

THAILAND

Dialogue Process for Peace in the Border Provinces of Southern Thailand

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1. Historical Background

Since 2004, insurgents in southern Thailand have fought violently¹ to achieve an independent state for Muslim ethnic Malays. This insurgency is one of Southeast Asia's longest running and most lethal small armed conflicts. In this conflict,² around 5,500 people have already lost their lives and nearly 10,000 have been injured.³ Since 2006, the Thai government has spent nearly 135 million USD on military security operations in the south, deploying around 60,000 security forces. Further, it earmarked large development projects in the region.⁴ However, these military operations cannot fully subdue the insurgents.

On February 28, 2013, the General Consensus on Peace Dialogue Process (hereinafter Peace Agreement)⁵ was signed between the Thai government and

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¹ For details on the insurgency that erupted in January 2004, see Staff Writer, *Into the South: What will it take to end fighting between the government and insurgents in Thailand's deep south?*, AL JAZEERA, Jun. 28, 2013, available at <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/101east/2013/06/2013626115439264456.html> (last visited on Sept. 23, 2013).

² For details on the history of the conflict, see generally Z. ABUZA, *CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE: THE INSURGENCY IN SOUTHERN THAILAND* (2009).

³ See *South Death Toll: 5,235*, THE BANGKOK POST available at <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/local/367429/south-death-toll-5235> (last visited on Sept. 23, 2013).

⁴ The Southern Border Provinces Administration Centre ("SBPAC") had requested Bt3.974 billion (33 million USD) for its operations in the south. See Staff Writer, *Army Chief: Prolonged Southern Violence not Linked to Military Budget*, MCOT, available at <http://www.mcot.net/site/content?id=5090cde4a26cb3d61b000001#.UkUcRdJmjk4> (last visited on Sept. 23, 2013).

⁵ See Figure 1 (The image of the Peace Agreement).