promote genuine dialogue and diplomacy in addressing conflicts and tensions. Further, the 59th AMM also advanced ASEAN's engagement with High Contracting Parties (HCPs) to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) through the adoption of the *Guidelines on the Modalities for Engagement of ASEAN with High Contracting Parties under the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia*. The Guidelines, which is the first of its kind in the 50-year history of the Treaty, established modalities of engagement to deepen cooperation with HCPs, especially those that do not yet maintain formal partnerships with ASEAN, and provides new avenues for practical cooperation in support of ASEAN Community-building and the principles of the TAC.

Complementing these efforts, the Philippines hosted the 33rd ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) on 23 July 2026 in Manila, which gathered 26 ARF Participants and provided an important platform to exchange views on regional and international security issues of common concern, discuss ARF activities for the next inter-sessional year, and identify ways forward in strengthening cooperation within the ARF. Chaired by Secretary of Foreign Affairs Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro, the meeting achieved the following milestones:

- The United Kingdom was admitted as the 28th ARF Participant following ASEAN consensus. This milestone reflects the United Kingdom's strong and growing engagement with ASEAN as one of its Dialogue Partners.
- The ASEAN Regional Forum Manila Plan of Action (MPOA) 2026-2036[5] was officially adopted. Aligned with the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, the MPOA aims to guide the ARF's efforts in strengthening practical cooperation among all Participants for the next 10 years while ensuring that the Forum remains responsive to the evolving geopolitical environment.
- The ARF Annual Security Outlook 2026,[6] which provides a platform for ARF Participants to share perspectives, strengthen confidence, and deepen mutual understanding on regional security development, was officially published. The 2026 edition, which was facilitated by the

Philippines, features national contributions from 21 ARF Participants on regional and national security perspectives, defense policies, and insights on the role of the ARF.

Commemorating 50 Years of TAC

The commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) was among the Philippines' key deliverables, as ASEAN Chair, underscoring the Treaty's continued relevance as the cornerstone of peace and stability in the region and beyond.

The Philippines marked the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty in 1976 on 24 February 2026 with the issuance of the *ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Statement on the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Signing of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia*. The statement reaffirmed the importance of the TAC as a foundational code of conduct for interstate relations. The Philippines also unveiled the Commemorative Logo, which was inspired by the Sampaguita (*Jasminum sambac*), the country's national flower, symbolizing friendship, purity of intention, humility, hope, and a warm welcome—values that closely resonate with the spirit and enduring relevance of the TAC.

The significance of the TAC was further highlighted during the Commemorative Activity of the 50th Anniversary of the TAC in Manila on 24 July 2026, which gathered 61 Foreign Ministers or Representatives of High Contracting Parties, demonstrating ASEAN's convening power and reaffirming the shared commitment to the enduring principles of the Treaty.

The Commemorative Activity marked the accession of Sweden, Poland, Romania, and Lithuania to the TAC, bringing the total number of HCPs to 62 from the five (5) signatories in 1976, which includes the Philippines, reflecting the Treaty's contribution to ASEAN's political and security architecture.

The Commemorative Activity further provided an opportunity for meaningful exchange of views between HCPs at the inaugural High-Level Conference, which is the first of its kind in ASEAN's history. The Conference discussed three (3) thematic issues: *Conflict Prevention and Preventive Diplomacy, Enhancing Maritime Security and Promoting Maritime Cooperation*, and *Advancing Cooperation in Addressing Emerging Threats and Challenges*.

The TAC's continued contribution to regional peace and stability was further recognized when the United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus the Philippines-led and ASEAN-sponsored resolution entitled "*Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia*" on 04 September 2026, which secured 102 co-sponsors from across all geographic regions.



- **Terrorism**

The Philippines has achieved measurable progress in its counter-terrorism efforts, evidenced by a significant reduction in the threat posed by local terrorist groups such as the Abu Sayyaf Group and the Daulah Islamiyah Group. These achievements are reflected in the country's improved ranking in the Global Terrorism Index.[7] Despite this progress, the Philippines remains vigilant against the possible resurgence of local threats and the emergence of new risk factors, including the use of digital platforms for recruitment and radicalization, as well as the vulnerability of specific sectors to terror-grooming.

The Philippines' counter-terrorism policy framework is anchored on an inclusive, rights-based, victim-centered, and whole-of-society approach. The country recognizes that terrorism is increasingly transnational, reinforcing the need to enhance present cooperation mechanisms that will resonate well with realities on the ground.

The Philippines implements peace-oriented approaches that support long-term stability. This includes the AFP's Community Support Programs (CSPs), which bridge gaps in underserved or conflict-affected communities by delivering basic social services, addressing local grievances, and enabling an environment conducive for sustainable development. The CSPs have been successfully implemented in multiple Philippine provinces, particularly in areas that have achieved Stable Internal Peace and Security (SIPS)—an official status given to an area where local threats have been successfully minimized.

The Philippines also conducts reconciliation initiatives to facilitate the disengagement of former combatants and their reintegration into mainstream society. These include the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP), wherein the Philippine Government assists former combatants through financial and legal aid as well as livelihood training.

As terrorism threats evolve, the Philippine Government remains responsive not only in further capacitating its security and law enforcement agencies, but also in implementing its National Action Plans (NAPs) on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) and Unity, Peace, and Development (UPD).

In 2025, the Philippines adopted the goTravel Software Solution through the United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel Programme, a capacity-building initiative for UN Member States to prevent, detect, and investigate terrorist offenses and related travel using advanced passenger information and passenger name records. These initiatives are in line with international standards, recommended practices, and human rights principles.

Executive Order No. 33 (2023) established the National Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Coordinating Committee (NACC), strengthening the Philippines' existing measures against illicit financial activities. Key initiatives under the NACC have enhanced intelligence fusion activities to dismantle local terrorist groups by cutting off their funding sources and support networks. These combined efforts led to the Philippines' successful exit from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Grey List on 21 February 2025.

The Philippines continues to strengthen internal security in response to concerns over foreign-based recruitment, including reports of Filipino-Americans participating in Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) linked network.[8] Investigations are underway on the broader role of international

solidarity work (ISW) in amplifying extremist narratives.

The security sector has actively participated in counter-terrorism related initiatives under the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)-Plus Experts' Working Group on Countering Terrorism; ADMM Collaboration with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs); ASEAN Our Eyes (AOE); Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological, and Radiological (CBR) Defense Experts; and the ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Center of Excellence (ACICE). The AFP also deploys three (3) liaison officers and one (1) civilian analyst to the Counter-Terrorism Information Facility (CTIF) in Singapore.

While the Philippines maintains its long-standing legal and historical claim to North Borneo (Sabah), it actively engages in practical border cooperation with Malaysia and Indonesia under the 2016 Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA). This initiative focuses on addressing terrorism, armed robbery, kidnap-for-ransom, and transnational crime in the Sulu-Sulawesi area. There have been zero incidents of kidnap-for-ransom in the area since 2021, and no monitored arrival of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) in the Southern Philippines since April 2020.

- **Transnational Crime**

The Philippines recognizes cybercrime, trafficking in persons, human-trafficking-linked scam hub operations, online financial fraud, illicit drug trafficking, money laundering, and terrorism-related financing as among the major non-traditional security concerns shared across the ASEAN Community. This assessment is consistent with the deliberations of ASEAN Leaders at the 48th ASEAN Summit, where they underscored the urgency of combatting cross-border syndicates, scam hubs, scam farms, online financial fraud, and illicit trafficking.[9] The proliferation of technology-facilitated crime, including the exploitation of digital platforms and artificial intelligence by criminal syndicates, compounds the complexity of these threats and reinforces the need for sustained regional cooperation, intelligence-sharing, and capacity-building among ASEAN Member States.

As ASEAN Chair, the Philippines hosted the 20th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) and its Related Meetings on 19-21 October 2026, which facilitated exchanges on evolving transnational criminal threats and deepened cooperation in ensuring cohesive responses to evolving regional security threats. Further, during the Philippines' hosting of the 26th ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and Related Meetings on 16-18 June 2026, the meeting adopted the SOMTC Work Programme (2026–2028), which will guide ASEAN's efforts in strengthening its capacities and cooperation towards the effective implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action in Combatting Transnational Crime (2026-2036).

Complementing these efforts, within the ARF, the Philippines co-chaired the 22nd ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC), alongside the United States and Bangladesh on 17-18 April 2026 in Manila, marking the final year of our co-chairmanship cycle for 2023-2026. Through this platform, ARF Participants exchanged views, experiences, and best practices on countering terrorism and transnational crime. As a culmination of our efforts, the Philippines is currently co-chairing, alongside the United States and Bangladesh, the *ARF Framework Document on Addressing Complex Hybrid Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Criminal Threats through Effective National Action Plans* for the Inter-Sessional Year 2026-2027. The Framework Document is envisioned to be the

outcome document of the scenario-based discussions conducted during the ISM on CTTC over the past three years, which aims to serve as a resource of lessons and best practices to better equip ARF members with actionable guidance to effectively deter, detect, and disrupt transnational criminal activities. Further, the *ARF Training on Developing Exercises to Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Terrorism*, co-chaired by the Philippines alongside the United States in Manila on 20–22 January 2026, provided opportunities to test, validate, and revise operational plans and capabilities of the ARF Members, aimed at strengthening their preparedness and resilience against WMD terrorism threats at both regional and national levels.

In the same vein, as a member of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the Philippines, through the Philippine Center on Transnational Crime (PCTC) and the INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB) Manila, engages other INTERPOL member countries in the region for a coordinated effort against transnational crimes. Information exchanges, synchronized operations and capacity-building activities have resulted in numerous accomplishments against transnational threats. Through these engagements, the Philippines contributes to regional security by strengthening interoperability among ASEAN law enforcement and security bodies, expanding the region's collective capacity against transnational organized crime, and reinforcing the Philippines' commitment to a rules-based regional order guided by international law.

Trafficking in Persons

At the regional level, the Philippines serves as the Voluntary Lead Shepherd (VLS) for the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime's (SOMTC) Trafficking in Persons (TIP) priority area. As such, the Philippines led the development of the ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Work Plan Against TIP (2023-2028) or the "Bohol TIP Work Plan 2.0," which was endorsed by the SOMTC in July 2023 and serves as ASEAN's comprehensive blueprint in combatting TIP. The Philippines also organized the first ASEAN Workshop on Monitoring and Reporting of the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting, and Learning (MERL) Framework, which trained officials of ASEAN Member States and ASEAN Sectoral Bodies in promoting data harmonization, enhancing reporting mechanisms, and ensuring coordinated implementation of the Bohol TIP Work Plan 2.0. As part of its commitment to combat TIP through comprehensive and victim-centered approaches, the Philippines also actively led efforts in the development of the "*ASEAN Guidelines on the Implementation of the Non-Punishment Principle for Victims of Trafficking in Persons*," which supports ASEAN Member States and Sectoral Bodies in applying the non-punishment principle for TIP victims, in line with relevant national laws and regional and international obligations.

More recently, the 20th AMMTC, hosted by the Philippines in October 2026, adopted key outcome documents, including the *First ASEAN Regional Trafficking in Persons Report*. The Philippines initiated the development of the Report, which serves as an ASEAN-led regional mechanism to report the implementation of the Bohol TIP Work Plan 2.0, featuring key accomplishments, good practices, and implementation progress among ASEAN Member States and relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, while fostering shared learning and regional cooperation in combating TIP in line with the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons (ACTIP) and the ASEAN Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons (APA).

At the national level, the Philippine government, for the past few years, monitored and conducted operations to limit scam hubs, in the guise of Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGOs) or Internet Gaming Licenses (IGLs), which were involved in fraud, trafficking in persons, kidnap for ransom, tax evasion, money laundering and drug trafficking, among other crimes.

Likewise, Philippine government agencies communicate with relevant foreign diplomatic missions to provide assistance to their respective foreign nationals. This demonstrates the Philippines' commitment and readiness to address human trafficking cases and other transnational crimes in the region.

The Philippines also maintained its Tier 1 status in the US Department of State 2025 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report for the tenth consecutive year,[10] indicating that the US considers the Philippines as fully meeting the minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

Illegal Drug Trafficking

The Philippines recognizes the illicit drug problem as both a traditional and non-traditional security concern affecting the ASEAN region. While drug trafficking remains a law enforcement and border security challenge, its implications extend to public health, social welfare, governance, economic stability, and community resilience. Across Southeast Asia, drug trafficking networks have become transnational, adaptive, and technologically enabled, with growing linkages to money laundering, corruption, cyber-enabled crime, illicit financial flows, trafficking in persons, and other forms of organized crime.

From the Philippine perspective, cannabis sativa and methamphetamine hydrochloride remain the principal drugs of concern. The country's archipelagic geography, extensive coastlines, numerous ports, and expanding logistics networks present vulnerabilities that may be exploited by transnational criminal organizations. Authorities have likewise observed the increasing use of maritime routes, parcel delivery systems, encrypted communications, online platforms, digital payment mechanisms, and social media applications to facilitate trafficking operations and related criminal activities.

In response, the Philippines continues to implement a balanced, comprehensive, and evidence-informed approach through the Enhanced Philippine Anti-Illegal Drugs Strategy (E-PADS). The strategy integrates supply reduction measures with preventive education, treatment, rehabilitation, recovery, reintegration, aftercare, and community-based interventions, recognizing that sustainable drug control requires addressing both the availability of illicit drugs and the factors that contribute to individual and community vulnerability.

As part of its contribution to regional security, the Philippines actively participates in ASEAN mechanisms that strengthen collective responses to transnational drug threats. Through the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB), the country contributes to the ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network (ADMN), facilitating the regular exchange of information on drug abuse trends, emerging substances, trafficking patterns, treatment and rehabilitation developments, and policy innovations among ASEAN Member States. This mechanism enhances regional situational awareness and supports timely, coordinated, and evidence-based responses to evolving drug threats. In addition, the Philippines also convened the 9th ASEAN

Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters on 15 October 2026, promoting the exchange of views and best practices on how we can best address the use, abuse, and proliferation of illicit drugs in the region.

The Philippines likewise advances regional cooperation through the conduct of national drug research and surveillance initiatives, including the National Household Survey on the Patterns and Trends of Drug Abuse in the Philippines and the operationalization of the Integrated Drug Monitoring and Reporting Information System (IDMRIS). These initiatives strengthen the generation, analysis, and sharing of reliable data that support both national and regional policymaking. The Philippines also advocates enhanced cooperation on precursor control, maritime interdiction, cross-border law enforcement coordination, and the development of early warning mechanisms for New Psychoactive Substances (NPS).

- **Cybersecurity**

In bolstering the cybersecurity posture of the region, the Philippines contributed to the development of the ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy. The country also participates in the ASEAN CERT Incident Drill (ACID) and contributes to the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre as well as maintains various bilateral and multilateral cyber cooperation agreements. These efforts are supported by hosting and participating in numerous ASEAN cybersecurity exercises and workshops, alongside the consistent sharing of threat intelligence with ASEAN partners.

Under the ASEAN Regional Forum, the Philippines co-chaired with Canada the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the Open-Ended Study Group (OESG) on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) to Reduce the Risk of Conflict Stemming from the Use of ICTs for the Inter-Sessional Year 2025-2026. The meetings provided a platform to strengthen regional cybersecurity cooperation and exchange views on issues related to the rapidly changing ICT environment, including the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The Philippines also co-chaired with Australia the ARF Workshop on Critical Information Infrastructure (CII) Identification on 13 April 2026 in Manila, Philippines. The workshop tackled national approaches to identifying and in protecting CII.

Moreover, national cyber defense policies in the Philippines are anchored on key legislation, specifically the Cybercrime Prevention Act (Republic Act 10175), the DICT Charter (Republic Act 10844), and the Data Privacy Act (Republic Act 10173). These frameworks are supported by the implementation of the National Cybersecurity Plan (NCSP) and the ongoing strengthening of National Computer Emergency Response Team (NCERT) capabilities.

- **Maritime Security**

As an archipelagic state with a vast coastline, the Philippines' economic vitality and national security are deeply tied to the stability and protection of the region's maritime domain. In this context, the Philippines, through its maritime security agencies, has accelerated efforts to build a credible maritime posture that will support the preservation of the maritime entitlements and sovereign rights of all states, as well as the peaceful uses of the seas, in accordance with international law, particularly the 1982 UNCLOS and the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award. These efforts include sustained investments in advanced defense technologies and multi-domain capabilities, particularly

those that enhance maritime and air domain awareness, as well as capacity-building initiatives on maritime law enforcement, search and rescue, and marine environmental protection.

At the regional level, the Philippines continues to play a proactive role in maritime security cooperation, including through the ADMM, ADMM-Plus, ARF, ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF), Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), and the ASEAN Coast Guard Forum (ACF).

Under the Philippines' ASEAN Chairship, the *ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Maritime Cooperation* was adopted by the 48th ASEAN Summit on 08 May 2026 in Cebu, which is aimed at strengthening maritime cooperation, including through concrete initiatives, such as the formalization of the ACF as an ASEAN Sectoral Body under Annex I of the ASEAN Charter and the planned establishment of an ASEAN Maritime Centre in the Philippines.

The ACF has been institutionalized within the ASEAN Framework under Annex I of the ASEAN Charter as an ASEAN Sectoral Body under the APSC pillar, particularly as a subsidiary body under the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM).

The Philippines is also working towards the establishment of an ASEAN Maritime Centre in the Philippines, which will support the work of ASEAN and ASEAN-led mechanisms on maritime-related issues and will promote cross-sectoral and cross-pillar collaboration among ASEAN Member States, through promoting technical cooperation, information sharing, research collaboration, and capacity building activities, inter alia, while avoiding duplication of efforts. The Centre's Concept Paper and TOR will be adopted by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers on 14 November 2026.

In parallel, maritime cooperation in ASEAN has continued to strengthen through the convening of the ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) and Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) that serve as valuable platforms for dialogue with ASEAN Member States and Dialogue Partners on a wide range of maritime issues. The Second Edition of the ASEAN Maritime Outlook will be published during the 16th AMF, which will be hosted by the Philippines, as ASEAN Chair, in Manila. Under the EAMF, the Philippines and Australia are also co-shepherding the development of the EAMF website, as well as policy briefs to be undertaken by the EAMF Pool of Experts.

The Philippines also serves as the Country Coordinator for the ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations for 2024-2027. Coinciding with the Philippines' ASEAN Chairship, ASEAN and India declared 2026 as the *Year of Maritime Cooperation* in recognition of their longstanding maritime relations and shared interest in advancing cooperation in trade, blue economy, tourism, and connectivity. Recently, the Philippines hosted the 2nd ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise (AIME) in Zambales from 26 September to 2 October 2026, strengthening practical maritime cooperation, interoperability, and mutual trust and confidence between ASEAN and India.

Further, for the ARF's Inter-Sessional Year 2026-2027, the Philippines co-chaired the *6th ARF Workshop on Ferry Safety* with Cambodia, Thailand, and China on 11-12 November 2026, where participants shared experiences, best practices, and lessons learned towards the enhancement of domestic ferry safety, building on previous iterations of the ARF Workshop on Ferry Safety and the ARF Work Plan for Maritime Security (2022-2026), and as one of the concrete follow-ups of the ARF Statement on Enhancing Regional Cooperation on Ferry Safety. The Philippines is also co-shepherding the *Compendium of Best Practices on Safeguarding and Enhancing*

Regional Cooperation on Ferry Safety among ARF Participants with Cambodia and China, which compiles best practices and successful cases, policies, and technological innovations of ARF Participants aimed at safeguarding and enhancing cooperation on ferry safety.

Moreover, the Department of National Defense (DND) initiated the adoption of the Guidelines for Maritime Interaction under the auspices of the ADMM and subsequently, its corresponding operating guidelines at the ASEAN Chiefs of Navy Meeting (ANCM), with a view to strengthen confidence-building measures in the maritime domain and establish protocols for interaction to reduce misunderstandings and miscalculations at sea. The DND also continues to emphasize the importance of early warning systems to prevent miscalculations from escalating.

The ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI), introduced by Brunei Darussalam and launched during the Philippine Chairship of the ADMM in 2017, serves as a permanent, rapid, reliable, and secure communication channel for ASEAN Defense Ministers to coordinate responses to emergency situations, particularly in the maritime domain. As the technical lead, the DND actively supports the expansion of the ADI Phase 2, which will incorporate secure email and video conferencing alongside existing voice and facsimile options.

Additionally, under the ADMM-Plus, the Philippines is co-chairing the Experts' Working Group (EWG) on Maritime Security (MS) with Japan for the 2024-2027 cycle. These efforts will focus on implementing the existing confidence-building measures, addressing the nexus between maritime security and climate change, and promoting marine environmental protection.

The Philippine Navy (PN) also hosted the Maritime Security Conference (MSC) in October 2025. The MSC convened subject matter experts to discuss the impact of climate change on naval operations, the role of navies in marine environmental protection, and the protection of critical undersea infrastructure (CUI).

In September 2026, the Philippines hosted the Joint Cooperative Activity (JCA), marking the first at-sea activity under the ADMM-Plus EWG on Maritime Security since the pandemic. Centered on the theme "ASEAN Seas of Cooperation: Enhancing Maritime Security and Protection in a Changing World," the exercise focused on regional naval responses to climate-induced disasters at sea and the protection of marine ecological integrity.

The PCG, in partnership with the United States Coast Guard, successfully hosted the 11th Southeast Asia Maritime Law Enforcement Initiative (SEAMLEI) Commanders' Forum on 18-20 November 2025 in Makati City. The forum brought together senior maritime law enforcement leaders from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, the United States, and Viet Nam to strengthen regional cooperation and address shared maritime security challenges. It served as a strategic platform for enhancing communication, coordination, information sharing, and interoperability among maritime law enforcement agencies.

Further, the Philippines also continues to support international maritime information-sharing initiatives such as the International Fusion Centre (IFC). The AFP maintains International Liaison Officers (ILOs) at the Singapore Navy-hosted IFC.

The AFP and PCG also work with the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) Information Sharing Center (ISC) to combat incidents of piracy and armed

robbery against ships in Asia. The Philippines was elected as Chairperson of the RECAAP ISC Governing Council in September 2025. The PCG also successfully hosted the RECAAP Capacity Building Senior Officers' Meeting (CBSOM) in Manila on 22-26 June 2026. The five-day meeting brought together delegates from 14 ReCAAP Contracting Parties, observers from Malaysia and Indonesia, and representatives from the Philippine shipping industry, port authorities, and partner agencies to strengthen regional cooperation against piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia. The meeting served as a platform to review regional maritime security developments, identify operational gaps, exchange best practices, and discuss the implementation of the ReCAAP ISC Ten-Year Roadmap (2027-2036).

The Philippines also collaborates with the Combined Task Force (CTF) 151, which is one of the five task forces under the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) in Bahrain focusing on counter-piracy operations beyond the region, particularly off the Horn of Africa. The Philippine Navy previously assumed command of CTF-151 in 2023.

To curb IUUF within and beyond the maritime zones of the Philippines, the Department of Agriculture, through the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), has entered into agreements with international partners to strengthen regional monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) efforts through the establishment of protocols on information-sharing for port data and sightings of illegal fishing. The BFAR also implements the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) to block IUUF vessels from domestic ports and landing illicit catches, while the Bureau's Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) contributes to regional maritime security by providing real-time tracking data that detects illegal fishing intrusions and uncovers suspicious cross-border maritime movements.

In this context, the Philippines sees an opportunity to enhance access to and utilization of maritime intelligence platforms such as SeaVision for vessel monitoring and analysis in the Regional Fisheries Monitoring Centers (RFMC), particularly in support of fisheries monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) and the implementation of Port State Measures (PSM). Improved access to maritime information can strengthen pre-arrival risk assessment, vessel activity verification, port targeting, and inspection planning. BFAR is looking into the development and application of an IUU Fishing Index and Threat Assessment Tool (I-FIT) for commercial fishing vessels and commercial fishing waters to have a more comprehensive risk-based assessment framework covering both municipal and commercial fishing and support the prioritization of enforcement interventions.

- **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief**

Situated within the Pacific "Ring of Fire" and the Western Pacific Typhoon Belt, the Philippines is highly vulnerable to natural disasters such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and tropical storms. On average, around 20 typhoons enter the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) each year, with eight to nine making landfall.[11] Dense coastal and urban populations, rapid urbanization, and climate change exacerbate the impacts of these typhoons, leading to heightened risks of flooding, storm surges, and landslides. These recurring hazards contribute to significant economic impacts, with annual losses estimated at approximately 3% of the Philippines' GDP.[12]

In 2025, 23 tropical cyclones entered or formed within the PAR; 11 of which made landfall, with two that were categorized as super typhoons,[13] indicating a steady rise in frequency and intensity brought about by climate change.

To address this, the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 continues to prioritize accelerated climate action and disaster resilience to protect communities, ecosystems, and the economy. Chapter 15 of the PDP outlines sustainable investments, adaptive capacity-building, and environmental protection, among other measures. It also includes mainstreaming climate change by integrating climate risk management into national, sectoral, and local development plans.[14]

In addition, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (NDRRMP) 2011-2028, legally based on Republic Act No. 10121, serves as the roadmap for proactive risk reduction, covering disaster prevention and mitigation, disaster preparedness, disaster response, and rehabilitation and recovery.[15] The Philippines' commitment to addressing climate change and its impact is further reflected in its participation in international frameworks such as the Paris Agreement, the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which the NDRRMP and the PDP are aligned with.

Support to Regional Disaster Response

- **Myanmar Earthquake Response, 2025** – Following the earthquake that struck Myanmar in 2025, the Philippines extended humanitarian assistance in support of regional disaster response efforts. Three (3) personnel from the Office for Civil Defense (OCD) and the Department of Health (DOH) were deployed as members of the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) to support rapid assessment, coordination with national authorities, and facilitation of humanitarian assistance.

  The NDRRMC also deployed to Myanmar a Philippine Inter-Agency Humanitarian Contingent (PIAHC) via the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre). The PIAHC, composed of 89 personnel from the OCD, AFP, DOH, Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Emergency Response Team (DENR-ERT), conducted search, rescue, and retrieval (SRR) operations, and provided emergency medical and humanitarian assistance to affected communities.

- **Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA)** – The Philippines continues to support the operationalization of the DELSA, a regional mechanism designed to facilitate the rapid mobilization and delivery of humanitarian relief supplies during disasters. As part of the ASEAN regional logistics network, the Philippines hosts a DELSA satellite warehouse. The facility stores pre-positioned humanitarian relief items, including family kits and shelter materials, which may be deployed to disaster-affected ASEAN Member States upon request.

  Since the DELSA's establishment, the Philippines has benefited from humanitarian assistance mobilized through the AHA Centre, including the deployment of relief items from the DELSA satellite warehouse in the Philippines. From 2012 to 2025, the total value of humanitarian relief assistance provided through the AHA Centre and the DELSA to support disaster response operations in the Philippines amounts to approximately USD 12.2 million, covering at least 18 major disaster events, including typhoons and other large-scale emergencies. In 2025, the Philippine Air Force facilitated three (3) sorties from the DELSA satellite warehouse

in the Philippines, to deliver humanitarian relief items to Myanmar.

- **ASEAN-ERAT** – The Philippines actively contributes personnel to regional humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations through its pool of trained ASEAN-ERAT members. Philippine representatives participated in the response to the Sulawesi earthquake in Indonesia in 2018, as well as in missions to Myanmar following a major fire incident in 2018, the regional joint assessment related to the coronavirus pandemic in 2022, Tropical Cyclone Mocha in 2023, and the magnitude 7.0 earthquake that struck Myanmar in 2025.

Capacity-Building and Interoperability Exercises

- **Participation in the ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response (ARDEX) 2025 in Cambodia** – The Philippines participated in the ARDEX 2025 hosted by Cambodia. ARDEX is ASEAN's flagship disaster response simulation exercise aimed at testing and strengthening regional operational readiness and coordination mechanisms in responding to large-scale disasters. Participation in the exercise enabled the Philippines to engage with ASEAN counterparts in simulated emergency scenarios, validate regional response procedures, and further strengthen interoperability and coordination among ASEAN Member States.

- **International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) External Classification of Thailand's Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), 2025** – The Philippines sent observers to the INSARAG External Classification Exercise of Thailand's USAR Team. The activity evaluated the operational readiness of the Thai USAR Team against internationally recognized standards for search and rescue operations. This exercise provided an opportunity for Philippine representatives to observe international best practices, benchmark national capabilities, and promote knowledge exchange with regional and international partners. Such engagements contribute to improving interoperability and aligning national capabilities with global standards in urban search and rescue operations. This is in line with the current modernization of the Philippines' Search, Rescue, and Retrieval (SRR) system by transitioning to a ten-year strategic horizon (2026-2036).

  Central to this reform is the operationalization of the Philippine USAR National Accreditation Body (NAB), which establishes unified standards for Organization, Equipment, and Training (OET) for both USAR and flood response teams. By aligning these benchmarks with international INSARAG standards, and through global benchmarking, such as observing Thailand's (THA-01) successful accreditation last November 2025, the NDRRMC is ensuring that SRR teams are interoperable, welt-equipped, and professionalized.

- **ASEAN ERAT Localization, 2025** – The Philippines hosted an ASEAN-ERAT Localization initiative in 2015, aimed at strengthening national capacities in rapid disaster assessment and coordination during emergency response operations. The activity introduced ASEAN-ERAT methodologies, tools, and coordination processes to national and local responders to enhance their ability to conduct rapid needs assessments during the early phase of disasters. The initiative strengthened alignment between national disaster management mechanisms and ASEAN

regional response frameworks, while promoting improved coordination among government agencies, local government units, and humanitarian partners.

- **ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR** – The Philippines also actively participates in the ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR that was established in 2011 for the specific purpose of promoting practical, action-oriented cooperation on HADR. One of these practical efforts is the ASEAN Militaries Ready Group (AMRG) on HADR, which facilitates the coordination and rapid deployment of military personnel and assets from ASEAN Member States for disaster response. The Philippine Defense and Armed Forces Attaché (PhilDAFA) to Indonesia has assumed the role of Military Representative to the AHA Centre for 2026, in line with the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the AMRG on HADR.

- **Women, Peace, and Security**

The Philippines remains deeply committed to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, as reflected in its leadership in multilateral fora and its continued efforts to advance implementation at the national and local levels. The meaningful participation of women is integral to the country's peacebuilding and development agenda.

In October 2024, the Philippines hosted the *International Conference on Women, Peace, and Security (ICWPS)*, which brought together over 1,700 delegates from 75 countries to stocktake on the implementation of the WPS agenda.

The *Pasay Declaration on Women, Peace, and Security*, adopted during the ICWPS, reaffirms foundational commitments set forth in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and related resolutions, calling for accelerated efforts to achieve gender equality and enhance women's meaningful participation in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and recovery processes. It also recognized the interconnectedness of security, climate, and gender equality.

Following the ICWPS, the Philippines also hosted the *Philippine Conference on Women, Peace, and Security* in October 2025, aimed at amplifying the voices of women and boosting their capacity to engage in community-driven efforts, along with commitments to gender-responsive legal practice and institutional reforms, as well as strengthening the utilization of the government's Gender and Development (GAD) budget allocation.

ASEAN is guided by the *ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on WPS*, mobilizing to advance implementation of the WPS agenda to promote sustainable peace and security for all ASEAN citizens. It is designed to allow sufficient space to ensure that WPS implementation speaks to national and sub-national peace and security priorities and evidence-based realities, noting ASEAN's long history of innovative local approaches on peace and security, often led by women.

The Philippines also hosted the *2026 ASEAN Conference on Women, Peace and Security* last 06-08 October 2026, with the aim of enhancing regional cooperation on Peace Sustainability and localizing peacebuilding commitments, as well as strengthening ASEAN frameworks and mechanisms for conflict resolution and human-centered peacebuilding across traditional and non-traditional security issues.

In the ARF, the region pushed for the inclusion of action lines in the *ARF MPOA 2026-2036* relating to Women, Peace, and Security, particularly in promoting women's meaningful participation in the areas of conflict

resolution, peacekeeping operations, and confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy.

The Philippines is proud to have been the first country in Asia to adopt a National Action Plan on WPS (NAPWPS) in 2010, and is currently implementing its fourth iteration by embracing a whole-of-society approach, covering the period 2023-2033. Beyond its national plan, the Philippines has encouraged the adoption of action plans at the regional and sub-national levels, such as the adoption of an action plan for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The Philippines continues to advocate for gender-responsive peace-building strategies as well as women's inclusion in peace talks.

- **Non-proliferation, Arms Control, and Disarmament**

The Philippines continues to actively participate in international disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation mechanisms. It supports international agreements on non-proliferation and calls for the full implementation of the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty. It remains committed to preserving Southeast Asia as a region free from nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and the SEANWFZ Treaty.

In line with this commitment, the Philippines convened the 13th Annual Meeting of the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM) on 11-13 August 2026 in Manila, which discussed updates and proposals on cooperation with external partners, as well as progress on the implementation of relevant action lines in the SEANWFZ Treaty and its Plan of Action (2023-2027) and the different Technical Working Groups under ASEANTOM. These efforts were further complemented by practical initiatives in nuclear security, notably through the Philippines' hosting of the ASEAN Nuclear Emergency Notification and Communications Exercise in July 2026 in Manila, a flagship regional exercise which seeks to strengthen regional readiness for nuclear and radiological emergencies. The Philippines is also co-chairing the Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ISM on NPD), alongside Australia and New Zealand, for the 2024-2027 Inter-Sessional cycle. This year, the Philippines hosted the 17th ARF ISM on NPD, in Manila on 13–14 April 2026, which provided a platform for dialogue on key issues, including nuclear disarmament, nuclear risk reduction, lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), conventional weapons, space security, and ongoing cooperation on non-proliferation and disarmament.

The Philippines also reaffirmed its enduring commitment to global peace and security and supported the global call for transparency and accountability by Nuclear Weapon States during the 11th Review Conference of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT RevCon), where the Philippines emphasized its enduring commitment to transparency and accountability. The Philippines also continues to advocate for the universalization and full implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), contributing to the global verification regime through the hosting of three stations of the CTBTO International Monitoring System (IMS). Through one (1) radionuclide station in Tanay and two (2) auxiliary seismic stations in Tagaytay and Davao, the Philippines contributes to the collective monitoring of nuclear weapons testing.

The country likewise actively cooperates with partners in advocating for the resumption of negotiations toward a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) at the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva. The Philippines

joined high-level representatives from Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the United Kingdom, and the United States in launching the Friends of a FMCT initiative in New York on 23 September 2024, and a Ministerial Meeting on the same on the margins of the 2024 and 2025 UN General Assembly High-Level Week.

As a State Party to most humanitarian disarmament treaties, the Philippines remains a strong proponent of this cause. It participated in the Fifth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, on 25-29 November 2024. At the Conference, the Philippines reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to a mine-free world, recalling its early support for mine action dating back to 1995 when it destroyed its entire stockpile of anti-personnel mines. The Philippines continues to promote a human rights-based approach to victim assistance, the integration of mine action in peace processes, and the inclusion of indigenous peoples and women in mine action efforts. It also acknowledged the emerging challenges posed by climate change and the continued threat posed by the use of improvised mines by non-state armed groups.

On small arms and light weapons (SALW), the Philippines participated in the Ninth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (BMS9 SALW) from to 1-5 June 2026 in New York. The Biennial Meeting of States has the mandate to consider and assess the national, regional and global implementation of the Programme of Action (PoA), to prevent combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and its International Tracing Instrument (ITI).

On biological weapons, the Philippines continues to engage in discussions, including through participation in the International Workshop on the Operationalization of Article VII of BWC in May 2026. A two-day Table Top Exercise (TTX) on the Operationalization of Article VII of the Biological Weapons Convention to assess national and regional operationalization of Article VII.

On emerging technologies, the Philippines is actively contributing to the discussions of the Open-ended Working Group on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space in All its Aspects (OEWG on PAROS), and the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (GGE-LAWS). The Philippines also participated in the Vienna Conference on Autonomous Weapons Systems, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Regional Conference on the Peace and Security Aspect of Autonomous Weapons Systems. The Philippines advocates for inclusive, norm-based approaches to responsible innovation and use of emerging technologies.

In outer space governance, the Philippines continues to advocate for the elaboration and operationalization of the duty of "due regard" under Article IX of the Outer Space Treaty. Together with Australia and Singapore, the Philippines submitted a Working Paper entitled "*Perspectives and Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space in All its Aspects: ASEAN Regional Forum Workshop on Peace and Security in Outer Space*," which summarized the key takeaways from said ARF Workshop held in November 2025 in Manila. The country's continued engagement in the OEWG PAROS process and other space mechanisms, such as the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Other Space (COPUOS), is aimed at safeguarding the Philippines' space

infrastructure and the risks and threats posed by the space activities of other countries.

Demonstrating its commitment to regional dialogue, the Philippines participated in the 19th Asia Senior-Level Talks on Non-Proliferation (ASTOP) in October 2024 in Tokyo, Japan. The ASTOP is a key platform for confidence-building and coordination among regional stakeholders. At a regional workshop on the sidelines of ASTOP, the Philippines reiterated its longstanding support for the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCoC) as a unique and vital multilateral confidence-building mechanism. As the first ASEAN Member State to subscribe to the HCoC and a former Chair of its Subscribing States, the Philippines reaffirmed its call for universalization of the Code, enhancement of transparency measures, and strengthened regional capacity to address missile proliferation. It underscored the importance of transparency tools such as annual declarations and pre-launch notifications in building trust.

Domestically, the Philippines continues to strengthen its strategic trade control frameworks to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It co-hosted the 2024 Strategic Trade Management Summit in Manila on 23-25 April 2024, which brought together Indo-Pacific stakeholders to enhance interagency coordination, export control systems, and regulatory compliance. The Summit affirmed the Philippines' growing leadership in integrating trade facilitation with international security obligations.

In parallel, the Philippines and Singapore, with support from Japan and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), conducted the first-ever UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540 Peer Review Exercise in Southeast Asia. The inaugural review was held in Manila from 28 to 29 May 2024, followed by a second consultation in Singapore from 4 to 5 September 2024. These exercises enabled detailed and collaborative assessments of participating countries' implementation of export controls and non-proliferation obligations under UNSCR 1540, culminating in the development of an outcome document that supports stronger regional coordination and compliance.

The Philippines' approach to nuclear and radiological security is anchored on its national laws and international commitments. Republic Act No. 12305, or the Philippine National Nuclear Energy Safety Act, provides a comprehensive framework for the regulation of nuclear and radioactive materials and activities, including nuclear safety, security, safeguards, physical protection, and the prevention of unauthorized or malicious acts involving nuclear and radioactive materials. The law also establishes the Philippine Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority (PhilATOM) as the country's independent nuclear regulatory authority.

The Philippines is likewise a State Party to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and its Amendment, which establishes international obligations concerning the physical protection of nuclear material and the prevention and criminalization of certain offenses involving nuclear material. Moreover, through the country's Nuclear Energy Program - Inter Agency Committee (NEP-IAC), the national policy for nuclear security and safeguards is being developed. These policies aim to identify different government agencies with roles in nuclear security and safeguards based on their respective mandates. This includes capability assessment, and capacity-building requirements of each agency. The policies further provide direction for transboundary communication, cooperation, and collaboration with stakeholders and international partners.

The Philippines also implements its obligations under its Comprehensive Safeguards

Agreement and Additional Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as under the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its Amendment. At the national level, the country continues to strengthen regulatory and security frameworks covering the possession, use, transport, import, export, and other activities involving nuclear and radioactive materials.

Regional cooperation through information sharing, capacity building, nuclear security exercises, radiation detection, and cooperation among regulatory, customs, law enforcement, and other competent authorities further contribute to ASEAN's collective nuclear and radiological security. Given the region's extensive maritime routes and major trade corridors, the Philippines supports practical cooperation to strengthen border detection, interdiction, and response capabilities against the illicit movement of nuclear and radioactive materials. These efforts complement regional initiatives on information sharing, capacity building, and coordination among competent authorities to prevent proliferation-related risks, while facilitating legitimate trade and peaceful nuclear applications.

These multiple lines of effort reaffirm the Philippines' principled commitment to advancing global disarmament, safeguarding human security, and promoting rules-based international cooperation in an increasingly complex strategic environment.

- **Peacekeeping Operations**

The Philippines maintains a long-standing peacekeeping footprint, having actively engaged in United Nations peacekeeping operations (PKO) since 1963. At present, the Philippines maintains individual deployments of UN military observers (UNMOS) and staff officers to four (4) mission areas, namely: the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), and UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

The Philippines continues to undertake efforts to elevate its capabilities for peacekeeping under the UN Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS). Aside from UNMO and staff officers, one (1) Quick Reaction Force (QRF) Company from the AFP is currently registered in the PCRS. During the 2025 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial Meeting (PKMM) in Berlin, Germany, the Philippines committed an additional AFP Light Infantry Battalion (LIB).

Under the auspices of the ADMM, the AFP hosted the 10th Meeting of the ASEAN Peacekeeping Centers Network (APCN) in May 2026 and the 3rd ASEAN Peacekeeping Staff Exercise (APSE-3) in October 2025. The 10th APCN discussed updates on ASEAN Member States' national initiatives and international commitments for peacekeeping, developments in UN PKO, expanding women's participation in these operations, and strengthening regional and international peacekeeping partnerships. As a concrete effort, the Philippines tabled for discussion a draft Terms of Reference (TOR) that would guide the regular conduct of APCN meetings and activities. Meanwhile, the APSE-3 brought together 30 participants from ASEAN Member States for rigorous drills and scenario-based training for UN PKO. Under the ADMM-Plus, the Philippines co-chaired with New Zealand the first cycle (2011-2014) of the EWG on PKO. During which, the Work Plan focused on the legal aspects of UN PKO, as well as building regional peacekeeping capabilities amid force generation issues and operational challenges.

II. Future Trends on Regional Security

Southeast Asia's security environment will continue to be shaped by geopolitical competition, intra- and inter-state disputes, transnational threats, technological developments, and climate-related risks. Strategic competition will remain a crucial factor in influencing regional partnerships and the broader security architecture, as countries continue to expand strategic presence and modernize military capabilities.

Against this backdrop, ASEAN should be able to assert and maneuver itself into a position where its interests prevail, equally expanding its capacity for international engagement, and without compromising the balance that underpins its diplomacy. To this end, ASEAN Member States must continue to collectively maintain unity and ASEAN Centrality, so as to uphold ASEAN's role as a regional convenor and peace-broker amid fundamentally diverging interests in the region.

The interplay between traditional and non-traditional security challenges will continue to shape the security architecture, where developments in one domain have cascading effects across others. Conflicting territorial and maritime claims, cyber security threats, terrorism, the impact of climate change, pandemics, and economic disruptions, among other threat vectors, will no longer be isolated concerns, but will continue to increasingly influence one another. ASEAN has witnessed this trend in recent events, where conflicts create shocks to global trade and energy supplies, cyber-attacks disrupt critical infrastructure, and climate-related disasters exacerbate humanitarian crises.

This evolving regional and global landscape necessitates ASEAN to view security through a comprehensive, multidimensional lens, which further requires enhancing collaboration among various sectors, including defense and military, law enforcement, disaster management, science and technology, health, and economic sectors.

Digitization and technological advancements further reinforce the interconnectedness of traditional and non-traditional security challenges. Non-traditional threats such as disinformation and data poisoning will further contribute to direct, physical and systemic risks for military and defense systems, disrupt political cohesion, and hamper responses to threats. Meanwhile, the application of these advancements into weapon systems, such as autonomous weapon systems, will increase militaries' effectiveness but may come with major ethical, legal and operational questions and implications for the practice of international humanitarian law and the law of armed conflict.

ASEAN should, therefore, expand the scope of its cooperation in a way that is cognizant of the vulnerability of critical infrastructure to cyber-attacks, the impact of disinformation campaigns on public support for government initiatives and internal cohesion, and the adverse effects associated with the proliferation of autonomous weapon systems, among other factors.

The emergence of AI-enabled cyber threats necessitates the development of adaptive defenses, and recognition of the long-term risks that quantum computing poses to current encryption standards. The rollout of 5G and 6G technologies across ASEAN introduces new cybersecurity implications that must be addressed, while the growing cyber skills gap among its members remains a critical challenge. Ultimately, these factors underscore the need for a harmonized ASEAN cyber legal

framework and the establishment of norms for responsible state behavior in cyberspace.

There is a need to strengthen regional cyber resilience through harmonized legal frameworks, interoperable incident response mechanisms, digital forensic capabilities, and sustained capacity-building initiatives among ASEAN Member States. For example, drug syndicates continuously evolve and increasingly exploit cyberspace and emerging technologies to facilitate illegal drug activities.

Law enforcement agencies must strengthen their technological capabilities and adapt their strategies to effectively address these evolving threats. ASEAN may consider developing more expedited and efficient mechanisms for cross-border information and cooperation to enable timely investigation and prosecution of cybercriminals.

The Philippines recognizes that ASEAN's maritime security environment will continue to evolve amid intensifying strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific, the rapid advancement of emerging technologies, cyber threats against maritime infrastructure, climate change, and increasingly complex transboundary maritime incidents. These developments reinforce the need for sustained cooperation, institutional resilience, and collective preparedness among ASEAN Member States.

In addressing these challenges, the Philippines continues to advocate for the peaceful settlement of disputes through dialogue, diplomacy, and adherence to international law. Recognizing that developments in the West Philippine Sea and South China Sea affect regional peace and stability, the country supports continued negotiations among stakeholders, while encouraging ASEAN to remain a credible platform for confidence-building, mutual understanding, and the peaceful management of disagreements without the threat or use of force.

As ASEAN charts its course toward a more secure maritime future, the Philippines envisions a regional security architecture that integrates maritime law enforcement, environmental stewardship, humanitarian assistance, disaster response, and institutional cooperation. By strengthening interoperability, transparency, and practical collaboration among ASEAN Member States, the Philippines remains committed to advancing a maritime region where peace, stability, and shared prosperity continue to prevail through unity, trust, and collective responsibility.

Future regional security trends in ASEAN will be shaped by the growing interest in peaceful nuclear applications, including nuclear power, advances in nuclear technology, and the need to maintain effective controls over nuclear and radioactive materials. These developments will require stronger regional cooperation to ensure that peaceful uses of nuclear energy remain safe, secure, and consistent with non-proliferation objectives.

ASEAN's continued commitment to the SEANWFZ remains central to regional confidence building. At the same time, the expansion of civilian nuclear infrastructure will need to be supported by credible regulatory oversight, emergency preparedness, physical protection, safeguards implementation, and sustained engagement with relevant international partners.

In the midst of all this, ASEAN needs to preserve the rules-based international order. This order, which envisions states peacefully resolving disputes through common laws and rules without respect to great power status or balance of force, is the foundational core of ASEAN's principles and values. As ASEAN looks into the future, it ought to improve

its institutional capacity to better facilitate cross-sectoral coordination, streamline work processes to enable efficient responses to crises and emerging situations, and better leverage the strengths of ASEAN Member States and its partners to maintain a region that is resilient, innovative, and dynamic.

Finally, ASEAN initiatives to address these multilayered issues must deliver tangible benefits to local communities. Securing political buy-in and active engagement with stakeholders are crucial to ensure sustained policy implementation.

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Singapore



I. Security Concerns in the Region and National Defence and Security Policies

A. Security Concerns Common to the ASEAN Community

ASEAN faces an increasingly fragmented and unpredictable security environment. The global operating system that has supported decades of stability is under strain. Major power contestation is intensifying. Small states face the question of whether we are entering a world where rules moderate power, or where power defines rules. Conflicts are no longer geographically contained, as their effects reverberate across regions and domains.

Given ASEAN's dependence on critical infrastructure, such as undersea cables and pipelines, energy grids, and open sea and air lines of communication, protecting them and strengthening supply chain resilience should be our collective priority. At the same time, transnational threats remain serious concerns. These include terrorism, drugs, piracy, human trafficking, pandemics, climate change, as well as chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks.

No single country can address these challenges alone. ASEAN's unity and Centrality, together with its network of partners and ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ASEAN Plus Three, ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), East Asia Summit (EAS), and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) remain essential. These mechanisms should continue to engage stakeholders in an open and inclusive regional architecture.

B. Individual National Defence Policies

Singapore's defence policy is built on the twin pillars of deterrence and diplomacy. Singapore believes in the need for a strong defence to ensure that we enjoy peace and security. A strong defence also provides us with the political space and freedom to act in the best interests of our people. This is why Singapore has invested steadily and prudently in defence over the years to build up a professional and capable Singapore Armed Forces (SAF). To overcome our small size and lack of resources, Singapore makes use of technology as a force multiplier. Singapore's defence expenditure in FY2026 stands at three per cent of our Gross Domestic Product.

UN Register on Conventional Arms (UNROCA)

To demonstrate support for transparency and confidence-building, Singapore has submitted reports to the UNROCA since 1993 and continues to make regular submissions on international transfers of conventional arms. Singapore supports a balanced approach that combats the illicit arms trade without impeding the legitimate right of States to acquire conventional arms for self-defence.

Military Expenditure

Singapore takes a prudent and stable approach to defence spending. This steady and long-term approach to defence spending is a critical enabler in allowing the SAF to develop its capabilities systematically, maintain a high level of readiness, and obtain the best value from defence investments.

C. National Contributions to Promoting Regional Security

Singapore seeks to build strong and friendly ties with defence establishments and armed forces regionally and globally. Singapore supports a rules-based, open, and inclusive regional security architecture that encourages countries to engage in strategic dialogue and practical military cooperation. Singapore participates actively in ASEAN-led platforms such as the ADMM/ADMM-Plus, EAS, and ARF, as well as other multilateral arrangements and fora such as the Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD) and the Five Power Defence Arrangements. Singapore actively contributes to practical military cooperation through the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups (EWGs).

Since July 2023, the ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence (ACICE) has served as a regional platform for defence establishments to share information, build capacity, and develop a common understanding of cyber and information threats. This supports regional security by enhancing ASEAN Member States' (AMS') ability to understand threats that cut across national borders. The 4th Digital Defence Symposium (DDS) was held in July 2026, bringing together senior military and defence officials and non-state stakeholders to discuss the latest developments in the cybersecurity and information landscapes. The 4th ASEAN Roundtable on Digital Defence held alongside the Symposium, provided AMS a platform to exchange views on the cyber and information challenges, and to explore practical areas of defence cooperation.

Singapore is an active proponent of Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) among militaries and defence establishments. CBMs are useful guidelines particularly to reduce miscalculations and preserve a peaceful and stable regional security environment.

Singapore hosts the annual SLD organised by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). Since its inception in 2002, the SLD has established itself as the premier defence and security conference in the Asia-Pacific region. The 23rd SLD was held from 29 to 31 May 2026. General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam and President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam Tô Lâm delivered the Keynote Address, while President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste Dr José Ramos-Horta delivered the Special Address. On the sidelines of this SLD, Singapore and 16 partner countries launched the Guiding Principles for Underwater Infrastructure Defence Exchanges (GUIDE), a non-legally binding, multilateral document that outlines shared principles for critical underwater infrastructure (CUI) security and potential areas of defence cooperation. The 14th IISS SLD Sherpa Meeting, held from 18 to 20 January 2026, supplemented the SLD process by providing an inter-sessional platform for senior defence officials, military officers, and experts to engage in frank discussions on evolving regional security challenges.

i. Counter-Terrorism

Terrorism and its underlying ideologies remain complex and long-term challenges. The threat of terrorism remains a key concern, especially with online self-radicalisation, including amongst the youth. The digital environment is facilitating more personalised and mixed forms of violent extremism. Artificial intelligence can further accelerate the creation, translation, personalisation, and dissemination of extremist content. Continued vigilance, social resilience, early intervention, and international cooperation are therefore essential.

Singapore supports the ASEAN "Our Eyes" initiative, which enhances strategic information exchange on counter-terrorism among ASEAN

defence establishments. At the operational level, the Counter-Terrorism Information Facility (CTIF) facilitates information sharing. Singapore's Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological and Radiological (CBR) Defence Experts complements these mechanisms by facilitating information exchange and cooperation between CBR experts from all AMS through its secure web portal and workshops, and its harmonised CBR sampling guidelines ensure a baseline standard for CBR Sampling in ASEAN.

ii. Non-Proliferation, Counter-Proliferation, Arms Control, and Disarmament

Singapore is active in combating the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Singapore ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1976 and concluded a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1977. Singapore ratified the IAEA Additional Protocol (AP) and adopted the modified Small Quantities Protocol in March 2008 and supports the universalisation of both the CSA and the AP. Singapore last served as a member of the IAEA's Board of Governors (BOG) from 2022 to 2024, and has hosted regional workshops on topics such as emergency preparedness and response, nuclear regulatory law, and nuclear safety and security. Singapore was designated as an IAEA Collaborating Centre in July 2025, focusing on radiochemistry and environmental monitoring to strengthen regional emergency preparedness and response. Singapore is party to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and supports its early entry into force.

Singapore joined the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) in May 2010 and subscribed to The Hague Code of Conduct against the Proliferation of Ballistic Missiles (HCoC) in August 2011. Singapore acceded to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and accepted the 2005 Amendment to the CPPNM in September 2014. Singapore ratified the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT) in September 2017.

Singapore strongly supports counter-proliferation initiatives such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Singapore has actively participated in the PSI since its establishment in 2003. As a member of the PSI Operational Experts' Group (OEG) and the PSI Asia-Pacific Exercise Rotation (APER), Singapore has hosted PSI exercises and meetings. Singapore participated in PSI activities, such as the APER Exercise Pacific Shield, the 2025 OEG meeting hosted by Japan in December 2025, and the 2026 OEG meeting hosted by Argentina in June 2026. Singapore will host the APER Exercise Deep Sabre in 2027, which will be the fifth time we are hosting a PSI exercise.

Singapore supports the efforts of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to further develop capabilities and readiness against the threat of chemical weapons. Pursuant to Article X of the OPCW, Singapore has been conducting the Emergency Response to Chemical Incidents training course on a biennial basis since 2009. A virtual technical workshop was organised by the Network of ASEAN CBR Defence Experts in May 2025 with assistance from experts from the OPCW. The Network also co-chaired with Viet Nam the International Workshop on "Post-War Toxic Waste Remediation, CBR Incident Response and Environmental Restoration Technology" in September 2025. In addition, from 2024 to 2026, Singapore contributed technical experts to serve on the OPCW Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) Temporary

Working Group (TWG) on chemical forensics. In 2025, Singapore also contributed an expert to serve on the OPCW Central Analytical Database Validation Group.

Singapore is also committed to the non-proliferation of biological and toxin weapons. Singapore participated in the Meeting of States Parties in December 2025, and has submitted returns on Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) CBMs annually since 2012.

The Network of ASEAN CBR Defence Experts has also continued to strengthen regional preparedness against CBR threats through capacity-building initiatives. These included a virtual workshop on "Anthrax - Regional Awareness and Preparedness" in May 2026; preparations for an upcoming regional exercise on the cross-border transportation of biological samples; and the inaugural virtual regional workshop on "Strengthening ASEAN Capacity for CBR Disinformation Detection and Response" in July 2026, in collaboration with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI).

Singapore has a robust export control regime underpinned by the Regulation of Imports and Exports Act (RIEA) and the Strategic Goods (Control) Act (SGCA). The SGCA controls the transfer and brokering of goods capable of being used to develop, produce, operate, stockpile or acquire WMD, along with strategic goods and related software and technology. The SGCA's control list is regularly updated to align with the four major multilateral export control regimes. Singapore also works closely with international partners on regional capacity building in this area, such as through the Joint Industry Outreach Seminar on Strategic Trade Management, which Singapore has co-organised with the US and Japan yearly since 2014. Singapore and the Philippines convened a 'United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) Peer Review Exercise on Export Controls' in May 2024, the first in Southeast Asia, to serve as a useful reference and facilitating the strengthening of the region's capabilities in preventing the proliferation of WMD.

Singapore also participates actively in international discussions on the governance of emerging technologies, such as Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), AI in the military domain, and outer space security.

iii. Transnational Crime

In today's world, security challenges are increasingly transnational in nature. These cannot be adequately addressed by individual countries' domestic policies. Singapore has therefore actively worked towards facilitating a concerted regional effort to combat transnational crimes.

Financial Crime

Singapore strongly supports regional and global efforts against money laundering (ML) and terrorist financing (TF). We joined the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in 1992 and are a founding member of the Asia-Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), a FATF-Style Regional Body formed in 1993. Singapore has been active contributors to the FATF and APG's work, regularly providing inputs on ML/TF typologies and other policy matters, as well as contributing experts and assessors to support the mutual evaluations of countries.

Singapore recently completed its 5th Round FATF Mutual Evaluation, where the FATF/APG strongly affirmed Singapore's robust, effective framework and processes to counter Money Laundering, Terrorism Financing, and Proliferation Financing. Singapore was placed on Regular Follow-up, the process for FATF members that have done well and is an improvement from Singapore's 4th Round

results in 2016 even though the FATF Standards have been significantly enhanced in a number of areas. Nevertheless, Singapore will continue to build on the strengths of our AML/CFT/CPF framework and will carefully study the FATF's recommendations and assess how Singapore can adopt them in a risk-proportionate manner, considering the context.

Under the aegis of the ASEAN Ministerial and Senior Officials' Meetings on Transnational Crime (AMMTC & SOMTC), Singapore is the ASEAN Voluntary Lead Shepherd for cybercrime and online scams. Additionally, the Singapore Police Force's Commercial Affairs Department (SPF/CAD) runs the annual International Economic Crime Course (IECC). This course was attended by local and foreign participants from ASEAN countries and our regional partners such as China, Hong Kong, Australia, and New Zealand. This course aims to help local and regional partners to keep abreast of the latest financial crime trends, commercial crime methodology, investigation best practices, as well as emerging crime risks with the increased adoption of digital assets. The course also includes a visit to the Anti-Scam Command (ASCom), where ASCom shared insights on strategies to combat scams.

The Singapore Police Force actively supports various INTERPOL operations aimed at tackling transnational financial crime.

- Participated in INTERPOL's Operation First Light 2026, where through international cooperation with Oman in intelligence collection and exchange, USD 6.6 million (SGD 8.4 million) was prevented from being transferred out of Singapore as a Business Email Compromise scam using INTERPOL's I-GRIP.

- Led Operation FRONTIER+ Execution: major enforcement wave between April and May 2025 where SGD 7.7 million was seized, 714 bank accounts were frozen in Singapore alone, and 1,800 suspects were arrested regionally as part of a multilateral initiative to drive real-time asset recovery across 11 jurisdictions (including Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and Brunei). The most recent iteration, Operation FRONTIER+ III, was conducted from 10 March to 7 May 2026 and brought together 10 jurisdictions. The operation resulted in the arrest of 3,018 subjects, aged between 13 and 85, and the investigation of 7,553 subjects linked to more than 138,000 scam cases, involving approximately USD 752 million (SGD 963 million) in losses. FRONTIER+ members also froze nearly 102,000 scam-linked bank accounts and seized over USD 161 million (SGD 207 million) in illicit funds.

- Bilateral Anti-Scam operations with Malaysia in March 2025 where ASCom executed a month-long joint operation to clamp down on cross-border scam syndicates and mule networks operating across the causeway.

Singapore has also taken a lead role in regional asset recovery as one of the nine steering group members of the Asset Recovery Interagency Network – Asia Pacific (ARIN-AP) since 2024, alongside fellow AMS Indonesia and Thailand. ARIN-AP aims to bring about improvements to the speed and reactiveness of countries' asset recovery efforts on an informal basis, prior to countries utilising Mutual Legal Assistance.

In August 2025, Singapore hosted the INTERPOL workshop on Silver Notice/Diffusion for the Asia-Pacific region. The workshop was organized to familiarise law enforcement agencies with the use of the Silver Notice. 21 representatives from national police forces, financial intelligence units, judicial authorities, and asset recovery specialists across nine Asia-Pacific countries (including Singapore–Commercial Affairs Department (CAD),

Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB), and Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB)) attended the workshop.

On the bilateral front, Singapore has fostered strong partnerships through various initiatives, including a joint workshop with UK's His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) on trade-based money laundering in 2024. This workshop brought together more than 20 participants from ASEAN countries' financial crime bureaus, financial intelligence units, and anti-money laundering policy agencies. Singapore also conducts annual bilateral engagements with Malaysia's Commercial Crime Investigation Department/Royal Malaysia Police (CCID/RMP) and Viet Nam's Ministry of Public Security (MPS).

The Singapore Police Force also partnered the International Security Cooperation Directorate (DCIS) of the French National Police, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ministry of Interior and the International Security Alliance (ISA) to organise the Anti-Scam Conference, which ran from 11 to 13 May 2026. Themed "United Against Scams," the conference convened representatives from over 20 countries and key stakeholders to share best practices on combating scams. SPF speakers highlighted transnational scam trends, criminal tactics, and victim manipulation techniques, while fostering stronger international cooperation against scams.

Cybercrime

Singapore serves as the Lead Shepherd for Cybercrime within ASEAN. This role involves coordinating ASEAN's efforts to combat cybercrime, including capacity building, training, and information sharing among AMS. Singapore also plays a crucial role in facilitating ASEAN's initiatives against cybercrime, including organising regional workshops and conferences. In 2024 and 2025, the SPF Cybercrime Command (CCC) organised the ASEAN Cybercrime Conference. In 2025, the theme of the conference was "Coming Together as One ASEAN – Fortifying Our Defences Against the Next Wave of Cyber Threats". The 2025 conference saw speakers from selected foreign law enforcement agencies/international organisations such as Australian Federal Police (AFP), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF), Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and INTERPOL (IGCI). Strategic law enforcement agencies (LEAs) were also engaged by CCC via sideline meetings.

Singapore has also actively contributed to capacity and awareness building efforts. In conjunction with the Singapore International Cyber Week (SICW), the ASEAN Cybercrime Prosecutors' Roundtable Meeting (ACPRM) and the Senior Officials Roundtable on Cybercrime (SORC) were organised in 2024 and 2025. The former allows cybercrime prosecutors and law enforcement officers to share best practices and chart the way forward for better cooperation in this domain, while the latter provides a platform for high-level discussions among the ASEAN SOMTC Leaders and the Plus Three Dialogue Partner countries, industry experts and academia to discuss the latest threats, trends, and solutions on cybercrime. Singapore will be organising the 12th edition of the SORC in October 2026.

In March 2023, Singapore co-organised the ASEAN-Australia Cyber Capacity Building Workshop in Singapore. Themed "Recognising and Responding to Cybercrime Activity Presented or Exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic," the Workshop provided an overview of cybercrime trends, responses, and challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic,

along with case studies of operations against cybercrime. The second ASEAN-Australia Cyber Capacity Building Workshop on "Investigating Online Child Sexual Exploitation" took place from 9 to 10 April 2025 in Singapore, and provided a platform for AMS to share cross-sectoral perspectives on the trends, responses, and challenges in combating online child sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse material in their respective countries.

In November 2025, Singapore co-organised the ASEAN-Italy Project Falcone-Borsellino in-person workshop on cybercrime and international economic crime (IEC). Held in Rome, Italy, the Workshop aimed to strengthen operational capacities, promote cooperation, and enhance the understanding of cyber and financial crime through a comprehensive exchange of experiences between AMS and Italy. There will be another workshop held in Italy in 2026.

In September 2026, Japan, with Singapore as co-proponent and ASEAN Chiefs of National Police (ASEANAPOL) as implementing agency, will be organising study visits to National Anti-Scam Centres (NASCs) in Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore. The visits aim to allow participants to understand the workings of an NASC, the good and bad practices, and to allow participants to network and build ties with their counterparts in the region.

Trafficking in Persons

Singapore takes a serious view of trafficking-in-persons (TIP) crimes. An inter-agency taskforce, jointly led by Singapore's Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Manpower, was formed in 2010 to coordinate Whole-of-Government strategies to combat TIP. Given the transnational nature of TIP threats, the Taskforce works closely with the foreign law enforcement agencies and embassies, including through intelligence exchanges, joint investigations, and coordinated enforcement actions.

Singapore supports regional and international efforts to combat TIP. Singapore cooperates with other AMS through platforms such as the AMMTC and SOMTC, which oversees the region's effort to combat TIP. Singapore worked closely with other AMS on the development of the ASEAN Convention on Trafficking in Persons (ACTIP) which was signed by ASEAN Leaders at the 27th ASEAN Summit in November 2015. Following the signing of the ACTIP, Singapore also worked closely with other AMS on the development of the ASEAN Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons (APA) and the Bohol Trafficking in Persons Work Plan (BWP) 2017-2020, which were endorsed in 2015 and 2016 respectively. Upon the conclusion of the first BWP in 2020, building on the learnings, Singapore continued to support regional efforts and actively contributed to the development of the Bohol TIP Work Plan 2.0, which was endorsed in 2023. The APA and both iterations of the Work Plan complemented the ACTIP by outlining specific actions and policies to address the challenge of combatting TIP.

Beyond ASEAN, Singapore is a party to the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (UN TIP Protocol), which seeks to prevent, suppress, and punish trafficking in persons while protecting victims and promoting cooperation among State Parties.

Drug Trafficking

Singapore is firmly committed to the regional and international fight against drug trafficking. Singapore contributes actively at regional platforms such as the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (AMMD) and ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Drug

Matters (ASOD) which oversee the region's effort to combat drug trafficking. Singapore also participates actively at the AMMTC and SOMTC, where Singapore pledged to work with countries to effectively combat illicit drug trafficking. We have also supported capacity building efforts in the region. Annually, the CNB organises capability building workshops dedicated for international partners, such as the five-day Singapore Drug Control Programme, where Singapore shares its comprehensive drug strategies through lectures, dialogues, and site visits. The workshops provide opportunities for senior officials from various countries to exchange and share experiences and best practices in drug control. Since 2022, a total of 106 participants from over 43 countries have benefitted from the programme thus far of which eight countries were AMS. CNB also organises the Integrated Narcotics Enforcement Programme (INEP) for AMS regularly. Through INEP, participants will be able to learn more about each other's drug enforcement experiences and hear from dialogue partners, such as the Australian Border Force and US Homeland Security Investigation, about their experiences and strategies in dealing with Transnational Serious and Organised Crime, both domestically and internationally. Having secured membership to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) for the term 2024 to 2027, we are committed to enhancing our contributions in capacity building and sharing of best practices, to boost AMS' capabilities to tackle drug trafficking. Notably, Singapore sponsored a thematic chapter on the public safety outcomes affected by the abuse of illicit drugs in the World Drug Report 2026. Singapore will be seeking re-election for membership in the CND for the term of 2028 to 2031, reflecting our strong commitment to working with the international organisations and countries on drug-related matters.

iv. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Disasters can affect any country without warning. With the increasing frequency of climate-induced disasters, it is integral for Singapore to remain proactive in the field of disaster management while enhancing our humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) capabilities. Working on the principle of One ASEAN One Response (OAOR), Singapore readily and proactively contributes to disaster management and HADR-related initiatives and missions, and has pledged support to work in synergy with other AMS to build a more disaster resilient ASEAN.

Singapore is the co-chair of two out of three of the working groups of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM): the ACDM Working Group (WG) on Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PRR), and Global Leadership (GL). The ACDM WGs oversee the implementation of the five priority programmes under the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme, including projects and activities enhancing regional cooperation in all aspects of disaster management, including humanitarian assistance response.

From 2024-2027, Singapore is co-chairing the fifth cycle of the ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR with New Zealand. In this cycle, the EWG on HADR will seek to promote both military-military and civil-military HADR cooperation amongst the ADMM-Plus countries, and strengthen regional awareness of the impact of climate change on HADR preparedness and response, to facilitate more effective and resilient HADR responses in the region.

Singapore successfully concluded the Chairmanship of the ACDM in 2021 that saw the launch of three new ASEAN Plus One mechanisms with China, Japan, and ROK which

will contribute towards the enhancement of the regional capacities and capabilities in disaster management and resiliency. ASEAN also rallied support to operationalise the ASEAN Leaders' mandate for ASEAN's humanitarian assistance to Myanmar to be delivered through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) in support of Point 4 of the Five-Point Consensus.

The ASEAN-Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ERAT) is an official resource of ASEAN, under the ACDM, and is designed to support National Disaster Management Offices (NDMOs) of an affected AMS in the aftermath of a disaster. In April 2025, Singapore, represented by the Singapore Civil Defence Force, deployed three ASEAN-ERAT officers to support the AHA Centre's on-the-ground response efforts during the M7.7 Earthquake in Mandalay, Myanmar, which focused on conducting rapid assessments and coordinating international humanitarian response. Over the course of 10 days, Singapore's ASEAN-ERAT officers conducted rapid assessments in Nay Pi Taw, Mandalay and Sagaing, conducting analysis to identify the critical needs of the affected communities. Operations entailed visits to numerous sites from eight townships, including shelter areas, hospitals, and collapsed sites for assessment.

In August 2023, Singapore hosted the ASEAN Disaster Management Week (ADMW), which saw the inaugural ASEAN Disaster Resilience Forum (ADRF), a biennial forum which provides an avenue for ASEAN and non-ASEAN stakeholders to discuss topics related to disaster resilience in the region. The ADRF is one of the modalities to deliberate on methods to promote synergy and coordination among the relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, ASEAN Centres and Entities. The ADRF was held back-to-back with the ASEAN Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management (SPDDM) 2023, the latter of which has been held since 2015. The SPDDM is a keystone deliverable by ACDM Singapore, which charts long-term strategies for the ACDM and sharpens ASEAN's policy direction, strategic engagements, and thought leadership in disaster management. Singapore hosted the 11th run of the SPDDM in August 2026. In view of it being 10 years of the ASEAN declaration on One ASEAN One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region, the event served as an opportunity to reflect on ASEAN's achievements in strengthening regional disaster management cooperation, assess progress made under the OAOR framework, and consider future priorities for collective disaster response. In addition, Singapore co-organises the ASEAN Senior Executive Programme in Disaster Management (SEPDM) annually to nurture the planning and crisis management capacities and facilitate networking of the senior leadership cadre in the ASEAN disaster management fraternity. The 12th run of SEPDM will be in October 2026.

Singapore established the Changi Regional Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Coordination Centre (RHCC) in September 2014 as a platform for militaries and civilian organisations from various countries to work together by facilitating information-sharing and response coordination for HADR. The Changi RHCC complements existing disaster response institutions – such as the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the AHA Centre. Singapore is appreciative of like-minded countries that have supported and partnered with the Changi RHCC, such as Australia, Brunei, Canada, China, France, India, Lao PDR, New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines, the ROK, Thailand, the UK, the US, and Viet Nam, which have attached International Liaison Officers (ILOs) to the RHCC or exchanged contact points for disaster relief. In 2025, the Changi RHCC coordinated the deliveries of humanitarian aid supplies to Myanmar in April

2025, Viet Nam in October 2025, and Thailand in December 2025.

Exercise Coordinated Response (Ex COORES) is the Changi RHCC's flagship table-top exercise co-organised biennially with US PACOM's Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DM) and a partner nation. Ex COORES allows both military and civilian stakeholders to come together and exercise responses towards a natural disaster scenario. Previous iterations of Ex COORES built military linkages, enhanced mutual understanding, and strengthened cooperation in disaster relief between military and civilian agencies. Ex COORES was last held in October 2025 with CFE-DM and the Viet Nam National Steering Committee for Civil Defense (VINASARCOM), and saw participation from 39 militaries and 37 civilian organisations, including the AHA Centre. The next edition of Ex COORES will be held in 2027.

The Changi RHCC also supports training and capacity-building efforts by co-organising the UN Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord) course with the UN OCHA. The UN CMCoord course was held in April 2025, with participants from international and local IOs/NGOs, including the AHA Centre.

Singapore, represented by the Singapore Civil Defence Force, was classified as a Heavy Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team by the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) in 2008, and is notably the first country in the Asia-Pacific region to attain the classification. Singapore maintains a dedicated 80-member contingent on standby; codenamed Operation Lionheart, its core function is to provide urban search and rescue and/or humanitarian relief assistance to countries afflicted by major disasters. Most recently, an 80-member Operation Lionheart contingent was deployed to assist with USAR operations in response to the M7.7 earthquake in Mandalay, Myanmar. The Operation Lionheart contingent successfully completed the INSARAG External Reclassification (IER) in August 2025 and was reclassified as Heavy USAR team.

Singapore will also be hosting the ASEAN Regional Disaster Exercise (ARDEX) in September 2027. Conducted every 2 years, ARDEX is a full-scale simulation exercise that seeks to test, practise, review and evaluate ASEAN's emergency response and disaster management mechanism to test regional processes and capabilities, and is a key deliverable of the ACDM to ensure regional preparedness to disaster.

v. Maritime Security

As a maritime nation, Singapore has a strong interest in keeping the international sea lines of communication open, safe, and secure. Singapore takes a serious view of any threats to the freedom and safety of navigation and overflight. To this end, Singapore works with like-minded countries to uphold international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and plays an active part in fostering regional maritime security cooperation and enhancing port security.

As a major hub port and one of the top ten ship registries in the world, Singapore is committed to the security of seaborne cargo. As one of the first States to implement the International Maritime Organization (IMO) International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, Singapore has contributed actively to capacity building programmes at various regional forums to assist countries in their implementation of the ISPS Code. Singapore is also party to the IMO's International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety

of Maritime Navigation (SUA Convention 1988), and the 1988 Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms located on the Continental Shelf (SUA FFP 1988).

Given the vital sea lines of communication in the region such as the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS), Singapore cooperates closely with key stakeholders to uphold maritime security and freedom of navigation. To this end, Singapore remains fully committed to the following three principles, which have gained broad consensus amongst regional stakeholders: (i) primary responsibility for the security of regional waterways lies with the littoral States; (ii) the international community, including major user States and intergovernmental organisations, like the IMO, have an important role to play; and (iii) cooperative measures should be in accordance with international law, in particular the 1982 UNCLOS, the relevant standards and recommended practices of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and instruments and conventions of the IMO. Singapore is also supportive of ASEAN's approach towards the maritime issues encapsulated in the Bali Concord II, signed in October 2003, which reiterates the transboundary nature of maritime issues and the need to address them in a holistic, integrated and comprehensive way.

These principles have translated into cooperative efforts at a regional level. Singapore is part of the Malacca Straits Patrol (MSP), a joint undertaking by Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand, to ensure the security of the SOMS. Since its inception in July 2004, the MSP has substantially reduced the incidence of piracy and armed robbery against ships occurring in the SOMS. Most recently, the 16th MSP Joint Coordinating Committee was hosted by Singapore in January 2026.

Apart from conducting air and sea patrols, Singapore also believes in enhancing maritime awareness and ensuring systematic and timely exchanges of information to keep sea lanes safe. In this regard, the Information Fusion Centre (IFC) established in April 2009 seeks to facilitate information-sharing and collaboration to enhance maritime security. With 26 ILOS from 21 countries deployed to IFC, and operational linkages to 163 partners across 58 countries, the IFC enables multinational, inter-agency maritime security collaboration through real-time information sharing. The IFC also supports broader efforts to enhance regional capacity for maritime security through the conduct of exercises, workshops, and other training activities. These include the annual Regional Maritime Practitioners' Programme (RMPP) and the biennial Maritime Information Sharing Exercise (MARISX). The IFC is also the permanent secretariat for the ASEAN Navy Chiefs' Meeting.

Singapore is also one of the founding members of the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), the first intergovernmental initiative that promotes and enhances cooperation against piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia. At present, 22 States are Contracting Parties to the ReCAAP. Singapore is also the host of the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) since its inception in November 2006. Over the years, the ReCAAP ISC has established itself as a go-to authority on trends and analyses of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia, and continues to play an instrumental role in disseminating timely and accurate information for governments and the shipping industry. In addition, the ISC also produces useful anti-piracy guides, reports, and reference materials for the maritime community. The ISC continues to plan, conduct, and support capacity building efforts to improve the capability of Contracting

Parties and regional governments to combat piracy and armed robbery against ships in the region. Today, the ReCAAP is held up as a successful model of regional cooperation in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships by the IMO and has inspired other similar initiatives, such as the Djibouti Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden.

CUI has emerged as a further maritime security priority. Subsea telecommunications cables, energy pipelines and related systems underpin the region's connectivity and economic activity, but cross jurisdictions and cannot be protected by any country acting alone. In 2025, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, and Thailand co-sponsored the ADMM Concept Paper on CUI Security from a Defence Perspective. In May 2026, Singapore and 16 partner countries launched GUIDE.

vi. ICTs Security

Cyber threats are transboundary and cross-cutting challenges to all AMS. At the same time, cybersecurity is a key enabler of digital transformation, economic growth, and public confidence. The cyber threat landscape now includes malicious cyber activity by State and non-State actors, including attacks against critical information infrastructure, ransomware, cyber-enabled scams, disinformation, and the security implications of artificial intelligence, connected devices, and emerging technologies. Amidst an increasingly sophisticated international and regional cyber threat landscape, Singapore remains strongly committed to efforts towards promoting an open, secure, stable, accessible, peaceful, and interoperable ICT environment.

At the regional level, since 2016, Singapore has also been hosting the annual ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity (AMCC), held on the side-lines of the Singapore International Cyber Week (SICW). Singapore has hosted the ASEAN Regional Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) since October 2024. The ASEAN Regional CERT facilitates incident-response, information-sharing, coordination, joint training, and cooperation in protecting national and cross-border critical information infrastructure. In 2025, Singapore worked with counterparts from Malaysia and all other AMS to finalise the adoption of the ASEAN Norms Implementation Checklist, the first regional checklist of its kind, to support the practical implementation of the eleven voluntary, non-binding UN norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace. Apart from these, Singapore continues to convene the annual ASEAN CERT Incident Drill.

In support of the above initiatives, Singapore has been running multi-disciplinary cyber capacity building in the region through the ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence (ASCCE) since 2019 to close gaps in cyber capabilities and support AMS in their efforts to contribute meaningfully to international cyber discussions. Delivered in close collaboration with AMS and Dialogue Partners as well as key industry partners and academia, ASCCE programmes have now evolved in response to the changing cyber threat landscape and now include courses on the cybersecurity of emerging technologies, such as AI and Quantum as well as national cyber leadership development-related courses.

Within the defence sector, Singapore hosts the ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence (ACICE). ACICE facilitates threat information-sharing, research, training, and capacity-building in the cyber and information domains, and supports the implementation of the eleven UN cyber norms among ASEAN defence establishments. In July 2026, ACICE convened the fourth Digital Defence Symposium under the theme "Building Digital and Information Resilience: Technology, Norms, and the Cyber Information Continuum".

II. Future Trends on Regional Security

The future regional security environment will be characterised by the convergence of traditional and non-traditional threats. Conventional military power will remain necessary for deterrence, but conflict will increasingly extend beyond geography, beyond military firepower and beyond the immediate dispute. A crisis in one region can affect Southeast Asia through supply chains, energy markets, information networks, and cyber systems.

Emerging technologies will accelerate this trend. AI, autonomous and unmanned systems, cyber capabilities, quantum technologies, and space-based systems will offer substantial economic and security benefits, but may also lower barriers to hostile action, compress decision-making time, and increase the risk of miscalculation or unintended escalation.

The protection of critical lifelines will become a central element of security policy. Critical information infrastructure, subsea cables and pipelines, ports, energy grids, water systems, satellites, payment networks, and strategic supply chains will increasingly be targets of disruption, coercion, or sabotage. Climate change, natural disasters, public-health emergencies, and resource insecurity may compound these vulnerabilities. National and regional resilience will therefore require redundancy, diversified sources of essential supplies, adequate stockpiles, trusted information-sharing, and closer cooperation among governments, militaries, critical-infrastructure operators, technology companies, and civil society. Domestic confidence and social cohesion will also be prerequisites for sustained national resilience and effective international cooperation.

ASEAN can continue to serve as a stabilising force if it remains cohesive, credible, and effective. ASEAN Centrality cannot be sustained by process alone. It must be supported by deeper regional integration, unity on issues of common interest, and practical initiatives that respond to the needs of ASEAN's peoples. ASEAN-led mechanisms should remain open and inclusive and give all major powers a stake in regional peace and stability.

Thailand



I. Security Concerns in the Region and National Defence and Security Policies

A. Security Concerns Common to the ASEAN Community

Strategic and Geopolitical Developments

The global landscape is becoming increasingly complex and contested. Intensifying geopolitical, geo-economic and geo-technological competition among major powers continues to reshape international relations and regional dynamics, prompting States to diversify partnerships and preserve strategic autonomy.

Economic statecraft has also become more prominent, with tariff and non-tariff measures, export controls, investment restrictions, and technological regulations increasingly used as instruments of leverage. At the same time, declining confidence in multilateral institutions and the growing use of bilateral and minilateral arrangements are reshaping international cooperation.

These developments could place increasing pressure on ASEAN unity and centrality, while creating challenges for regional supply chains, economic resilience and technological development. They also underscored the interconnectedness of regional and global security challenges and the need for effective multilateral cooperation.

Beyond traditional security concerns, States must also respond to increasingly complex transnational and non-traditional security threats, including cybercrime, online scams, trafficking in persons, public health emergencies, environmental degradation, and the disruptive effects of rapid technological advancement. Such challenges transcend national borders and require effective national responses supported by coordinated regional and international cooperation.

Emerging Cyber Threats and the Nexus with Transnational Crime

The convergence of emerging technologies and transnational organised crime is creating increasingly sophisticated and scalable security threats. Criminal networks exploit AI, cryptocurrency ecosystems, digital platforms, regulatory gaps and cross-border vulnerabilities to facilitate cyber-enabled fraud, phishing, malware, disinformation and illicit financial flows.

The growing nexus between cyber threats, online scams, trafficking in persons, money laundering and other forms of transnational organised crime has become a significant regional security concern. Addressing these challenges requires stronger national cyber resilience, closer cooperation among law enforcement and regulatory authorities, enhanced information-sharing, improved public-private coordination and sustained regional and international collaboration.

B. Individual National Defence Policies

Defence Policy and Force Readiness

Thailand implements defence policies and operations in line with the Government's priorities and strategic direction outlined in its White Paper 2026-2027. The overarching objective is to strengthen the capability and readiness of the Royal Thai Armed Forces to effectively address both traditional and non-traditional security challenges and safeguard national security and the well-being of the Thai people.

Recognising the growing challenges posed by transnational crime and cross-border security threats, Thailand places particular emphasis on strengthening border security and enhancing coordination among relevant agencies. Key areas of focus include drug trafficking, human trafficking, illegal migration, wildlife and natural resource trafficking, and cyber-enabled crimes, including online scams and call-centre fraud.

Through strengthened intelligence-sharing, enhanced operational readiness, and closer civil-military cooperation, Thailand continues to improve its capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to emerging security risks.

Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures

Thailand regards transparency, predictability and confidence-building as important components of national defence policy and regional security cooperation. The MOD regularly publishes its policy directions and strategic priorities, reflecting Thailand's commitment to transparency and to strengthening confidence in its defence posture.

Thailand also continues to support ASEAN-led security architecture and contribute proactively to regional peace and stability. Through participation in ASEAN-led defence and security mechanisms, Thailand promotes consultation, practical cooperation, and mutual trust among ASEAN Member States and external partners.

Thailand attaches particular importance to transparency and confidence-building as key pillars of effective arms control. Thailand has consistently submitted annual reports on military spending and arms transfers under the UN Report on Military Expenditures and the UN Register on Conventional Arms, and will continue to support efforts to strengthen transparency, predictability, and trust among States.

C. National Contributions to Promoting Regional Security

Thailand is committed to promoting regional security and stability through robust national policies and proactive engagement in regional and international cooperation. Its contributions encompass defence cooperation and confidence-building, responses to transnational crime and emerging security threats, maritime cooperation, arms control and non-proliferation, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

i. Defence and Security Cooperation

At the regional level, Thailand actively participates in defence cooperation under ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the ADMM, the ADMM-Plus, and the ARF. Through these platforms, Thailand contributes to confidence-building, practical cooperation, and capacity-building in areas such as maritime security, counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, military medicine, and other non-traditional security challenges.

Joint Exercises

Thailand continues to support practical defence cooperation and interoperability through multinational military exercises, which contribute to confidence-building, preparedness, and cooperation among regional partners.

The 45th Cobra Gold joint exercise, co-hosted by Thailand and the United States from 24 February to 6 March 2026, involved 25 countries and 8,277 personnel and strengthened interoperability, multinational planning and practical defence cooperation among participating countries.

Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

Thailand remains firmly committed to advancing the WPS agenda and the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women across all pillars of peace and security. In December 2025, Thailand launched its first National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2024–2027) to translate this commitment into concrete national action.

Thailand continues to deploy women military and police personnel to UN peacekeeping missions, enhancing the inclusivity and effectiveness of peace operations.

Women currently comprise 27 out of 257 Thai military and police personnel serving in the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Thai woman personnel also serve in other UN peacekeeping and headquarters assignments.

ii. Transnational Crime and Emerging Security Threats

Thailand recognises that transnational crime and emerging technologies are becoming increasingly interconnected. Cybercrime, online scams, trafficking in persons, illicit financial flows, drug trafficking, terrorism and other cross-border threats often involve overlapping networks, technologies and logistical channels. Thailand therefore pursues an integrated approach based on prevention, law enforcement cooperation, information-sharing, border management, public-private coordination and regional institution-building.

Cybersecurity

Thailand attaches great importance to maintaining an open, secure, stable, accessible, interoperable, and peaceful information and communications technologies (ICTs) environment. Thailand reaffirms that international law applies in cyberspace and supports the framework of responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs. At the same time, Thailand recognises the transformative impact of emerging technologies—including artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and cloud systems—on cybersecurity, while acknowledging the new risks and vulnerabilities they present.

Thailand supports the establishment of the Global Mechanism on ICT security and remains committed to promoting responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs as the first permanent United Nations mechanism dedicated to cybersecurity.

At the national level, Thailand continues to strengthen its cybersecurity framework through the implementation of the National Security Policy and Plan 2023–2027 and the Cybersecurity Policy and Action Plan 2022–2027. These frameworks guide efforts to enhance national cyber resilience, protect critical information infrastructure, strengthen coordination among relevant agencies, and reduce cyber risks.

Thailand is reviewing its existing policy framework in preparation for the next national cybersecurity planning cycle (2028–2032) and advancing amendments to the Cybersecurity Act 2019 to ensure that the legal framework remains responsive to rapid technological change and an increasingly complex cyber-threat landscape.

In 2025, ThaiCERT recorded 3,384 cybersecurity incidents, underscoring the need to strengthen national preparedness and cyber resilience.

The ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC) in Bangkok continues to provide technical training, workshops, and exercises for ASEAN Member States. Thailand and Japan are exploring follow-on cooperation in areas including

artificial intelligence security, post-quantum cryptography, and operational technology security.

Combatting Online Scam

Thailand accords high priority to combatting online scams and cyber-enabled transnational organised crime, recognising their growing impact on people's well-being, economic security, public trust, and regional stability.

Thailand has played an active role in advancing regional cooperation through the ASEAN Recommendations on Anti-Online Scams and the Report on Online Scam Activities in ASEAN (2023-2024).

At the national level, Thailand has strengthened its legal and institutional framework to address illicit SIM cards, mule accounts, and illegal telecommunications signals and related forms of technology-enabled crime.

Thailand has also strengthened operational cooperation among law enforcement agencies, financial institutions, telecommunications operators and digital service providers, through the establishment of Anti Cyber Scam Centre (ACSC) in December 2025, to detect and disrupt online scams and facilitate public reporting.

In December 2025, Thailand and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) co-hosted the International Conference on the Global Partnership against Online Scams, which adopted the **2025 Bangkok Joint Statement** on prosecution, prevention, protection, policy, and partnership.

Thailand believes that effectively addressing online scams requires not only robust domestic measures but also stronger international legal cooperation. In this regard, Thailand signed the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime in October 2025 and has initiated preparations for accession through a national steering committee tasked with reviewing domestic legislation and facilitating implementation of the Convention.

Counter-Terrorism

Thailand views terrorism as an evolving threat increasingly linked to geopolitical instability, terrorist financing, the movement of foreign terrorist fighters and online radicalisation. Thailand supports stronger regional cooperation on prevention, information-sharing, border security and societal resilience against violent extremism.

Promoting Multiculturalism and Interfaith Dialogue

Thailand promotes interfaith and intercultural dialogue nationally and internationally, including through the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and relevant UN initiatives, as a means of strengthening societal cohesion and preventing violent extremism.

Drug Trafficking

The production and trafficking of synthetic drugs from the Golden Triangle remain a major transnational security challenge for the Mekong sub-region and Southeast Asia. Criminal networks increasingly exploit porous borders, digital platforms, online financial services, cryptocurrencies, and regional logistics networks.

Thailand prioritises drug control as a national agenda through the implementation of the **"Seal-Stop-Safe" Operation**, which aims to strengthen border control, prevent the spread of drugs into communities, and enhance public safety. These efforts have contributed to

significant increases in drug seizures and the disruption of major trafficking routes.

Thailand also works closely with Mekong countries under the Greater Mekong Subregion framework, including the Safe Mekong Coordination Centre (SMCC) and the Safe Mekong Joint Operation, to strengthen controls over precursor chemicals, dismantle transnational trafficking networks, facilitate real-time information exchange and operational coordination.

As host of the ASEAN Narcotics Cooperation Centre (ASEAN-NARCO) and lead shepherd on illicit drug trafficking under SOMTC, Thailand promotes intelligence-sharing, operational cooperation, and capacity-building. Thailand also supports regional mechanisms including ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network (ADMN), ASEAN Airport Interdiction Task Force, and ASEAN Seaport Interdiction Task Force.

Thailand continues to promote Alternative Development as a sustainable means of addressing the root causes of illicit drug production, including through cooperation in the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

Border Management and Counter-Trafficking Cooperation

Thailand views secure, effective, and well-coordinated borders as essential to combatting transnational crime, facilitating legitimate cross-border movement, and enhancing regional connectivity.

Thailand initiated the **ASEAN Border Management Cooperation Roadmap**, adopted in September 2025, as ASEAN's first comprehensive framework for strengthening regional border management cooperation, providing practical recommendations to enhance coordination, address evolving security and socioeconomic challenges, facilitate legitimate trade and travel, and strengthen regional connectivity.

To support implementation of the Roadmap, Thailand and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) co-organised the **Second Border Management Cooperation Dialogue for the ASEAN Region** in Bangkok on 16–17 October 2025, focusing on strengthening digital capabilities of frontline officers, improving data collection and analytical capacity, enhancing inter-agency coordination, and promoting information-sharing.

Thailand also continues to strengthen cooperation against trafficking in persons. With support from Australia under the ASEAN–Australia Counter Trafficking Programme, Thailand operationalised the **Counter Trafficking in Persons Centre of Excellence** in 2024. The Centre serves as a regional training platform for government officials, law enforcement agencies, and civil society organisations, promoting operational cooperation, professional capacity and victim-centred approaches across ASEAN.

iii. Maritime Cooperation

Thailand's maritime approach integrates maritime security, the protection of critical infrastructure, safe navigation, and the sustainable management of marine resources, consistent with international law, particularly the 1982 UNCLOS.

Maritime Security

Thailand's maritime governance is guided by the Act on the Protection of National Maritime Interests B.E. 2562 (2019) and the National Maritime Security Plan 2023–2027, with the Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Centre (Thai-MECC) coordinating relevant agencies.

Thailand is developing a dedicated Plan for the Protection of Critical Maritime Security Infrastructure in the Case of Submarine Cables, under the leadership of Thai-MECC, to strengthen national preparedness and response to incidents affecting submarine cables in accordance with international law and relevant international practices.

Thailand promotes ASEAN and international cooperation on submarine cable protection through exchanges of best practices, capacity-building, and stronger maritime domain awareness.

Thailand attaches particular importance to the safety and security of navigation in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore. Through close cooperation with Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore under the Malacca Straits Patrol (MSP), Thailand contributes to preventing and suppressing piracy, armed robbery against ships, and other transnational maritime crimes.

As a Contracting Party to the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), Thailand supports regional efforts through information-sharing, exchanges of best practices, and operational cooperation. Thailand also contributes to regional maritime domain awareness by seconding officers to the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre and assigning an International Liaison Officer to the Information Fusion Centre.

Marine Environmental Protection and Sustainable Management of Marine Resources

Thailand supports regional cooperation on marine environmental protection, including marine debris reduction, oil-spill preparedness, marine spatial planning and sustainable fisheries.

Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

Thailand regards combatting IUU fishing as an essential element of sustainable fisheries management, marine resource conservation, food security, and the blue economy.

Thailand initiated the ASEAN Network for Combating IUU Fishing and supports stronger regional cooperation on sustainable fisheries management.

iv. Arms Control, Disarmament, and Non-proliferation

Thailand remains committed to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation at national, regional and international levels. Its contributions encompass humanitarian mine action, the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and nuclear security.

Landmines

Anti-personnel mines continue to pose serious humanitarian and security challenges, threatening lives and livelihoods, hindering socio-economic development, and undermining regional security, particularly in border areas affected by past and ongoing conflicts.

Thailand maintains no stockpiles of anti-personnel mines and continues to conduct mine clearance operations along border areas despite operational challenges, including in areas pending boundary demarcation. Approximately 99.5 per cent of previously contaminated areas have been successfully cleared and returned for safe civilian use. Recent border incidents have resulted in new contamination, further complicating Thailand's mine clearance efforts. Thailand is therefore requesting a fourth extension under Article 5

of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) to fulfil its remaining clearance obligations.

As a member of the Committee on Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance under the APMBC for the 2026–2027 term, Thailand supports the universalisation of the Convention, including through stronger international cooperation on mine clearance and victim assistance.

Thailand also promotes comprehensive victim assistance covering emergency assistance, rehabilitation, vocational training, and livelihood support.

Thailand supports the work of ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC) and broader regional cooperation on humanitarian mine action, including mine clearance, risk reduction, victim assistance and the exchange of experience and good practices.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

Thailand upholds its long-standing policy of not developing, acquiring, or proliferating any kind of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery, and fully complies with its commitments and obligations on non-proliferation of WMD.

Thailand reaffirms the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. Our commitment extends equally across all three pillars of the NPT –disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Efforts on disarmament and non-proliferation should be carried out in complementarity of each other in order to fulfil the objectives of the NPT.

As one of the first three countries to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and an informal co-facilitator with Ireland, Thailand remains committed to its universalisation and to bridging divides across complementary disarmament and non-proliferation frameworks.

Thailand has strengthened national implementation of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons through inter-agency coordination workflow in line with the policy-level operational guidelines for the interdiction of illicit trafficking in WMD, their delivery systems, and related materials and equipment by land, sea, and air.

Within the UN framework, Thailand continues to demonstrate its strong commitment to the full and effective implementation of key disarmament instruments, particularly the UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004). Currently, Thailand is in the process of preparing a national report to assess and review its implementation of the resolution.

At the regional level, Thailand remains committed to advancing ASEAN's non-proliferation agenda, including through the implementation of the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty, or Bangkok Treaty, and the work of the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy.

As Depositary State of the SEANWFZ Treaty, Thailand supports sustained ASEAN engagement with the NWS towards the signing of the Protocol, including through dialogue on outstanding interpretative declarations.

Nuclear Security

Thailand continues to strengthen its preparedness, prevention, detection, and response capabilities. Key developments include the establishment of the National Nuclear Security

Regime (2023) and the development of its Implementation Plan (2026–2030), providing a structured framework for addressing nuclear security incidents.

Thailand organises national and international training courses and workshops on detection and response, and participates in nuclear security threat response exercises under the annual National Crisis Management Exercise, as well as conducts regular threat assessments for nuclear facilities and carries out risk assessments and threat surveillance concerning nuclear and radioactive materials out of regulatory control, as well as weapons of mass destruction.

v. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Thailand supports the effective implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme 2026-2030 and stronger ASEAN preparedness, interoperability and coordination through the AHA Centre and the principle of "One ASEAN, One Response".

Thailand also continues to contribute to regional disaster-response efforts and capacity-building activities aimed at strengthening ASEAN's collective resilience to natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies.

II. Future Trends on Regional Security

Looking ahead, geopolitical competition, technological change and increasing prominent human security challenges will test ASEAN's unity, resilience and institutional effectiveness.

Geopolitical Competition and Strategic Fragmentation

Against the backdrop of geopolitical competition, the erosion of multilateralism and growing pressure on the rule-based international order, ASEAN faces a two-fold security challenge.

First, ongoing regional issues, including the South China Sea and the situation in Myanmar, will remain significant to regional security. Progress in the negotiation of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea will continue to require sustained diplomatic engagement, mutual trust and adherence to international law, particularly the 1982 UNCLOS. The situation in Myanmar will also continue to have significant political, humanitarian and security implications for ASEAN and the wider region.

Second, ASEAN's efforts to maintain its unity and centrality will be tested by geopolitical and geo-economic fragmentation. Major-power competition may place increasing pressure on ASEAN Member States and ASEAN-led mechanisms, while unilateral actions and minilateral arrangements may affect the relevance and effectiveness of established multilateral platforms.

Preserving ASEAN's relevance will therefore require cohesion, strategic adaptability and the ability to translate dialogue into practical cooperation. ASEAN will need to continue providing an inclusive regional architecture in which all relevant parties can engage

constructively, manage differences and reduce the risk of miscalculation.

Technological Advancement and Emerging Security Domains

Advanced technologies will have multifaceted security implications for regional security. AI, digital financial services, encrypted communications and critical technologies will reshape transnational crime, strategic competition, and emerging security domains, including cyberspace, outer space and subsea infrastructure. These developments require the timely establishment of shared norms, confidence-building measures and frameworks for practical cooperation. ASEAN will need to develop greater common understanding of emerging technologies and their security implications while strengthening national and regional capacity to manage associated risks.

Human Security Challenges

Climate change, disasters, demographic transition and health security risks are becoming increasingly relevant to regional security, as they can exacerbate vulnerabilities, strain national capacities and create cross-border risks. Strengthening regional preparedness, early warning and coordinated responses will therefore be essential to safeguarding regional stability and resilience.

Prospects for ASEAN

By leveraging its tradition of dialogue, consultation, and confidence-building, ASEAN can help manage strategic competition, reduce misunderstandings and preserve channels of communication. ASEAN can also promote practical cooperation on shared challenges—particularly in cybersecurity, transnational crime, critical infrastructure protection, border management, maritime domain awareness, disaster preparedness and public health resilience—even where participating countries hold different strategic perspectives.

To fulfil this role, ASEAN will need to maintain unity, strengthen institutional effectiveness and ensure that ASEAN-led mechanisms remain responsive to changing regional circumstances. Centrality should be demonstrated not only through ASEAN's position at the centre of regional architecture, but also through its ability to shape agenda, promote cooperation and facilitate meaningful responses to common challenges.

Through sustained commitment to dialogue, international law, inclusive cooperation and multilateralism, ASEAN can position itself as a constructive and relevant actor in shaping the future regional security landscape and contributing to a rules-based international order.

Timor-Leste



I. Security Concerns in the Region and National Defence and Security Policies

A. Security Concerns Common to the ASEAN Community

The regional security environment continues to face increasing geopolitical tensions, strategic competition, and complex interactions among major and regional powers. These developments have implications for regional peace, stability, and prosperity and underscore the importance of maintaining ASEAN Centrality and an open, inclusive, and rules-based regional architecture.

The evolving conflicts and tensions in different parts of the world also have wider regional implications, including for energy security, food security, economic stability, and the resilience of supply chains. These developments reinforce the importance of strengthening regional cooperation, exercising restraint, and pursuing peaceful approaches consistent with international law.

Maritime security remains an important component of regional stability. Ensuring maritime safety and security, freedom of navigation, the protection of civilian infrastructure, and the safety of humanitarian personnel requires continued dialogue, confidence-building, and practical cooperation among ASEAN Member States and relevant partners.

At the same time, ASEAN faces a growing range of non-traditional security challenges, including transnational crime, human trafficking, people smuggling, cybercrime, digital financial fraud, climate-related disasters, and other emerging threats. These challenges are increasingly interconnected and require coordinated and whole-of-ASEAN responses.

Timor-Leste therefore supports strengthening ASEAN cooperation through dialogue, consensus, preventive diplomacy, and confidence-building measures, including through relevant ASEAN-led mechanisms and processes, while promoting respect for international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

B. Individual National Defence Policies

Timor-Leste's national security and defence policies are anchored in the Constitution. The Constitution establishes the responsibilities of the Defence Force, the Police, and Security Forces in safeguarding national independence, territorial integrity, population security, and internal security. In particular, Article 146 provides for the role of the FALINTIL-FDTL in the military defence of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, while Article 147 establishes the role of the police in defending democratic legality and ensuring internal security.

These constitutional principles are further supported by Law No. 2/2010 of 21 April on National Security, which establishes an Integrated National Security System and provides for coordinated State action in the areas of national defence, internal security, and civil protection. The Law characterises national security as national, integrated, global, and permanent in nature, with an inter-ministerial dimension, and provides for coordinated action in addressing threats and risks to the essential elements of the State.

The Integrated National Security System provides a comprehensive framework for addressing security challenges and protecting national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the security of the population. Its activities are multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary, and inter-ministerial, with an emphasis on institutional

coordination, prevention, and preparedness, while ensuring that national security functions remain subject to the Constitution and the law and respect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The national security system comprises three principal elements:

1. **The supervisory, control, and advisory body**, comprising the President of the Republic, the National Parliament, the Superior Council of Defence and Security, the Government, and the Judiciary;
2. **The coordination, command, and control body**, comprising the Inter-Ministerial Commission for Security and the Integrated Crisis Management Centre, led by the Prime Minister; and
3. **The operational components of the national security system**, comprising the Defence Forces, internal security forces, and civil protection elements.

C. National Contributions to Promoting Regional Security

i. ASEAN integration and ASEAN-led mechanisms

As ASEAN's 11th Member State, Timor-Leste is committed to participating actively and engaging constructively in ASEAN's political-security cooperation and contributing to the maintenance of regional peace, security, stability, and prosperity.

Timor-Leste seeks to contribute to ASEAN Centrality and to the ASEAN-centred regional architecture through active participation in relevant ASEAN-led mechanisms, ministerial bodies, and sectoral mechanisms, including:

1. ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM);
2. ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting (ADSOM);
3. ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC);
4. Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC);
5. ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of Ministries of Foreign Affairs (DGICM);
6. ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (AMMD);
7. ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD);
8. ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF); and
9. Other relevant ASEAN-led mechanisms and sectoral bodies within the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC).

ii. ASEAN Legal Instruments

Following its admission as ASEAN's 11th Member State in October 2025, Timor-Leste further advanced its integration into ASEAN's legal and institutional framework through accession to a range of ASEAN legal instruments relevant to regional peace, security, and stability. On 25 October 2025, on the sidelines of the 47th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits, Timor-Leste deposited its Instrument of Accession (IOA) to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). Subsequently, on 24 November 2025, Timor-Leste deposited its IOAs to a number of ASEAN legal instruments, including the Protocol to the ASEAN Charter on Dispute Settlement Mechanisms and its related instruments concerning unresolved disputes and non-compliance, the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (MLAT), the

ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism (ACCT), and the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP). These accessions formed part of Timor-Leste's continued implementation of the Roadmap for Timor-Leste's Full Membership in ASEAN and its commitment to abide by and accede to ASEAN treaties, conventions, agreements, and instruments.

In 2026, Timor-Leste further advanced its participation in ASEAN legal and security cooperation through the national approval of its accession to the ASEAN Treaty on Extradition (AET). The Treaty was signed by Timor-Leste on 14 November 2025, and the National Parliament approved the ratification of Timor-Leste's accession on 23 March 2026.

iii. ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

Timor-Leste has been a participant in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) since 2005, having been admitted as the ARF's 25th participant at the 12th ARF Ministerial Meeting in Vientiane. Since then, Timor-Leste has actively contributed to ARF processes and hosted ARF activities in Dili, beginning with the 5th ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEP) Meeting in January 2011. The meeting sought to generate innovative, practical, and feasible ideas for advancing Preventive Diplomacy (PD), building on discussions at the 4th ARF EEP Meeting in Bali in 2009, while also exploring the future direction of the ARF as an important component of the evolving regional security architecture.

iv. International Legal Instruments Relevant to Regional Security

Timor-Leste is party to a range of international legal instruments that contribute to international and regional peace, security, and stability. While these instruments extend beyond the specific field of regional security, they reflect Timor-Leste's commitment to international law, multilateral cooperation, and the peaceful maintenance of international order, including in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, the prevention of transnational organized crime, and the protection of international peace and security.

Among the relevant international instruments to which Timor-Leste is a party are:

1. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT);
2. Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT);
3. Biological Weapons Convention (BWC);
4. Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC);
5. Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines;
6. International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism; and
7. United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its relevant Protocols.

These commitments form part of Timor-Leste's broader engagement with the international legal framework and demonstrate its support for multilateral cooperation, the rule of law, disarmament and non-proliferation, and collective efforts to address transnational security challenges.

In the area of nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, Timor-Leste achieved a significant milestone on 14 September 2026 by becoming the 182nd Member State of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), following its admission at the 70th Regular Session of the IAEA General

Conference in Vienna, Austria. Timor-Leste's membership further reflects its commitment to multilateralism, nuclear non-proliferation, and the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology. The Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, Additional Protocol, and Small Quantities Protocol between Timor-Leste and the IAEA entered into force on 25 September 2024, reinforcing the country's commitments to safeguards, transparency, and verification. Membership in the IAEA also provides a framework for strengthened international cooperation in areas of national development, including water resources management, agriculture, health, energy, and the strengthening of national regulatory capacities, while contributing to international and regional efforts to promote nuclear safety, security, and non-proliferation.

As a further recent development, on 15 September 2026, Timor-Leste signed the Declaration on Accession to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Vientiane, Lao PDR, during the Third Review Conference of the Convention. This development reflects Timor-Leste's continued commitment to humanitarian disarmament, international humanitarian law, and the protection of civilians from the effects of cluster munitions. As the accession process remains ongoing, this development is presented as an expression of Timor-Leste's intention to join the Convention, rather than as a completed accession.

Through these international legal instruments and commitments, Timor-Leste contributes to strengthening international law and cooperation in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation, humanitarian protection, counter-terrorism, and the prevention and combating of transnational organised crime. Collectively, these commitments complement Timor-Leste's participation in ASEAN's political-security framework and reinforce its contribution to regional peace, security, stability, and cooperation.

v. United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

Timor-Leste has actively engaged and contributed military and police personnel to United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Operations, including the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). These contributions reflect Timor-Leste's commitment to international peace, security, and stability, while providing opportunities to strengthen the capabilities and professional experience of its military and police personnel through engagement with international counterparts and United Nations peacekeeping standards. As of July 2025, Timor-Leste was contributing two Experts on Mission to UNMISS.

vi. Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance

Timor-Leste's engagement with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) forms part of its broader participation in ASEAN's efforts to strengthen regional disaster preparedness, resilience, and humanitarian assistance. Through cooperation with the AHA Centre and relevant ASEAN mechanisms, Timor-Leste is strengthening its national capacity to prepare for and respond to natural and climate-related hazards, including floods, droughts, and other emergencies, while contributing to ASEAN's collective disaster management efforts.

Since becoming an ASEAN Member State, Timor-Leste has supported regional disaster management through financial contributions

and engagement with relevant ASEAN institutions and mechanisms. In December 2025, the Government of Timor-Leste approved a voluntary contribution of US$500,000 to the AHA Centre to support regional humanitarian operations following natural disasters and contribute to strengthening collective disaster preparedness and resilience.

The AHA Centre continues to engage with Timor-Leste's Civil Protection Authority (APC) in support of capacity-building and disaster management initiatives. This engagement contributes to strengthening Timor-Leste's national disaster management systems and practices in accordance with relevant ASEAN frameworks and standards, while facilitating Timor-Leste's participation in regional mechanisms for disaster monitoring, information-sharing, early warning, and coordinated response. It also supports Timor-Leste's participation in ASEAN's "One ASEAN, One Response" approach to collective and coordinated disaster response and humanitarian assistance.

vii. Transnational Crime

The *Comissão de Luta Contra o Tráfico de Pessoas* (CLCTP) serves as Timor-Leste's national coordinating body for the prevention and combating of trafficking in persons. Established under Decree-Law No. 9/2021 of 30 June, as amended by Decree-Law No. 22/2023 of 12 April, the CLCTP brings together relevant government institutions, including the Scientific Criminal Investigation Police (PCIC), the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL), the Migration Service, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion, and the Public Prosecution Service, together with representatives of civil society. The CLCTP is responsible for coordinating national actions to combat trafficking in persons, strengthening cooperation with international partners, and supporting the implementation of relevant international commitments.

viii. Bilateral Defence, Security, and Border Cooperation

Timor-Leste–Australia: New Partnership for a New Era

On 28 January 2026, the Governments of Timor-Leste and Australia signed the Joint Declaration on Establishing a New Partnership for a New Era, following the bilateral meeting between the Prime Ministers of the two countries, H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão and H.E. Anthony Albanese. The partnership reaffirms their commitment to ongoing cooperation, consultation, and mutual respect for national sovereignty, and reflects their shared vision for a peaceful, stable, and prosperous region.

In the area of peace and regional integration, the two countries committed to strengthening cooperation on common security interests, including maritime security, efforts to prevent human trafficking, people smuggling, and transnational crime, as well as critical infrastructure. The partnership also reaffirms their shared commitment to ASEAN Centrality and the importance of an ASEAN-led regional architecture that is open, transparent, rules-based, and inclusive.

Timor-Leste and Australia further committed to strengthening cooperation among police, border security, and immigration agencies through the Timor-Leste Police Development Program and cooperation under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Migration and Border Management. Cooperation also includes strengthening cyber-security skills and capabilities, enhancing public awareness of cyber risks, and strengthening

cyber-related information-sharing between law enforcement agencies.

Australia and Timor-Leste share a history of deep defence cooperation. Both countries reaffirmed their commitment to continuing to develop a modern defence relationship based on partnership, sovereignty, and the interests of the two countries. Through the Defence Cooperation Program, both countries will further strengthen the mutually beneficial and longstanding collaboration between their defence forces, contributing to national, regional, and international stability and security.

The partnership also reaffirms the importance of international rules and institutions and the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Building on the 2018 Maritime Boundary Treaty, Timor-Leste and Australia reaffirmed the universal and unified character of UNCLOS as the comprehensive legal framework within which activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out.

Timor-Leste–Australia: Migration and Border Management Cooperation

On 25 August 2025, Timor-Leste and Australia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Migration and Border Management between the Ministry of the Interior of Timor-Leste, including the Migration Service, and the Australian Department of Home Affairs, including the Australian Border Force. The MoU strengthens bilateral cooperation on migration and border management, including efforts to combat organized crime, human trafficking, people smuggling, and irregular migration, while promoting institutional cooperation and human resource development.

The MoU builds upon the existing framework established by the 2002 Memorandum of Understanding on the exchange of information and mutual cooperation in combating illegal immigration and people smuggling. It also provides for expanded cooperation in areas including border systems management and security, lawful pathways for travel and migration, the return of citizens and irregular migrants, and combating human trafficking.

Timor-Leste–Malaysia: Defence Cooperation

Timor-Leste continues to strengthen its long-standing defence relationship with Malaysia, which has been an important defence partner since the restoration of Timor-Leste's independence in 2002. In November 2025, the Government of Timor-Leste decided to ratify the defence cooperation agreement between the two countries, reaffirming their commitment to cooperation in promoting peace, security, and regional stability within the framework of ASEAN.

The agreement provides a framework for strengthening bilateral military cooperation through regular political and strategic dialogue, the exchange of information, experience, and personnel, technical and military training, joint exercises, and cooperation in science, technology, and the defence industry. These areas of cooperation contribute to strengthening institutional and professional capacities and enhancing bilateral cooperation in support of regional peace, security, and stability.

D. Future Trends on Regional Security

Managing Geopolitical Competition and Strengthening ASEAN Centrality

The regional security environment is expected to remain complex and dynamic, shaped by geopolitical competition, strategic uncertainties, and the increasing interdependence of political, security, economic, and technological interests. For ASEAN, these developments underscore the importance of maintaining an open, inclusive, and ASEAN-led regional architecture in which Member States can engage major powers and other partners through dialogue, consultation, and cooperation.

As ASEAN enters a new phase of Community-building under the **ASEAN Community Vision 2045,** strengthening ASEAN Centrality and ASEAN-led mechanisms will remain important in maintaining regional peace, security, and stability. The Vision envisages ASEAN as a peaceful, stable, and secure region and as a primary driving force in shaping the regional architecture, while contributing to a rules-based international order and promoting the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law.

From Timor-Leste's perspective, ASEAN's strength lies in its ability to provide an inclusive platform for dialogue, confidence-building, preventive diplomacy, and cooperation among countries with diverse interests and perspectives. Sustained engagement through ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), ADMM-Plus, and other relevant mechanisms, can contribute to managing differences, reducing misperceptions, and strengthening mutual confidence.

Climate Change, Disaster Risks, and Non-Traditional Security

Climate change and disaster risks are likely to remain important security and development concerns for Southeast Asia. Increased exposure to extreme weather events, natural disasters, water and food insecurity, and impacts on livelihoods and critical infrastructure can place additional pressure on national and regional resilience.

For Timor-Leste, these challenges highlight the importance of strengthening national preparedness and regional cooperation, particularly in disaster risk reduction, humanitarian assistance, climate adaptation, and resilience-building. ASEAN's experience in disaster management provides an important framework for strengthening collective preparedness and response, including through regional cooperation and partnerships. ASEAN's disaster resilience work has increasingly emphasized anticipation, institutional capacity, resource mobilization, partnerships, and innovation in preparing for future risks.

Timor-Leste considers that addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach linking security, development, and resilience. Strengthened cooperation among relevant national authorities, ASEAN institutions, and regional partners can contribute to protecting communities, supporting sustainable development, and reducing the potential security implications of climate-related and other non-traditional threats.

Emerging and Disruptive Technologies and Cybersecurity

Rapid technological development will continue to create opportunities for economic growth, public services, and regional connectivity, while also generating new security challenges.

Cyberattacks, cybercrime, online fraud, misuse of digital technologies, data security risks, and the potential misuse of artificial intelligence require strengthened national and regional cooperation.

For Timor-Leste, strengthening cybersecurity capabilities, institutional coordination, legal frameworks, and technical capacity will be an important part of building national resilience. As a new ASEAN Member State, Timor-Leste also sees value in participating progressively in ASEAN cooperation on cybersecurity, digital governance, capacity-building, and information-sharing.

The ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy 2026–2030 provides a framework for strengthening regional cybersecurity cooperation, including cybersecurity incident response, regional coordination, capacity-building, and international cooperation. Timor-Leste supports continued regional efforts to promote a secure, resilient, and trusted digital environment, while ensuring that technological development contributes to inclusive and sustainable development.

Prospects for Regional Security Cooperation

Looking ahead, Timor-Leste considers that ASEAN's ability to maintain regional peace and stability will depend on its continued capacity to adapt to changing security conditions while preserving the principles, norms, and mechanisms that underpin ASEAN cooperation. Strengthening ASEAN Centrality, preventive diplomacy, confidence-building, dialogue, and practical cooperation will remain important in addressing both traditional and non-traditional security challenges.

As a new Member State, Timor-Leste remains committed to contributing constructively to ASEAN Community-building and to working with ASEAN Member States and external partners through ASEAN-led mechanisms. Timor-Leste looks forward to contributing to a resilient, innovative, dynamic, and people-centred ASEAN that remains a source of peace, stability, cooperation, and prosperity in the region.

Viet Nam



I. Security Concerns in the Region and National Defence and Security Policies

A. Security Concerns Common to the ASEAN Community

The global and regional security landscape is currently undergoing profound changes, which create both opportunities and challenges, with the challenges becoming increasingly prominent. Structural shifts in the international order are becoming more evident and are clearly reflected in regional dynamics, shaping the Asia-Pacific security environment in a more complex manner. In this context of traditional and non-traditional security challenges, constructive dialogue, balanced approaches, practical cooperation, and diversified partnerships are essential to enhancing regional resilience and adaptability. For the ASEAN Community, multilateralism remains indispensable and should be complemented by more flexible and issue-based frameworks of cooperation. Amidst this backdrop, it is vital that ASEAN continues to sustain the momentum of Community-building while reaffirming its unity and Centrality in shaping an open, inclusive, and rules-based regional architecture.

B. Individual National Defence Policies

The overall goal of Viet Nam's national defence is to strongly defend the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Homeland; to protect national interests and peoples; to maintain political stability and a peaceful environment for national construction and development. Viet Nam implements a defense policy of peaceful and self-defensive in nature. Viet Nam consistently and resolutely settles disputes and differences through peaceful means on the basis of international law, while actively and proactively preventing and countering the risks of conflict, implementing the policy of defending the Homeland from afar, and remaining prepared to respond to any war of aggression.

It is Viet Nam's consistent policy not to join military alliances, side with one country against another, allow foreign countries to establish military bases or use its territory to carry out military activities against other countries, or use or threaten to use force in international relations.

At the same time, Viet Nam also promotes defense cooperation with countries to improve its capabilities to protect the country and address common security challenges. Depending on circumstances and specific conditions, Viet Nam will consider developing necessary defense and military relations at appropriate level with other countries on the basis of respecting each other's independence, sovereignty, territorial unity and integrity as well as fundamental principles of international law, cooperation for mutual benefits and common interests of the region and international community.

Viet Nam opposes arms race. As a responsible member of the international community, Viet Nam is keen on fulfilling its duties while actively cooperating with other countries to address emerging security issues, contributing to the protection of peace and stabilities in the region and the world.

Viet Nam builds its military potential based on a unified strategy that is sufficient for national defence and construction. The combat competency and readiness of the armed forces, reflected in their organisation, structure, weaponry, logistical and technical support, military art, and science and technology, are

maintained, improved, and developed to meet the requirements of safeguarding the Homeland.

Viet Nam's defense budget is in line with the country's socio-economic development speed, meeting the requirements of strengthening defense potentials for protecting the Homeland, but not becoming a burden of the country's economy.

C. National Contributions to Promoting Regional Security

i. Counter-Terrorism

Viet Nam strongly condemns and opposes all forms of terrorism, terrorist financing/sponsorship and harbouring, as well as opposes all kinds of interference in the internal affairs of other countries under the pretext of counter-terrorism. Viet Nam has participated in numerous counter-terrorism initiatives, contributing to the enhancement of regional security.

Viet Nam works closely with other ASEAN Member States in implementing the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism and the ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counter Terrorism, while participating in various mechanisms such as the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM+), and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

Within the framework of ADMM and ADMM+, Viet Nam has participated in mechanism such as ASEAN Our Eyes Initiative (AOE), Virtual Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological, and Radiological Defence Experts, and ADMM-Plus Experts Working Groups on Counter Terrorism.

In April 2024, Viet Nam also co-chaired with the United States and Mongolia the ARF Workshop on Strengthening Legal Frameworks to Combat Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Terrorism in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The Workshop focused on strengthening the legal frameworks and capacities of the ARF participants to effectively prevent, detect, and respond to CBRN terrorism threats.

At the national level, in September 2025, Viet Namese Prime Minister issued Decision No. 30/2025/QD-TTg, which took effect on October 15, 2025, establishing new regulations for inter-agency coordination to prevent and combat the financing of activities that threaten Viet Nam's national security or are linked to terrorism.

ii. Non-Proliferation, Counter-Proliferation, Arms Control, and Disarmament

Viet Nam is strongly committed to global disarmament and non-proliferation, actively supporting and contributing to the common efforts of the international community for peace, security and disarmament.

Viet Nam maintains a consistent policy of supporting all efforts on disarmament and non-proliferation, particularly the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and of strengthening the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

Most recently, Viet Nam successfully presided over the Eleventh Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons at the United Nations in New York, reaffirming its active, constructive and responsible contribution to global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

At the regional level, Viet Nam is actively contributing to ASEAN's effort to build a

peaceful and nuclear weapon-free Southeast Asia region, through the Treaty on Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). Viet Nam is working closely with ASEAN Member States to encourage the signing of the SEANWFZ Protocol by the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS).

At national level, Viet Nam is stepping up efforts to draft a law on preventing and combating the proliferation of WMD, fulfilling its obligations under international treaties and complying with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540.

iii. Transnational Crime

Viet Nam has been actively and responsibly participating in ASEAN's cooperation frameworks on countering transnational crime, while also working closely with international organizations to rigorously implement projects and programs combatting human trafficking.

Within ASEAN, Viet Nam actively participates in regional frameworks to combat transnational crime, with a particular focus on information-sharing and intelligence exchange. Viet Nam also reaffirms its commitment to ASEAN's key instruments in this area, including the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP), the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime.

Viet Nam signed the ASEAN Treaty on Extradition, and in the final stage of internal procedures to accede to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) Protocol against the smuggling of migrants by land, sea and air.

At the bilateral level, Viet Nam cooperates closely with neighbouring countries in the Mekong basin to strengthen border management practices through the Regional Border Liaison Office (BLO) Network. This includes joint patrols and crime prevention initiatives along shared borders.

Viet Nam also strengthens cooperation with ASEAN's partner countries in capacity building, language training for law enforcement officers, and technical equipment and facilities supporting for combating transnational crime, coordinates cooperation and bilateral patrol activities with neighboring countries. In April 2026, Viet Nam officially deposited its instrument of accession to the Memorandum of Understanding on Establishing the Lancan-Mekong Integrated Law Enforcement and Security Cooperation Center, along with its Declaration, with the Secretariat of the Center.

iv. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Viet Nam is an active contributor to regional efforts on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, participating in meetings and joint training exercises on HADR, Search and Rescue (SAR) and relevant ASEAN mechanisms such as the ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR, ASEAN Militaries Ready Group (AMRG) on HADR, ASEAN Agreement on Disaster management and Emergency response (AADMER).

In August 2025, Viet Nam's Ministry of Agriculture and Environment collaborated with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) and the EU-SAHA Project funded by the European Union (EU) to organized the "One ASEAN One Response (OAOR) Roadshow, aiming at promoting cooperation and enhancing disaster response capacity in the region.

In 2025, as part of a broader ASEAN effort to support Myanmar's recovery following

a devastating earthquake, Viet Nam has deployed prompt humanitarian assistance, including an emergency aid package worth USD 300,000.

Within the ARF framework, Viet Nam works closely with regional countries to conduct and participate in disaster management training courses, to establish mechanisms for exchanging natural disaster warning, as well as supporting disaster response, strengthen the support and transfer of search and rescue facilities and equipment among ARF members.

v. Maritime Security

Maintaining and promoting peace, stability, and security in the maritime sphere in the region is in the interest of not only regional countries but also the international community. The regional maritime security landscape is still marked by ongoing and new challenges.

Viet Nam consistently reaffirms the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, safety, security, stability, and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the maritime sphere, particularly the South China Sea. Viet Nam also calls for all parties to exercise self-restraint, avoid the threat or use of force, and settle disputes through peaceful means, including full respect for legal and diplomatic processes, in accordance with international law, particularly UNCLOS 1982. Viet Nam has been strongly supporting the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety and is committed to working constructively with fellow ASEAN Member States and China towards the early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea that is consistent with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. Viet Nam also emphasizes the importance of upholding international law, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which sets out the comprehensive legal framework governing all activities in the seas and oceans.

Viet Nam's approach to maritime security is grounded in its strong commitment to international law and proactive regional and international cooperation. Viet Nam has undertaken comprehensive efforts to address maritime threats through enhanced law enforcement, regular patrols, information sharing, joint exercises, and closer coordination between its Navy, Coast Guard, and regional counterparts, while also contributing to maritime search and rescue and humanitarian assistance efforts at sea. At the same time, Viet Nam is strengthening measures against IUU fishing and promoting sustainable fisheries management, maritime science, technology, and surveillance capabilities through greater regional cooperation and exchange of best practices.

Viet Nam believes that the ARF is an essential multilateral platform for constructive dialogue, confidence-building, and coordinating practical cooperative measures on maritime security. In this regard, Viet Nam has co-chaired a number of ARF workshops and activities on maritime security, including the series of workshops on implementing UNCLOS and other international instruments to address emerging maritime issues. Viet Nam will continue such efforts to advance shared understanding of, and adherence to, the Convention and relevant international instruments.

Viet Nam also continues to attach great importance to regional cooperation on maritime security through ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) and Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), ASEAN Defense Minister's Meeting/Plus (ADMM/+). These are strategic frameworks for ASEAN and dialogue partners to exchange views and identify ways

to strengthen dialogue and cooperation on maritime security.

vi. ICT Security

Viet Nam attaches great importance to ICT security and cybersecurity cooperation at all levels—global, regional, and national.

Viet Nam, in coordination with the United Nations Office on Drugs & Crimes (UNODC), has successfully hosted the Signing Ceremony for the UN Convention against Cybercrime (Hanoi Convention) and a High-Level Conference on 25-26 October 2025 in Ha Noi. Viet Nam has also become of of the first three State Parties that ratified the Hanoi Convention, by doing so in early April 2026. Viet Nam pledges to support efforts for the Convention's early entry into force, promoting international cooperation in preventing and countering cybercrime for a safer digital future.

Regionally, Viet Nam is committed to actively and responsibly participating in the cooperation frameworks of ASEAN in general, and cooperation in information and communications technologies in the field of defence in particular, including the ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence (ACICE), ASEAN Direct Communication Infrastructure (ADI) in the ADMM process, ASEAN Cyber Defence Network (ACDN), ADMM-Plus EWG on Cybersecurity, ARF Inter-sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies (ISM ICTs), and the ARF Open Ended Study Group (OESG) on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) to reduce the risk of conflict stemming from the use of information and communication technologies.

Within ARF mechanism, Viet Nam has for years taken part in many initiatives on cybersecurity, including the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the use of ICTs (ISM-ICTs); the ARF Open-Ended Study Group (OESG) on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) to Reduce the Risk of Conflict Stemming from the Use of ICTs; the ARF Workshop on the Protection and Resilience of ICT-enabled Critical Infrastructure and the ARF Workshop on Countering the Use of ICTs for Criminal Purposes.

Viet Nam has also conducted various international cooperation activities on ensuring safety and cyber security, preventing crimes using high technology in various initiatives such as Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams (FIRST), Association of Asia-Pacific Computer Emergency Response Team (APCERT), Cybersecurity Alliance for Mutual Progress (CAMP), Global Forum on Cyber Expertise (GFCE).

In 2026, Viet Nam continues to take active part in the on-going progress of ICTs security negotiations to develop an international legal framework on cyberspace, cybersecurity and cybercrime at multilateral forums, under the auspices of the United Nations, including the Global Mechanism on developments in the field of ICTs in the context of international security and advancing responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs, following the conclusion of the UN Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on security of and in the use of ICTs 2021-2025. Through coordinated efforts, Viet Nam wishes to promote international cooperation to tackle global cybersecurity challenges, confidence building measures and the provision of technical assistance for developing countries.

IV. Future Trends on Regional Security

The regional and international security landscape has evolved considerably, posing significant challenges and underscoring the urgent need to modernize operational models to effectively address both traditional and emerging security challenges.

To advance and maintain relevance in this evolving landscape, regional revitalization efforts must be pursued in a comprehensive and coherent manner. This includes ensuring complementarity and synergy among all ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM+), the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), the East Asia Summit (EAS), and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). By minimizing duplication of work and leveraging its comparative advantages, particularly its inclusive nature and diverse membership, ASEAN can successfully adapt to new realities.

Moving forward, by continuing to embrace dialogue, consultation, and practical cooperation, ASEAN-led mechanisms need to maintain and further strengthen their roles as key pillars of the regional security architecture, capable of responding to an increasingly complex geopolitical environment. Through these unified efforts, the region can continue contributing to the building of an open, transparent, inclusive, and rules-based regional architecture firmly anchored in international law.

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