



ISIS is using its safe haven and foreign fighter population in Iraq and Syria to expand influence in Southeast Asia, in pursuit of its grand strategic objective to rule all Muslim lands. ISIS's Syria-based Southeast Asian fighters are sourcing and directing local networks to launch attacks. Competition between militant elements vying to lead the Southeast Asian pro-ISIS movement will likely encourage increased jihadist attacks in the short term, threatening urban areas and Western interests in the region. Support from ISIS's safe haven may also facilitate the creation of an active, trans-national ISIS affiliate in Southeast Asia in the medium term.

The U.S. has the opportunity to counter ISIS's network in Southeast Asia before it develops further. ISIS claimed its first attack in the region on January 14 in Jakarta, an act that belied ISIS's ambitions but reflected relatively low military capability. Southeast Asian jihadist groups are fragmented and face pressure from domestic counterterrorism operations. ISIS's campaign in Southeast Asia is at an early stage, so the group currently poses a lower threat to security there than it does in Libya, Egypt, and Afghanistan, where its affiliates enjoy sanctuary, and in Yemen, where its affiliate is prolonging a civil war. Early action against ISIS's Southeast Asian supporters can limit ISIS's ability to develop an affiliate in the area, particularly as those supporters face resistance from locally-focused and al Qaeda-associated groups.

- 1.** Three **Filipino** Islamist groups jointly pledged allegiance to ISIS on January 4, a prerequisite step to formally declaring an ISIS wilayat.
- 2.** ISIS claimed its first attack in Southeast Asia on January 14, a complex assault in a commercial district of **Jakarta**, Indonesia. Four attackers from a pro-ISIS group supported by an ISIS fighter in Syria used SVESTs, small arms, and hand grenades to kill four and injure more than twenty.
- 3.** Indonesian police arrested 16 individuals from three separate groups planning attacks in **Jakarta** on February 15. A group that received funds from the Middle East allegedly planned to attack Jakarta's airport, while other groups planned to attack security targets with VBIEDs and stabbing attacks.
- 4.** **Malaysian** authorities arrested an ISIS-linked militant suspected of planning a suicide attack on January 15.
- 5.** Police arrested an ISIS cell near **Kuala Lumpur**, Malaysia between January 22 and 24 that reportedly received direction from Malaysian and Indonesian militants in Syria.
- 6.** Indonesian officials reported on January 25 that local militants received funds from **Australia** and ISIS's stronghold of Raqqa, **Syria**. Officials also claimed weapons used in the ISIS-claimed Jakarta attack were smuggled from the southern **Philippines** to northern **Indonesia**, indicating coordination between pro-ISIS groups within and between multiple Southeast Asian countries.
- 7.** Malaysian-Indonesian ISIS combat unit in **Syria**, Katibah Nusantara, released a Malay-language video on January 25 threatening local officials in response to ISIS-linked arrests in **Malaysia**, demonstrating Southeast Asian ISIS fighters are invested in pro-ISIS activity in their home countries.
- 8.** Filipino militant group the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) created a task force to counter ISIS's recruitment on January 27, suggesting ISIS is successfully gaining support in the **Philippines**.
- 9.** A former senior member of the **Southeast Asian** al-Qaeda-linked terror group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) criticized ISIS and the Jakarta attack on February 11, indicating al Qaeda supporters will likely oppose the creation of a formal ISIS affiliate in the region.
- 10.** Unknown actors shot a **Saudi** anti-ISIS cleric during a lecture in **Zamboanga City, Southern Philippines**. ISIS has not claimed the attack, but it called for the cleric's assassination in the February 2016 issue of its English-language magazine *Dabiq*.