ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM

ANNUAL SECURITY OUTLOOK

2026

ASEAN PHILIPPINES 2026

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Foreword



The upheaval, uncertainty and unpredictability the world faces, in light of our shared security concerns and common aspiration for peace and stability, have undoubtedly undermined efforts for interconnectedness, cooperation, and partnership between and among countries. This year alone, the world felt the multiplier effects of various conflicts across the world, among others, impacting heavily on mobility, energy and food security, and supply chains, reverberating throughout the shared waters of our societies, our economies, and our peoples.

Despite this, our institutions of cooperation and partnership endure. The peaceful settlement of disputes through principled dialogue underscores the importance of our nation-to-nation relations. ASEAN recognizes that dialogue remains at the heart of peaceful diplomacy and good neighborliness. In expanding dialogue on matters of our community's security, the ASEAN Regional Forum was formed.

The ASEAN Regional Forum serves as a testament to ASEAN's commitment to extending its principles and culture of dialogue and consultation to countries outside of Southeast Asia and across the Asia Pacific region. This Forum has brought together nations from diverse and vast backgrounds, histories, languages, and peoples. Notwithstanding evident differences and at times opposing positions, the Forum has brought Participants from around the world together to exchange candid views, experiences, and expertise, and to engage in mutually beneficial cooperation.

This ARF Security Outlook is one of the mechanisms for confidence building and preventive diplomacy through exchanging information and best practices. Guided by the Philippines' ASEAN Chairship theme of "*Navigating our Future, Together,*" ARF Member States have shared insights, expertise, and experiences on how they have addressed common challenges in the field of international and domestic security, which each of our countries may refer to with an end in view towards learning from the best practices of our countries in addressing international and regional challenges.

Colleagues, noting the value of the ARF in fostering confidence-building as well as in facilitating exchange of views and mutual understanding among ARF Participants, it is my hope that the ARF ASO serves not only as a guide of lessons learned in addressing challenges worldwide, but that it also serves as part of the legacy established by the ASEAN Regional Forum's decades of cooperation, partnership, and dialogue amongst our nations. Despite the rough waters ahead, ASEAN and its partners will always be able to navigate the uncertain future, together.



MA. THERESA P. LAZARO

Chair of the 33rd ASEAN Regional Forum
Secretary of Foreign Affairs
Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines

Executive Summary

The 2026 edition of the ASEAN Regional Forum Annual Security Outlook (ARF ASO) features **21 submissions** from ARF participants detailing their perspectives on the regional security environment, national security and defense policies, national contributions to regional security, and the role of the ARF. These contributions reaffirm the participants' continued commitment to the ARF as a platform for building trust and enhancing mutual understanding, and promoting peace, security, and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

Across these submissions, participants highlight an increasing volatility of regional security landscape marked by structural shifts in the international order, military escalations, rapid technological change, and transnational challenges. Data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) supports these concerns, noting active conflicts are at the highest levels in decades, while related deaths are also witnessing a steep increase in the past years.

Given this uncertainty, ARF participants emphasized the need for ARF mechanisms to remain relevant, inclusive and effective in responding to current and international development. There are widespread calls to strengthen dialogue and address strategic challenges holistically, with ASEAN Centrality serving as the primary driving force.

Furthermore, the submissions recognize the ongoing efforts to implement ARF work plans in the following priority areas: (1) counter-terrorism and transnational crime; (2) security of and in the use of information and communications technology; (3) maritime security; (4) humanitarian assistance and disaster relief; (5) and global non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament mechanisms. Nonetheless, the participants assert that more needs to be done to achieve the goals of ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and ensure a stable, integrated, inclusive, sustainable and people-centered Asia-Pacific region.



Australia

I. Our Region

Australia and Southeast Asia are intrinsically linked. Our connections go beyond geography, with enduring ties across family, business, education, tourism and more. Australia and ASEAN share a vision for a region that is peaceful, stable and prosperous, with ASEAN at the centre. As ASEAN's first Dialogue Partner (1974) and Comprehensive Strategic Partner (2021), Australia is unwavering in our support of ASEAN centrality, the ASEAN-led regional architecture and advancing the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.

In 2026, we mark the fifth anniversary of our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with ASEAN. Australia will continue to be a steadfast, reliable and predictable partner for Southeast Asian nations, supporting ASEAN's priorities through our long-standing development cooperation and enduring people-to-people links. This includes ongoing implementation of the more than AUD500 million in initiatives announced at the ASEAN–Australia Special Summit in 2024, the AUD2 billion Southeast Asia Investment Financing Facility, and the ASEAN–Australia Centre.

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

The region faces a deteriorating security environment in a world undergoing profound changes. Strategic competition is intensifying, warning times are shortening, and complex risks are manifesting in new ways. Conflicts in other regions are shaping new alliances and defence postures, affecting social cohesion, and sharpening geostrategic competition across all domains. Our world has become less certain, more unstable and more dangerous, while internationally agreed rules and norms are under strain in the face of heightened challenges, including disinformation, interference and hybrid threats.

Strategic competition is now a permanent feature of our region, and it will continue to play out across military, economic, technological and diplomatic domains. At the same time, the unprecedented pace and scale of conventional and non-conventional military buildup is increasing the risk of conflict, including as a result of misunderstanding or miscalculation.

Australia is working to navigate this uncertainty and to bolster the preventive architecture. Regional security is a shared responsibility based on relationships, rules and resilience. Australia is working with partners to secure a peaceful, stable and prosperous region, with ASEAN and ASEAN-led institutions at the centre. Australia supports a regional architecture that upholds international law, in which each country can pursue its own peaceful aspirations without coercion, and in which all countries respect sovereignty and shared rules and norms. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM–Plus) have a key role to play in this shared endeavour.

2026 marks the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. The treaty's universal principles of peaceful coexistence and friendly cooperation among Southeast Asian countries

remain as relevant as ever. Australia seeks to promote a region where no country dominates and no country is dominated. A region in which countries and peoples can cooperate, trade and thrive. Where agreed rules are upheld, disputes are settled peacefully and in accordance with international law, sovereignty is respected, and all countries have the freedom to decide their future.

Australia recognises this can only be secured through the collective responsibility of regional countries, working in partnership with, and upholding the centrality of, ASEAN and ASEAN-led institutions. To this end, Australia will continue to support ASEAN's pivotal role in deepening mutual trust between member nations to reduce the risk of misunderstanding, navigate differences and prevent escalation. We were pleased to agree to the *ASEAN-Australia Leaders' Statement on Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management in the ASEAN-led Regional Architecture* and look forward to implementing the commitments made in the Statement and the ASEAN–Australia senior officials' Track 1 Workshop on Conflict Prevention (10 September 2025) – delivered with Malaysia and Indonesia.

Australia is concerned about the economic consequences of the Middle East conflict for our region, including the impact on energy supply chains, prices and flows of essential energy. Open and resilient global trade is critical to our mutual security and prosperity, particularly during crises. Australia is committed to working with partners in the region on this shared energy security challenge.

Australia is deploying all tools of national power to strengthen regional resilience. We are working with partners to build the inclusive infrastructure and economic opportunities to transform lives, foster stability and grow prosperity, underpinned by our commitment to open markets and an international rules-based trading system. Australia is continuing to deepen two-way trade and investment with our region, including through the initiatives under *Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040*.

Australia supports a region in which trade is unimpeded, and disputes are resolved peacefully and in accordance with international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Australia works with Southeast Asian states and ASEAN to support peace and stability in the South China Sea and adherence by all states to UNCLOS, the comprehensive legal framework for all activities in the oceans and seas.

Australia advocates for peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. We oppose any actions that increase the risk of accident, miscalculation or escalation, and we oppose any unilateral action to change the status quo. Conflict would be devastating for regional stability and prosperity. We encourage all parties to engage in dialogue rather than resorting to coercion or the use of force.

Australia remains deeply concerned by the Cambodia–Thailand border conflict. We urge both parties to honour the December 2025 ceasefire and the Kuala Lumpur Joint Declaration to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from provocative actions. We call for the protection of civilians and full cooperation with ASEAN Observer Teams.

Australia's cooperation with India, Japan and the United States through the Quad reinforces and advances our shared objectives for peace and stability in the region. Quad partners are all Comprehensive Strategic Partners of ASEAN and steadfast supporters of ASEAN centrality and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. The Quad is committed to working with partners in the region, leveraging our combined resources to respond to the region's most pressing challenges and pursue opportunities for mutual benefit.

The Quad will continue to deliver practical benefits in areas including: strengthening maritime domain awareness and security; supporting regional connectivity through undersea cable cooperation and improved access to advanced telecommunications technology; collaborating on critical and

emerging technologies and cybersecurity; building more secure and diverse supply chains; and supporting humanitarian assistance and emergency response across the Indo-Pacific.

i. Myanmar

The 2021 military coup in Myanmar reversed years of democratic, economic and development gains. Australia remains deeply concerned about the worsening political, security and humanitarian situation, which has serious implications for regional peace and security and transnational crime.

Australia noted with concern that the first elections held by the Myanmar regime since the coup, in three phases from December 2025 to January 2026, did not meet the conditions of a free, fair and inclusive process. Australia continues to urge the cessation of violence, release of those unjustly detained, safe and unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance, and inclusive dialogue among all stakeholders. Australia stands ready to support genuine efforts to alleviate humanitarian suffering, improve economic and social conditions and advance a sustainable resolution to the ongoing crisis in Myanmar.

We strongly support ASEAN's continued efforts to resolve the crisis. We call for the full implementation of the Five-Point Consensus, as reaffirmed by ASEAN Foreign Ministers in January 2026, and for meaningful and positive engagement by the incoming Myanmar authorities with ASEAN representatives, including the Chairs and Special Envoys.

Australia maintains targeted financial sanctions designed to limit the regime's access to funds and materiel. Australia continues to monitor the regime's actions. We urge the regime to return Myanmar to a civilian-led democratic government through genuine, inclusive dialogue.

Australia is committed to international efforts to pursue accountability for any war crimes, human rights violations and abuses and other atrocities committed in Myanmar, including those committed against the Rohingyas and other ethnic groups.

The ongoing conflict and restrictions on access by the military regime have constrained humanitarian and development organisations in providing assistance in certain areas. The earthquake that struck central Myanmar on 28 March 2025 compounded the already dire humanitarian situation. Despite these challenges, Australia's assistance continues to reach communities across the country.

Australia will continue to support the people of Myanmar through the provision of sustained development and humanitarian assistance (AUD124.8 million in 2025–26). Australia's assistance is targeted toward meeting immediate needs and building community resilience to respond to future challenges, with a focus on the most vulnerable. We also support the promotion of peace and democratic values. Our assistance is delivered through trusted partners, including the UN and non-government organisations. Australia does not provide any funding directly to the regime and takes proactive steps to ensure Australia's assistance does not confer legitimacy to the regime.

ii. DPRK

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) continues to present a grave threat to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and globally. Its wide range of provocative, escalatory and destabilising behaviour is contrary to our collective interest in a peaceful, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

The DPRK's continued advancement of its unlawful weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic missile programs remains gravely concerning. These actions threaten the security of neighbouring states and pose an unacceptable risk of accelerating global WMD proliferation. Reports that the DPRK remains ready to conduct

a seventh nuclear test are deeply concerning for the security of all regional states. Australia remains committed to the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula and supports the ROK's efforts to de-escalate tensions and explore the possibility of dialogue with the DPRK.

Australia continues to call upon the DPRK to comply fully with UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions requiring the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of its nuclear, other WMD and ballistic missile programs. In the absence of this compliance, Australia remains committed to acting with partners to contain the DPRK's malign behaviour, including enforcing UNSC resolutions and imposing sanctions under Australia's autonomous sanctions framework.

Australia participates in the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team (MSMT), which reports on the DPRK's violations and evasions of UNSC resolutions. Australia also provides a military contribution to sanctions enforcement under Operation ARGOS. This contributes to multinational efforts to monitor and deter illegal imports and exports of UNSC-sanctioned goods. Since 2018 under Operation ARGOS, Australia has deployed Royal Australian Navy vessels and maritime patrol aircraft.

The DPRK's state-sponsored cybercrime activities, in particular its unprecedented cryptocurrency thefts and money laundering activities, have continued to expand in both scale and severity. Theft of intellectual property and infiltration by DPRK hacking groups and fraudulent IT workers is damaging business confidence in our region and eroding prosperity. The MSMT's second report, released in October 2025, detailed the clear connections between DPRK entities already subject to UN sanctions and its cybercrime operations. Following the release of the report, the Australian Government imposed targeted sanctions on one individual and four entities involved in supporting North Korea's WMD programs through malicious cyber activity.

The DPRK's deployment of troops to support Russia's illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine is deeply concerning, and the continued export of materiel by the DPRK to Russia is a further flagrant violation of multiple UNSC resolutions. Australia supports efforts to highlight violations of DPRK related UNSC resolutions by the DPRK and Russia, in line with our commitment to strengthening accountability and upholding international rules and norms.

iii. Ukraine

Four years on from Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Australia remains steadfast in supporting Ukraine and imposing costs on Russia. Russia's unprovoked and unjustified invasion is a flagrant violation of international law, including the UN Charter. Russia's war undermines the ASEAN principles of non-interference and respect for sovereignty and international law, as set out in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo Pacific. It violates the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, to which Russia and Ukraine are parties.

In addition to causing terrible damage and loss of life in Ukraine, Russia's war is compounding human suffering and propelling the global food and energy security crisis. The effects of this crisis reverberate in the Indo-Pacific. Everyone in the region pays more for energy and food today because of Russia's ongoing attacks on Ukrainian agricultural production and energy infrastructure. Increasing reports of Russia's deceptive and exploitative tactics to recruit the most vulnerable people from the region to support its war machine are of deep concern. Russia's aggression has serious implications for security in both the Euro-Atlantic region and our own region, most clearly demonstrated by its expanding military cooperation with the DPRK, including the ongoing deployment of thousands of DPRK troops to fight for Russia against Ukraine.

Australia has contributed more than AUD1.7 billion in support for Ukraine in response to Russia's aggression and imposed over 1,800 sanctions to impose costs and limit Russia's ability to fund its war. We also lowered the Oil Price Cap for services provided in relation to seaborne Russian crude. We believe all countries are better off in a world where international rules are clear, mutually agreed and consistently followed.

Australia continues to closely monitor the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. Russia continues to target Ukraine's civilian infrastructure, leaving millions of Ukrainians without power, heating, clean water or adequate health care. Most recently, the Australian Government announced an emergency AUD10 million to the Ukraine Energy Support Fund, bringing Australia's total support to the Fund to AUD40 million. This funding has helped Ukraine repair and replace damaged energy infrastructure and support the continued provision of electricity, heating and essential services during one of Ukraine's harshest winters.

Australia supports all efforts to achieve a peace deal for Ukraine that ends Russia's war and safeguards security and stability in Europe. A lasting peace should uphold Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and ensure Russia does not renew its aggression. Australia continues to call on Russia to come to the negotiating table and engage in good faith.

iv. Middle East

The conflict in the Middle East continues to disproportionately affect the region and adds uncertainty to the global economic outlook. Damage to energy and logistics infrastructure and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz have contributed to large increases in oil, gas and other commodity prices. About 80 percent of oil and oil product exports transiting the Hormuz Strait were Asia-bound, making the Indo-Pacific highly susceptible to energy supply disruptions. The full scale of the economic impact will depend on how quickly shipping through the Strait of Hormuz returns to normal volumes, and market confidence in the conflict resolution.

Australia has called on Iran and its proxies to cease their indiscriminate attacks against other countries in the region, many of which were not parties to this conflict. Australia deplores the deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure. For decades, the Iranian regime has posed a threat to its own people, the region, and international peace and security through its ballistic missile and nuclear programs, support for armed proxies, and brutal acts of violence, terrorism and intimidation inside and outside Iran. Iran directed at least two attacks on Australian soil in 2024.

It has long been recognised that Iran's nuclear weapons program is a threat to global peace and security. Iran has consistently failed to comply with UNSC resolutions on its nuclear program; the Iranian regime can never be allowed to develop a nuclear weapon. Australia supports the United States acting to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and from continuing to threaten international peace and security. We join our partners in calling on all parties to adhere to international humanitarian law and protect civilians. The best outcome for the region is a return to dialogue and diplomacy.

Australia unequivocally condemned the terrorist attack on Israel by Hamas. We have always advocated for the immediate release of the hostages, for sustained and unimpeded aid to those in need and for all parties to adhere to international law. Australia welcomed the 10 October 2025 ceasefire agreement, which brought about an end to hostilities in Gaza. We urge all parties to implement President Trump's Middle East peace plan in full, recognising the only hope for enduring peace and security for the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples is a two-state solution.

Australia affirms the plan's commitment to denying Hamas any role in the future governance of Gaza and calls on it to disarm as per the agreement. We will continue to aid in Gaza's recovery through assistance to the Palestinian Authority's governance reform agenda, and through committing over AUD135 million in humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza and Lebanon since 7 October 2023.

A two-state solution is an essential component of peace and security in the Middle East, and we condemn any action that undermines it, including Israeli settlements in the West Bank, which are illegal under international law. Australia continues to advocate for Israel to ensure unimpeded and sustained humanitarian aid in Gaza, including allowing international non-governmental organisations and humanitarian actors to undertake their vital work independently and impartially.

At this stage of its post-Assad transition, Syria is still navigating critical security, humanitarian, political and economic challenges. Australia continues to encourage Syria's transitional government to conduct an inclusive process. Such a process would establish a representative, non sectarian government and protect the rights of all Syrians.

v. South China Sea

The South China Sea is a vital waterway for the entire international community. All States have a substantial interest in peace and stability, freedom of navigation and overflight, unimpeded trade, and adherence to international law, particularly UNCLOS. When disputes arise, differences must be managed through dialogue and other peaceful means and in accordance with international law—not by force or coercion.

Australia is deeply concerned about the risk of heightened tensions affecting the safety of life at sea in the South China Sea. We are concerned about a pattern of dangerous actions by China's vessels against Philippine vessels and crew in the South China Sea, including near Scarborough Shoal, Sabina Shoal and Thitu Island. These actions include dangerous manoeuvres and the ramming and water cannoning of vessels, which have resulted in injuries to fishers and crew. We will continue to express serious concern about unsafe and destabilising actions in the South China Sea, including the dangerous use of coast guard vessels and maritime militia and interference with routine maritime operations. We are also concerned about the ongoing militarisation of disputed features, efforts to disrupt other countries' legitimate resource exploration and exploitation activities, and interactions between aircraft in the South China Sea, including unsafe and unprofessional incidents. These actions endanger the peace and security of the region, threaten lives and livelihoods, and create risks of accidents and miscalculation.

Australia is also deeply concerned about unsafe and unprofessional actions towards Australian Defence Force aircraft and vessels. The Australian Defence Force conducts activities professionally and in accordance with international law and expects all other militaries to do the same. Australia is concerned when countries engage in activities that are inconsistent with UNCLOS, which provides the comprehensive legal framework for all activities in the ocean and seas. Adherence to UNCLOS provides the foundation for peace, security and stability in the maritime domain. Australia will continue to exercise its rights and freedoms under international law, including freedom of navigation and overflight, and will continue to respect the right of others to do the same. All maritime claims and activities, including those in the South China Sea, must be consistent with UNCLOS. All disputes must be resolved peacefully and in accordance with international law, particularly UNCLOS. The 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award is final and binding on the parties to the dispute.

Australia will continue working with ASEAN Member States and Dialogue Partners to promote peace and stability in the maritime sphere, particularly through promoting conflict

prevention, confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy. The ARF is a central pillar of the regional security architecture. All ARF members have a responsibility to promote dialogue and to support measures that reduce the risk of conflict and miscalculation, including by setting expectations for regional stability and providing a forum for engagement and cooperation.

Australia is not a party to negotiations between ASEAN Member States and China on a Code of Conduct for the South China Sea. However, the South China Sea is a vital waterway for the entire international community. It is vital to have an open maritime environment centred around adherence to international law. Accordingly, Australia considers it essential that any Code of Conduct be comprehensively and carefully considered by all ASEAN Member States, and not undermine the rights and interests of States, including third States, under international law, particularly UNCLOS.

vi. Energy Security

The Middle East conflict and closure of the Strait of Hormuz has heightened awareness of the risk of supply chain dependencies and disruptions to our individual and collective energy security. The Strait of Hormuz (indirectly) supplies around 80 percent of the oil into our region, meaning Southeast Asia, the Pacific and Australia are disproportionately exposed to the current disruptions. Like Australia, Pacific island countries rely on continuity in fuel supply from ASEAN trade partners.

The impacts of conflict demonstrate starkly the benefits of open and resilient global trade for our shared security and prosperity. Australia will continue to work with regional partners to maintain two-way flows, including of energy supplies, fertiliser and other critical goods at this time of global disruption.

Australia remains committed to working together with the region to strengthen energy supply chain resilience through deeper regional cooperation, support for the energy transition and by promoting the uptake of renewable energy resources. Australia will continue to work with our regional partners because energy security in our region is a shared challenge.

vii. Climate Change

Climate change is an accelerating, existential challenge, and supply chain disruptions from the Middle East conflict have highlighted the importance of the clean energy transition to our region's energy security.

Australia is already experiencing the impacts of climate change through more frequent and severe natural disasters and climate-related pressures on communities and infrastructure. Southeast Asia frequently ranks among the most vulnerable regions globally to climate impacts, including rising sea levels, extreme heat, severe flooding, worsening droughts and intense typhoons. Climate change poses region-wide risks, with its impacts threatening lives, infrastructure, security and economic stability. As a global problem, climate change requires coordinated international cooperation to address the challenge it represents. Australia is committed to the Paris Agreement and to working domestically and with international partners to address climate change causes and impacts.

In 2026, as COP31 President of Negotiations, Australia will work with Türkiye and the Pacific to secure strong climate outcomes that build resilience, cut emissions, support sustainable development and unlock the economic and energy security opportunities of the energy transition. We look forward to driving greater ambition through COP31, including through a pre-COP hosted in Fiji and a special leaders' event in Tuvalu, to secure international action to keep global temperatures to safer limits. As President of Negotiations, Australia will play a central role in helping COP31 bring profile to the unique climate challenges faced by the

Asia-Pacific region and to accelerate global action to address them, ensuring no one is left behind.

As a trusted partner on climate and energy transition, Australia is committed to working with ASEAN to deepen cooperation on regional efforts to transition to net zero. Australia's efforts are guided by the climate and energy cooperation opportunities identified under our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and the green transition priorities highlighted in *Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy*.

Australia continues to implement the AUD6.9 million Energy Cooperation Package under our Aus4ASEAN Futures Initiative announced by Prime Minister Albanese at the 2024 ASEAN–Australia Special Summit. The package enhances ASEAN-led regional energy policy and planning, including through the ASEAN Centre for Energy, and supports ASEAN's ambition to fully realise the ASEAN Power Grid by 2045. It also assists with implementation of the ASEAN Strategy for Carbon Neutrality and the establishment of an ASEAN Centre for Climate Change in Brunei Darussalam. During the Special Summit, the Prime Minister further announced establishment of the Southeast Asia Investment Financing Facility (SEAIFF) to provide up to AUD2 billion in loans, guarantees, equity and insurance for projects that will boost Australian trade and investment in Southeast Asia, particularly in support of the region's clean energy transition and infrastructure development. The first SEAIFF investment approved is a AUD75 million investment in the Singapore Government's Financing Asia's Transition Partnership to support the region's clean energy transition.

Australia recognises the national security implications of climate change and is taking steps to address the risks. The 2024 National Defence Strategy and the preceding 2023 Defence Strategic Review consider the role of climate change in the region and on defence capability. The Strategy and Review recommended developing national resilience and response measures at local levels to address the adverse effects of climate change and to accelerate the Australian Defence clean energy transition to increase national resilience. Further, the Australian Government's first pass report for the National Climate Risk Assessment, released in March 2024, identified nationally significant climate risks to Australia, including defence and national security. These assessments identified the expected pressures of concurrent disasters likely to be experienced in Australia and the region, and the Government's capacity to effectively respond. These nationally comprehensive views of Australia's climate risks allow a better understanding of where we need to focus our efforts going forward.

In 2024, the ADMM–Plus agreed on the requirement to incorporate issues on resilience and response to climate-related and other national disasters into the seven thematic ADMM–Plus Experts' Working Groups.

viii. Health Security

Australia works at national, regional, and global levels to support partner countries to: achieve their ambitions to deliver equitable access to quality, essential health services and health products; help to prevent and respond to communicable and non-communicable diseases; and advance sexual and reproductive health and rights. Australia works with governments, civil society organisations and Australian, regional and multilateral partners to respond to our shared health challenges—including the risk of pandemics, antimicrobial resistance and the health impacts of climate change. Australia's health assistance supports inclusive health systems that aim to meet the needs of women and girls, people with a disability and other groups experiencing marginalisation.

Australia is investing AUD620 million in our region's health security to improve health outcomes and promote prosperity and stability through the Partnerships for a Healthy Region initiative (2023–27). This initiative supports technical

expertise to build resilience in our region and provides funding for research and development of vaccines, drugs and diagnostics for diseases that affect Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Australia also supports global efforts to ensure the world is prepared to prevent and manage future disease outbreaks through our funding to the World Health Organization and the Pandemic Fund. In response to growing global uncertainty and cuts to development support in the region, in the 2025–26 Budget, Australia committed an additional AUD81 million for a regional health resilience package.

Australia is supporting the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases, which will enhance regional capacity to prepare for, detect and respond to pandemics. Australia maintains its role in health security in the region through continued participation in the ADMM–Plus Experts' Working Groups and through multilateral and bilateral arrangements. Australia supports civil-military collaboration for health emergency preparedness in our region and beyond.

ix. Counter-Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism

Terrorism and violent extremism continue to threaten the collective security of the region as new risks emerge and threats evolve globally. On 14 December 2025, 15 people tragically lost their lives in the horrific antisemitic terrorist attack at Bondi Beach. There is no place for hate and violence in Australia, and everyone has a right to feel safe and respected, regardless of their religious, ethnic or cultural background. Australia deeply appreciates the messages of support and solidarity from across the region.

ASEAN mechanisms play a critical role in mitigating risks and addressing the underlying conditions for terrorism and violent extremism, and these mechanisms are essential to continued regional prosperity, security and stability.

Key themes for cooperation include effective reintegration and rehabilitation of nationals associated with terrorism, countering violent extremism in prisons, the empowerment of youth as key partners in countering violent extremism, preventing terrorist use of new technologies, protecting crowded spaces and vulnerable targets, and identifying proactive practices to build regional resilience.

Online radicalisation, especially of youth, and the continued resonance of violent extremist material is a pressing concern. Regional cooperation remains a crucial component in preventing violent extremism, disrupting terrorist operations, and restricting terrorist travel and financing. ASEAN forums that share emerging terrorism trends and developments and explore evidence based policy responses continue to provide utility.

ASEAN Member States are driving positive programs and interventions. These initiatives enable disengagement, leverage important civil society contributions, and enact key reforms in the justice sector and law enforcement coordination. ASEAN Member States are adopting whole-of-society approaches in line with National Action Plans on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, and supporting whole-of-region approaches.

ASEAN-led efforts include countering terrorism financing, preventing and countering violent extremism, intelligence and information exchange, addressing online radicalisation, and building resilient communities.

x. AUKUS

In December 2025, AUKUS Defence Ministers reaffirmed their shared commitment to the AUKUS partnership, delivering priority infrastructure and workforce uplift in support of an enhanced trilateral submarine industrial base. Australia's acquisition of a conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability

(AUKUS Pillar I) and development of advanced military capabilities (AUKUS Pillar II) are a necessary response to the rapidly evolving strategic environment in our region.

Australia is transparently investing in a capable military, defence industry and partnerships, including through AUKUS, to be a reliable security partner for the region. We are building on our long history of cooperation to maintain the region's strategic balance and uphold agreed rules and norms. AUKUS makes a substantial contribution to collective deterrence in the Indo-Pacific.

Australia remains committed to our network of international partnerships, including ASEAN, the Pacific Islands Forum and other bilateral and multilateral forums. AUKUS nations will continue to listen carefully to regional views on safety, security and strategic issues affecting our region.

AUKUS partners remain committed to progressing Australia's acquisition of conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines in a way that sets the highest non-proliferation standard. Australia does not have and will not seek to acquire nuclear weapons. Australia will continue to meet its non-proliferation obligations and commitments, including under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone (Treaty of Rarotonga) and its safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). While Australia is not party to the Treaty of Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (the Bangkok Treaty), Australia will continue to work in a manner consistent with its basic principles.

2. National Security and Defence Policy

i. Overview

Australia's updated defence policy, planning, capabilities and resourcing are outlined in the *2024 National Defence Strategy* (NDS) and the *2024 Integrated Investment Program* (IIP). The NDS will be updated biennially. The move to a biennial NDS cycle allows policy, strategy, planning and reform efforts to keep pace with the rapidly evolving strategic environment.

As set out in the NDS, Australia's security and prosperity are inextricably linked to developments in the Indo-Pacific, and the defence of Australia lies in the collective security of the region. Australia will continue to strengthen defence engagement with Indo-Pacific partners, embracing opportunities to support mutual interests, build trust, deepen cooperation and maintain peace, security and prosperity in the region. The NDS reaffirms Australia wants to see a regional order with ASEAN at its centre, providing an essential stabilising influence.

Against the backdrop of intensifying strategic competition, and in concert with Australia's other tools of statecraft, the NDS seeks to deter any actions that could lead to conflict, military coercion or direct action against Australia or our interests. To support this, Australia has adopted a Strategy of Denial. The Strategy of Denial seeks to: deter any conflict before it begins; prevent any potential adversary from succeeding in coercing Australia through force; support regional security and prosperity; and uphold a favourable regional strategic balance.

The NDS reiterates the Australian Defence Force's five key tasks. These are to: defend Australia and our immediate region; deter through denial any potential adversary's attempt to project power against Australia through our northern approaches;

protect Australia's economic connection to our region and the world; contribute with our partners to the collective security of the Indo-Pacific; and contribute with our partners to the maintenance of international rules and norms.

The IIP sets out the specific capabilities Australia will invest in to give effect to the NDS. It provides a generational uplift in Australia's capabilities and shifts the Australian Defence Force to an integrated, focused force. The Australian Government has reset its defence capability investment priorities to deliver this fundamental change.

ii. Data Contribution to ARF Arms Register

We are also deeply committed to transparency. Australia reports data on its military expenditure to the UN in accordance with the UN Standardised Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures, which can be accessed at UNARM (un-arm.org). Details on the total number of personnel in the Australian Defence Force are published in the Department of Defence Annual Reports, available at www.defence.gov.au. Australia further reports on its international transfers of conventional arms each year to meet its obligations under the Arms Trade Treaty (thearmstradetreaty.org).

3. National Contributions to Regional Security

i. Counter-Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism

Australia's future is interconnected with the region, and our collective efforts seek to protect our citizens and build a region free from violence and hatred. Regional transnational crime cooperation through ASEAN mechanisms is crucial to disrupt terrorist and violent extremist activity. Australia recognises ASEAN's leading role in the protection of citizens by emphasising prevention and building on the strengths of civil society while developing policies that enable heightened community resilience and cohesion. Australia's counter-terrorism engagement with ASEAN proactively responds to emerging, cross-cutting issues, drawing from successes while openly looking to improve practices and policies.

In April 2026, Australia and Indonesia co-chaired the fifth ASEAN–Australia Counter-Terrorism Dialogue (CT Dialogue). The CT Dialogue demonstrates ASEAN and Australia's continuing commitment to counter-terrorism and preventing and countering violent extremism, in line with the Memorandum of Understanding between ASEAN and Australia on Cooperation to Counter International Terrorism (2018). The CT Dialogue aims to support proactive analysis of counter terrorism risks that the region faces collectively, and seeks to develop closer regional cooperation, including through information exchange and sharing best practice, rooted in the application of international best practices, human rights and international law. Australia is exploring avenues to develop and progress action plans with ASEAN to reinforce our shared counter-terrorism and counter-violent extremism efforts to address contemporary and emerging terrorism threats.

Australia supports implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism and the

associated Bali Work Plan. In 2025, in support of ASEAN priorities, Indonesia and Australia delivered two ASEAN–Australia Counter-Terrorism Workshops. At the March 2025 Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC), Indonesia and Australia delivered a workshop on the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Foreign Terrorist Fighters and their Families, and in November 2025 a workshop on the Empowerment of Youth to Prevent the Rise of Radicalisation. Both activities have strengthened cross-sectoral and civil society engagement and identified outcomes that provide guidance to ASEAN Member States and Australia.

Australia works closely with our ARF partners on counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism, including through the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CTTC). Australia supports ARF workshops and initiatives focused on countering the use of unmanned aerial systems, supporting victims of terrorism, and rehabilitation processes. Australia participated in the ARF Workshop on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism through Effective Reintegration (November 2025).

The evolving terrorism landscape reinforces the need for enhanced regional cooperation and coordination. In partnership with ASEAN, Australia hopes to advance practical exchanges that seek to strengthen our collective efforts against terrorist actors and violent ideologies. We aim to deliver new activities in 2026 to address current threat dynamics and challenges.

Regional investments such as Peacebuilding in Conflict-Affected Mindanao, the Australia–Indonesia Partnership for Justice and the ASEAN–Australia Political Security Partnership aim to strengthen the resolve and capacity of communities against violence. Australia appreciates the opportunity to refine counter-terrorism approaches with ASEAN Member States and develop innovative approaches that promote the safety and security of the region, in which we all have a shared interest in protecting from the harms of terrorism and violent extremism.

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

Australia is committed to a world without weapons of mass destruction. We work with others to strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and welcome Viet Nam's chairing of the 2026 Review Conference. Australia is co-chairing with the Philippines and New Zealand the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ISM on NPD) from 2025–27. The 17th ISM on NPD will continue dialogue to take forward shared goals.

Australia supports the entry into force and universalisation of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and urges progress on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT). Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator the Hon. Penny Wong chaired the Ministerial Meeting of the Friends of the CTBT, spoke at the launch of the FMCT Friends Group at the UN General Assembly High-Level Week in 2024, and attended the FMCT Friends Ministerial Meeting in 2025. As current chair of the Asia-Pacific Safeguards Network (APSN), Australia hosted the 16th annual general meeting in Perth from 3–5 November 2025. APSN facilitates the practical exchange of knowledge and best practice between nuclear safeguards practitioners.

In line with Australia's commitment to gender equality and women's leadership, we hosted a training program for women across the Pacific and Southeast Asia who work in nuclear science through the IAEA's 2026 Lise Meitner Fellowship, and provided scholarship funding for women in our region under the IAEA Marie Sklodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme.

As permanent Chair of the Australia Group (AG), Australia plays a leading role in preventing the spread of chemical and biological weapons. Many ARF members use the AG's Common Control Lists in their national export control frameworks to ensure trade in sensitive items does not contribute to weapons of mass destruction proliferation.

Australia has supported regional implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention, hosting regional workshops that contributed to achieving universalisation of the Biological Weapons Convention in the Pacific in 2025. Australia also works closely with partners on the Chemical Weapons Convention. In 2025, the Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office hosted a *Regional Training Course on Preventing Illicit Transfers of Chemicals for Pacific Island Countries*. Australia has been cooperating with Malaysia on enhancing Chemical Weapons Convention implementation since 2022, including through support from Australia's Defence Laboratories for an OPCW Designated Laboratory in Malaysia, enhancing regional analytical capabilities.

Australia contributed to the Proliferation Security Initiative's last Asia-Pacific Exercise Rotation – Exercise Pacific Shield 2025 in Tokyo. Australia's contributions and Japan's hosting of Exercise Pacific Shield enhanced regional counter-proliferation capability, coordination and interdiction techniques.

Australia supports the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and is pleased to be appointed Chair-designate of the ninth Biennial Meeting of States in 2026. We are a founding donor of the UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, which continues to fund projects in Southeast Asia and beyond. Australia continues to support implementation and universalisation of the Anti Personnel Mine Ban Convention. We welcomed recent ratifications by Tonga and the Republic of Marshall Islands. Australia also looks forward to working with Laos, which will assume the presidency for the Convention on Cluster Munitions and host the 2026 review conference.

Improvised Explosive Devices are still the cause of nearly half of all explosive ordnance casualties, with civilians comprising more than half of the casualties. Australia encourages all states to support this year's biennial UN General Assembly Resolution *Countering the Threat Posed by Improvised Explosive Devices*, led by Australia, France and Nigeria.

Australia has worked cooperatively with High Contracting Parties participating in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons' Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). Australia seeks the best possible outcome for the GGE on LAWS when it concludes its current mandate in September 2026.

Australia is committed to building a shared understanding of the opportunities and risks associated with LAWS and how International Humanitarian Law regulates the research, development, acquisition and deployment of new weapons, means and methods of warfare, including emerging technologies. Australia supports these efforts through ongoing constructive participation in the GGE on LAWS. Additionally, in March 2025, Australia co-hosted a third Expert Meeting on the legal review of Autonomous Weapons Systems.

Australia participates in efforts that consider the applications of AI and autonomy in the military domain. Australia endorses the 'Political Declaration on Responsible Military Use of AI and Autonomy' and the Responsible AI in the Military Domain Summits 'Call to Action', 'Blueprint for Action', and 'Pathways to Action'.

iii. Transnational Crime

Australia works closely with ASEAN partners to manage transnational crime threats in the region. This includes operational engagement, information sharing and capacity building. Deterring, disrupting and prosecuting the criminals who

profit from these activities is one of Australia's highest priorities in the region. We continue to engage on key issues through the ISM on CTTC, the SOMTC and the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters – Australia Consultation. The SOMTC+Australia Work Plan on Cooperation to Combat Transnational Crime (2026–30) has been adopted by the SOMTC, which includes a new workstream on people smuggling and broadens the cybercrime workstream to include online scams. The new Work Plan retains the successful counter terrorism, illicit drug trafficking, trafficking in persons and cybercrime workstreams from the 2021–25 Work Plan. Australia provides technical assistance and other support through activities under these mechanisms, as well as programs such as the Mekong–Australia Partnership on Transnational Crime, which has now entered Phase 2, the ASEAN-Australia Counter-Trafficking (ASEAN–ACT) program and the ASEAN–Australia Political Security Partnership (APSP).

Australia continues to increase its engagement to combat the proliferation of online scam centres across the Indo-Pacific. These centres are driven by broader polycriminal networks that are involved in a variety of illicit activities, including money laundering, human trafficking, forced labour, cybercrime and sex trafficking. This convergence strengthens criminal groups and increases regional security and economic risks. Australia supports a balanced response that includes law enforcement cooperation alongside non-law enforcement measures such as prevention programs, rehabilitation and support for trafficking victims, improved regulatory settings, and closer collaboration with industry and civil society. Australia continues to work with regional and likeminded partners to promote coordinated regional responses that address both the criminal networks behind scam centres and the systemic vulnerabilities they exploit.

Australia supports ASEAN to counter trafficking in persons through the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking Program, an AUD80 million investment over 10 years (2018–28). The ASEAN–ACT supports ASEAN Member States to strengthen effective justice systems, protect victims' rights and implement and report on their obligations under the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Australia has supported fair labour migration in ASEAN through the TRIANGLE in ASEAN, a AUD24 million investment implemented by the International Labour Organization in partnership with Canada from 2015–25. Australia is undergoing the design for the next phase, TRIANGLE Partnerships, which will continue efforts to promote safe and fair labour migration in the region and work to protect and promote the rights of migrant workers, reducing their vulnerability to being trafficked. Australia has supported regional security efforts under the APSP, a AUD10.5 million investment from 2019–24, with the next phase under design. The new program will build ASEAN leadership capability and deepen regional relationships across transnational crime, maritime security and regional resilience.

Australia seeks to disrupt and dismantle smuggling and trafficking networks through information sharing, coordinated action and joint operations. Australia is co-chair, with Indonesia, of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. The Bali Process continues work to implement the priorities in the 2023 Adelaide Strategy for Cooperation, as agreed by members at the Eighth Ministerial Conference of the Bali Process and Third Government and Business Forum in February 2023. This includes: strong regional commitments to combat trafficking into online scam operations; addressing the impacts of technology on irregular migration; and further strengthening Bali Process engagement with civil society and the private sector.

The global illicit drug trade continues to present a significant threat to the stability and security of the region. The Australian illicit drug market remains a lucrative and attractive target for transnational serious and organised crime groups who use the

Southeast Asian region as a source and transit location. Australia is particularly concerned about the growth in synthetic drug manufacturing, particularly methylamphetamine and its precursors, although heroin, cocaine and synthetic opioids also remain a threat. Australian Government agencies work closely with regional and international counterparts to prevent and disrupt the manufacture and trafficking of illicit drugs in the region, including through joint operations, intelligence sharing and capacity building.

iv. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Australia is committed to strengthening cooperation with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) through practical support and sharing information with ASEAN partners to improve future humanitarian responses. The Australia Assists program has provided humanitarian specialists to support ASEAN Member States, including in Indonesia, Laos, the Philippines and Timor-Leste, and has committed three deployments to the AHA Centre in 2025–26. These roles support the development of operating procedures for the Emergency Operations Centre, ICT strategic planning, and quality management and accreditation systems.

Australia is also reinforcing ASEAN's leadership in responding to the Myanmar crisis by supporting the AHA Centre to provide humanitarian assistance to Myanmar, including responding to the impacts of the 28 March 2025 earthquake. Australia has committed a total of AUD6.1 million from 2021–25 to the humanitarian response, which includes the procurement of relief items and food assistance and deployment of a monitoring team.

On 21 September 2025, Australia, Indonesia and seven other partner countries launched the Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel, driven by deep concern at the rising number of attacks, fatalities and restrictions affecting humanitarian workers worldwide. The Declaration is a commitment to uphold international law and to take practical steps to protect humanitarian personnel. It sets out a range of actions that countries may wish to pursue to strengthen respect for international humanitarian law, facilitate safe and unimpeded humanitarian access, align protections for international, national and local personnel, and enhance accountability and access to justice. More than 110 countries now support the Declaration, including most ASEAN members. The focus now is on building political momentum and advancing concrete measures to implement the Declaration in practice.

Australia continues to be a strong supporter and contributor to the ADMM–Plus Experts' Working Group on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief and participates in the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief.

v. Maritime Security

Australia is committed to supporting the implementation of the maritime pillar of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and the ASEAN Maritime Outlook. The Melbourne Declaration agreed by ASEAN and Australia at the ASEAN–Australia Special Summit in 2024 underscored our joint commitment to address maritime security challenges. We recognised that it is critical we maintain peace, stability, and maritime security in our region through the consistent adherence to, and application of, international rules and norms. The Melbourne Declaration reaffirmed the importance of the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS. During the Special Summit, Australia announced an investment of AUD64 million over four years to enhance Australia's Southeast Asia Maritime Partnerships. This commitment expands Australia's practical maritime

cooperation with regional partners, in line with our commitment under the Melbourne Declaration.

Australia continues to be a strong supporter of, and contributor to, ASEAN maritime forums, including the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ARF ISM MS), and the ADMM–Plus Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security. Australia is working with the Philippines as a co-sponsor to implement two projects—adopted by ASEAN Member States in March 2023—to strengthen the institutional capacity of the EAMF. We also continue to prioritise the implementation of items agreed under the ARF ISM MS Work Plan 2022–26.

Australia continues to work with regional partners to: enhance maritime domain awareness; combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; disrupt maritime transnational crime threats; uphold international law, particularly UNCLOS; improve maritime safety; sustainably manage marine resources; and respond to marine environmental challenges. In February 2025, Indonesia, Singapore, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Australia jointly delivered a 1.5-T rack Seminar on ASEAN's Role in Cable Connectivity and Resilience under the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.

Australia has worked closely with partners to support regional efforts to combat piracy and armed robbery at sea, including through the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia. In 2025, Australia hosted the 21st Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting in Sydney. Australia supports initiatives to bolster regional civil maritime security by strengthening agency-to-agency cooperation and promoting information sharing to achieve mutual outcomes.

vi. Cybersecurity

On 22 November 2023, Australia released its *2023–30 Australian Cybersecurity Strategy* together with its *Cybersecurity Action Plan*. Priority areas for the Strategy include Australia's ongoing international cyber engagement and capacity-building efforts to enhance the collective cyber resilience of our region and work with global partners to meet the evolving challenges of cyberspace.

Australia recognises that cyberspace and critical technology play an important role in our vision for a peaceful, stable and prosperous region. Australia's Southeast Asia and Pacific Cyber Program (SEA-PAC Cyber) contributes to capacity building efforts in our region, including ASEAN countries, to harness the opportunities of cyberspace and critical technology while mitigating the risks. SEA PAC Cyber will enhance cybersecurity and critical technology capacity and capabilities across Southeast Asia and the Pacific, to increase access to secure and trusted technologies. Under SEA PAC Cyber, Australia will support partner countries to reduce cyber risk, strengthen domestic and regional cyber resilience, and equitably manage and coordinate responses to current and emerging cyber needs.

Australia supports cooperation on advancing the agreed UN framework for responsible state behaviour in cyberspace, including through discussions of cyber issues in our region, such as the ARF Open-Ended Study Group on Confidence Building Measures to Reduce the Risk of Conflict Stemming from the Use of ICTs and the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies. Australia continues to co-sponsor and manage the ARF Points of Contact Directory on ICT Security with Malaysia. Australia co-chairs the ADMM–Plus Experts' Working Group on Cybersecurity with Cambodia for the 2024–27 cycle to support increased defence cooperation on regional cybersecurity challenges. Under our SOMTC Work Plan, in February 2025 Australia co-chaired the ASEAN–Australia Workshop on the UN Norms of Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace with Malaysia and Singapore. In April 2025, Australia co-chaired the ASEAN–Australia Cyber

Capacity Building Workshop on Investigating Online Child Sexual Exploitation with Singapore.

Australia is especially focused on efforts to enhance regional implementation of existing international law and the 11 agreed norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace. Australia supported, with Singapore and the Netherlands, Cyber Law International to conduct ASEAN-wide seminars and alumni workshops on the application of international law in cyberspace, tailored to the regional context.

Australia also demonstrates its commitment to advancing and implementing the framework of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace by continuing to support and promote the UN Institute for Disarmament Research's website for countries to self-assess against the Survey of National Implementation of the UN Group of Governmental Experts recommendations. Australia continues to look for opportunities to expand this work (including through capacity building) and promote elaboration of best practice guidance and practical assistance to help states implement the framework of responsible state behaviour.

In October 2025, Australia signed the UN Convention against Cybercrime (the Convention) in Ha Noi, Viet Nam. The Convention is the first UN-endorsed instrument addressing cybercrime and the collection of electronic evidence. Working with our regional partners in the UN Ad Hoc Committee (AHC) on Cybercrime, Australia was committed to negotiating a convention consistent with the existing international legal framework to address cross-border crimes. Australia's engagement in the AHC on Cybercrime reflects the priority Australia places on combatting online child abuse. The Convention establishes new global offences that address the significant harms caused by technology-facilitated abuse, including child sexual exploitation and abuse material and the grooming of children online. Australia remains committed to working closely with our regional partners towards the long-term success of the Convention, including by continuing to uphold human rights and the rule of law in ongoing AHC processes – as mandated by UN General Assembly resolution 79/243 – to negotiate the rules of procedure of the Convention Conference of States Parties and a draft supplementary protocol to the Convention.

vii. Space Security

Given the importance of space to all nations, there is a need to continue meaningful multilateral space security discussions to: enhance the governance of outer space activities; protect critical space infrastructure; and prevent an arms race in outer space. As space grows more congested and contested, risks of miscalculation and conflict increase. Integration of space systems into military operations heightens these risks. Actions in space – whether intentional or not – can be misinterpreted and escalate tensions.

Australia believes preventing an arms race in outer space requires a modern, inclusive approach that reflects evolving threats and activities. As we look to mark the 60th anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty in 2027, Australia supports further exploration and development of rules, norms and principles of responsible space behaviour, which can support international law, including the Treaty. Australia welcomes the commencement of substantive work in the Open-Ended Working Group on the Prevention of an Arms Race in All its Aspects.

Australia was pleased to co-chair with the Philippines and Singapore the ARF Workshop on Peace and Security in Outer Space on 26–28 November 2025 in Manila. We welcomed the diverse participation from twenty ARF Member States, including representatives from space agencies and foreign ministries. ARF members exchanged views on multilateral space security, threats to space systems, and regional transparency measures.

viii. Women, Peace and Security

Australia is committed to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda with ASEAN. Australia's Second National Action Plan on WPS (2021) and International Gender Equality Strategy, released in February 2025, outline our work to support gender-responsive peace and security efforts, which lead to longer-lasting peace that benefits everyone. Action on WPS is a commitment shared by governments in our region and ASEAN, as reaffirmed in the Melbourne Declaration.

Launched in 2022, the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security is a critical step in ASEAN Member States' progress towards meeting their commitments to gender equality and the human rights of women and girls, along with promoting sustainable peace and security in the region. During 2025, through joint ministerial statements, Australia reaffirmed its commitment to WPS with ASEAN Member States' Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Viet Nam.

Australia is working with ASEAN and other partners to design and deliver initiatives that support women peace mediator networks in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Through partnership with UN Women, Australia's support enables the provision of technical support to governments to develop, implement and review national action plans and the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on WPS. Australia supported the biennial ASEAN Women, Peace and Security Summit in July 2023 and September 2025, focused on the implementation of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on WPS. Since 2024, this support has seen Viet Nam and Timor-Leste release their first WPS National Action Plans, while the Philippines launched its fourth iteration.

Australia also engages actively with the ASEAN WPS Advisory Group, serving as an observer since 2023 and contributing to policy dialogue and coordination. Technical assistance and policy dialogue have strengthened ASEAN Member States' capacity to implement WPS. Australia advocates for WPS integration across regional Expert Working Groups on counter-terrorism, humanitarian assistance, maritime security, and cybersecurity.

Australia supports bilateral and regional programming on WPS, including on cybersecurity and countering violent extremism. This includes support to the ASEAN–ACT program, through which capacity-building activities focus on victim identification, protection and support, as well as the protection of persons in vulnerable situations. Australia is committed to identifying new opportunities to address contemporary challenges, such as climate change, cybersecurity and space, as part of our future support for WPS.

Australia supports the WPS agenda in the ARF. In March 2025, Australia, Viet Nam and Canada co-chaired the second ARF Workshop to Recognise 25 Years of Women, Peace and Security in Ho Chi Minh City. Australia is also working to advance the WPS agenda in the respective work plans of the ADMM–Plus Experts' Working Groups, in line with the 2023 ADMM–Plus Experts' Working Group Joint Statement on WPS.

4. Role of the ASEAN Regional Forum

i. National Contributions to Enhancing the ARF and Regional Security

Australia remains firmly committed to its longstanding and active engagement within ASEAN's regional security architecture, including the ARF, the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ADMM–Plus. As the region's longest established platform for security dialogue and cooperation, the ARF continues to have a vital role in facilitating constructive dialogue and advancing practical, working level cooperation on key security challenges facing our region.

Australia is an active member of the ARF and contributes to technical and practical engagement across the ARF's five workstreams. Australia is co-chair with the Philippines and New Zealand of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (2025–27). In April 2026, Australia, in partnership with Malaysia, was pleased to co-chair and host the 18th ARF Experts and Eminent Persons' Meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

ii. Future of the ARF

Australia supports ASEAN's efforts to revitalise the ARF in a comprehensive manner to maintain its effectiveness, relevance and function as the leading regional security forum in the Indo-Pacific. Revitalisation would enhance the ARF's leadership on current and emerging political and security challenges, including through its confidence building and preventive diplomacy mandate.



Bangladesh

Overview of the Regional Security Environment

1. The Asia-Pacific region remains central to global economic growth while simultaneously being confronted by multifaceted security challenges requiring collective measures to mitigate the same. As the region experiences heightened geopolitical competition and emerging strategic rivalries, it faces a complex interplay between traditional security concerns and non-traditional threats. These include climate change impacts, cybersecurity risks, food security, water security, energy security, transnational organized crime, and so on. Bangladesh emphasizes that such multidimensional challenges necessitate robust multilateral cooperation through ASEAN-led platforms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which serve as critical mechanisms for fostering dialogue and enhancing mutual trust among regional stakeholders.

2. Bangladesh remains steadfast in its commitment to the foreign policy principle that promotes a balanced and proactive engagement in regional security matters. Guided by a policy of non-alignment, Bangladesh strives to foster peaceful, cordial, and equitable relations with all nations. The country's core security priorities are to safeguard its national interests, uphold territorial integrity, and promote the long-term socio-economic well-being of its people. In the last decade, Bangladesh has made substantial progress in socio-economic development. However, regional instability, such as the Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN) situation and other global conflicts, poses substantial challenges in the region.

3. The following priorities underscore Bangladesh's perspective:

   a. **Maritime Security.** As a responsible maritime nation, Bangladesh advocates for strengthened regional collaboration on sustainable ocean governance, combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, and promoting rule-based maritime order.

   b. **Non-Traditional Threats.** Bangladesh stresses the urgent need for capacity-building initiatives and technology transfers to help vulnerable states mitigate climate-related disasters, cyber threats and humanitarian emergencies.

   c. **Inclusive Regionalism.** Bangladesh advocates for ARF's centrality in bridging divides through inclusive dialogue, aligning with ASEAN's outlook in the Indo-Pacific to ensure stability and equitable growth.

   d. **FDMN Crisis.** Regional instability, exemplified by enduring crises such as the FDMN situation and the cascading impacts of global conflicts, continues to pose significant challenges to collective security and sustainable development efforts in the region.

   e. **Climate Change.** Climate change remains a major non-traditional security challenge affecting regional stability. Bangladesh, being one of the most climate-vulnerable countries, faces increasing risks from sea-level rise, extreme weather events, flooding, and environmental degradation. Bangladesh underscores the importance of enhanced regional cooperation and collective efforts to address climate-related security challenges and to strengthen resilience across the region.

National Security and Defence Policy

1. To safeguard national interests, Bangladesh pursues Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Prevention. To enhance its security, the key national interests that Bangladesh would preserve are:

    a. A secured Bangladesh, inter alia, its people, resources, land, waters, airspace and core national values.

    b. Friendly, equal, and balanced relationship with neighbouring countries while creating fields for global and regional cooperation.

    c. Security arrangement through partnership (bilateral and multilateral) with global, regional and sub-regional countries.

    d. A global approach that strengthens Bangladesh's diplomatic linkages in the international community, committed to the maintenance of global peace, environmental protection, human rights and the security responsibilities as inscribed in the United Nations (UN) Charter.

2. Keeping in view Bangladesh's national interest and commitment to global peace and stability, the main aim of the Defence policy is to protect the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity while assisting the government in ensuring peace, stability and well-being of the people of Bangladesh. In doing so, Bangladesh's Defence policy is guided by the following:

    a. To safeguard the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

    b. To be capable of meeting all domestic and transnational non-traditional threats.

    c. To be able to incorporate all paramilitary, auxiliary forces and intelligence organizations and use the advantage of the demographic depth during a crisis or war.

    d. To be compliant with all treaties and obligations undertaken by the government with regard to international peace and security, peaceful resolution of conflicts and disarmament.

    e. To ensure congruence of Defence policy and foreign policy in light of national security policy.

Non-Proliferation, Counter Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament

1. The international community continues to grapple with the dual challenges of nuclear non-proliferation and comprehensive disarmament. Bangladesh remains steadfast in its commitment to global efforts aimed at preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. As a state party to both the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Bangladesh actively supports universal and non-discriminatory implementation of these critical instruments while advocating for strengthened compliance mechanisms.

2. Bangladesh has consistently participated in regional and international initiatives on non-proliferation and disarmament, including workshops under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. It maintains a voluntary suspension on nuclear testing and believes nuclear disarmament must be pursued through a step-by-step approach within an inclusive multilateral framework. All nuclear-armed states must engage in substantive dialogue to reduce the role

of nuclear weapons in security doctrines while working toward their complete elimination through verifiable measures.

3. Bangladesh recognizes the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as the cornerstone for promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy while preventing proliferation risks. Bangladesh upholds every state's right to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes in accordance with its international obligations. To gain energy security, the nuclear power plant program operates through rigorous bilateral agreements that prioritize safety and security.

4. Bangladesh remains deeply concerned about threats posed by nuclear terrorism and clandestine proliferation networks. Bangladesh considers UN Security Council Resolution 1540 a vital tool to prevent non-state actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. Strengthening the global nuclear security architecture and enhancing cooperation on border controls must remain a priority for the ARF community.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)

The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) plays a pivotal role in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operation. The Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) approach is generally divided into three phases: preparedness, response and rehabilitation. The country has undertaken the following actions:

1. **Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Risk Information**: Bangladesh continues to invest in strengthening its multi-hazard early warning systems, with a focus on improving the accuracy, timeliness and inclusivity of alerts. In alignment with the Early Warnings for All (EW4ALL) global initiative, the country is working to ensure that every person, particularly those in high-risk and underserved areas, receives timely and understandable warnings linked to early actions. National efforts have been directed towards enhancing forecasting infrastructure, expanding dissemination networks and integrating digital technologies for risk communication. By adopting a people-centered approach, Bangladesh seeks to close the gap between warning issuance and community response, thereby reducing loss of life and livelihoods.

2. **Anticipatory Action (AA) and Early Action Protocols (EAPs):** Bangladesh has increasingly prioritized Anticipatory Action (AA) and the development of Early Action Protocols (EAPs) to reduce disaster impact through timely, preemptive interventions based on credible forecasts. These protocols are designed to trigger predefined actions such as cash transfers, pre-positioning of relief and evacuation support before hazard strikes. In coordination with humanitarian partners and technical agencies, Bangladesh has piloted EAPs for flood and cyclone scenarios, integrating scientific risk analysis with community preparedness. These efforts are in alignment with regional aspirations under the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) to enhance forecast-based early warning systems and promote proactive humanitarian approaches across the ASEAN region.

Key Initiatives and Achievements of MoDMR

- Climate-Resilient Infrastructure: The completion of the project of "Multi-Purpose Disaster Shelters" in coastal belts, which now serve as community hubs equipped with basic needs.

- Urban Resilience Project: Strengthening the capacity of first responders (Fire Service and Civil Defense) through the establishment of specialized urban search and rescue units capable of international deployment within the ARF framework.
- Ensuring transparency and efficiency in relief activities, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief is working on digital transformation such as:

    a. Era of Smart Disaster Management: Transitioning to rapid, technology-driven responses.

    b. Electronic D-Form: Implementation for real-time damage assessment and prompt decision-making.

    c. G2P (Government-to-Person) Payments: Direct transfer of humanitarian aid into beneficiaries' accounts.

Key Aspects of the ARF Statement on Disaster Management are as follows:

a. Core objectives: Bangladesh views about the HADR is not merely as a reactive necessity but as a core component of human security along with regional co-operation. In 2026, our objectives remain on integrating Anticipatory actions (AA) and Forecast-based Financing (FbF) to minimize the loss of life and livelihoods before a hazard strikes.

b. Capacity Building and Regional Engagement: Bangladesh actively participates in regional workshop, simulation exercise and technical forums under the ASEAN Regional Forum. These engagements aim to enhance interoperability, readiness and mutual support among participating states. Bangladesh has contributed to shared learning initiatives and knowledge exchange with ASEAN member states and ARF partners. Such as-Hosting regional workshops on "Cyclone Preparedness and Community-Based Early Warning Systems," sharing the success of the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) which utilizes over 76,000 dedicated volunteers.

c. Institutional Strengthening and Coordination Mechanisms: The Government of Bangladesh has established and continues to enhance its disaster management institutions, including national and local-level coordination platforms. Emergency Operations Centers (EOC's) are being institutionalized to ensure timely decision-making, interoperable communication and unified command structures during emergencies. Efforts have also been made to improve civil-military coordination in humanitarian operations.

d. **Implementation:** Implementation is the "action" phase, where policy is turned into practice through several key mechanisms. Such as:

- Disaster Relief Exercise: The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief always conducts large-scale field exercise. These simulate real-life disaster scenario to test how different rescue teams work together.
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- Technology and Innovation: Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief applies many technologies in disaster management, such as Early Warning for All (EW4ALL), Early Action Protocols which guide anticipatory actions and other procedures.
- Public-Private Partnership: Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief encourages the involvement of private sectors and international organizations in the implementation phase for their technical and logistic support.

e. **Emergency Response and Humanitarian Assistance:** In keeping with regional standards and protocols Bangladesh continues to

improve its national capacity to deliver humanitarian assistance in a timely and coordinated manner. During and immediately after a crisis, the Ministry's primary goal is saving lives and providing basic necessities. Some important steps are as follows:

- **Search and Rescue (SAR):** Coordinating with the Fire Service, Armed Forces and local authorities to conduct rescue operations in affected areas.
- **Emergency Allocation:** Rapidly distributing GR (Gratuitous Relief), which includes:
    - **Food Assistance** – Dry food package
    - **Financial Aid** – Cash grants for immediate expenses
    - **Non-Food Items** – Distribution of blankets, corrugated iron (CI) sheets for temporary roofing, and clothing
    - Ensuring access to clean drinking water and sanitation



Brunei Darussalam

I. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

The Asia-Pacific region continues to face many interwoven security concerns, ranging from the complexities of major power rivalries to the looming specter of the global climate crisis amidst the backdrop of rapid technological advancements. These multifaceted challenges resonate across diverse fields, underscoring the intricate interplay of issues in shaping the landscape of the region's future.

As such, the fluidity of existing security issues reiterates the continued need for effective and viable approaches to address challenges affecting the region. With the current global order being widely perceived to have shifted towards multipolarity, such changes have presented significant challenges to the conventional models of multilateral cooperation. Efforts to enhance confidence-building measures, promote transparency, establish practical cooperation as well as mechanisms for crisis management continue to be important components of both bilateral and multilateral approaches towards reducing tensions and fostering trust among countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Further to this, the impacts of traditional and non-traditional security challenges alike also underscore the need for a holistic approach with wider involvement from all sectors and levels of society.

While the region has witnessed the proliferation of security cooperation, emerging challenges such as competition for political and economic influence has implicated the region's stability and security, as well as ASEAN itself. Over the years, ASEAN has faced increasing pressure, both internally and externally, to adapt and evolve towards better positioning itself to effectively manage and/or resolve problems within the region—intrastate crisis in member states, regional territorial disputes, post-pandemic inflation and standard of living crisis, as well as how it chooses to manage the current wave of major power competition.

Acknowledging ASEAN's growing importance in the geopolitical scene, there has been an increasingly intense competition among the major powers to gain (more) influence in the region. Henceforth, ASEAN needs to continue leveraging its convening power to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with not only major powers but also middle powers in the Asia-Pacific region in efforts to uphold multilateralism on all fronts. Hence, as an active and committed member of ASEAN, Brunei Darussalam remains resolute in its efforts to ensure the continued relevance and credibility of the ASEAN-led regional architecture as an anchor of regional security, stability and prosperity.

A. Traditional Security

i. Evolving Geopolitical Environment

The persisting geopolitical and geo-economic landscapes in 2025-2026 present a complex array of security challenges across the Asia-Pacific region. Ensuring international peace and stability requires careful management of tensions and conflicts amid shifting regional power dynamics, strategic competition, and the emergence of new actors. Multilateral and regional frameworks, including ASEAN, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ADMM-Plus, and the East Asia Summit, have strengthened dialogue and cooperation; however, challenges such as competition for political, economic, and strategic influence, resource security, and technological advancement continue to test regional resilience.

Non-traditional security threats, including maritime issues, cybersecurity risks, terrorism, transnational crime, climate change, and pandemics, increasingly intersect with traditional security concerns, necessitating coordinated, forward-looking responses. The intensifying contest over critical supply chains, energy security, and technological innovation further underscores the strategic complexity confronting regional actors. In this environment, sustained diplomatic engagement, confidence-building measures, and practical multilateral initiatives remain essential to maintaining balance and stability. For Brunei Darussalam, proactive participation in regional security architectures, advancing multilateral cooperation, and supporting confidence-building and preventive diplomacy are central to promoting a secure, stable, and prosperous regional environment.

ii. South China Sea

One of the primary challenges facing ASEAN is the long-standing territorial claims in the South China Sea. ASEAN and China remain committed to continuing to promote maritime security and safety, enhance mutual trust and confidence, and maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea. They have reaffirmed their commitment to the freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea and to exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability. Underscoring the heightening tensions in the South China Sea, it is more imperative than ever for all involved parties to reaffirm their commitment to fully implementing and concluding the negotiations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC), to mitigate further escalation of conflicts between warring parties.

Brunei Darussalam reaffirms the importance of upholding and adhering to international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), remains committed to the maintenance of peace, stability, and prosperity in the region, and maintains its two-step approach in addressing the South China Sea. Working in tandem with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, practical defence cooperation aims to increase mutual trust and confidence, as well as enable dialogue and engagement at the highest level among ASEAN defence officials. It also reaffirms its commitment to the full and effective implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC). These actions contribute to providing a positive and conducive environment towards achieving peaceful resolutions of disputes, and, at the same time, enable close cooperation to ensure the maintenance of peace, prosperity, and stability of the region.

iii. Korean Peninsula

The Korean Peninsula in 2026 continues to reflect complex political and security dynamics, with developments in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), including missile technologies and satellite launches, attracting sustained

international attention and concern. Reported progress in solid-fuel engines, along with ongoing testing of long- range and short-range systems, underscores the evolving nature of regional security considerations and highlights the importance of effective communication channels to reduce the risk of misunderstanding or unintended escalation.

Diplomatic engagements between North Korea, South Korea, and other regional powers have experienced periods of both dialogue and heightened tensions, reflecting the ongoing challenges of achieving sustained cooperation. Inter-Korean relations continue to face difficulties, influenced by differing political priorities, security considerations, and broader geopolitical factors. At the same time, South Korea maintains close security cooperation with the United States and other allies, focusing on deterrence, readiness and the promotion of regional stability through joint military exercises and diplomatic initiatives.

Within the wider regional context, the Korean Peninsula remains embedded in evolving geopolitical developments, including relationships among regional actors and ongoing multilateral considerations. Efforts toward peaceful reconciliation and denuclearization continue to face challenges, yet the region's strategic importance underscores the continued need for dialogue, confidence-building measures, and coordinated efforts to maintain peace and stability in Northeast Asia.

In response to evolving developments on the Korean Peninsula, Brunei Darussalam supports efforts that promote dialogue, confidence-building measures and adherence to international law to maintain regional peace and stability. Continued emphasis is placed on diplomatic and multilateral approaches towards the peaceful resolution of tensions and the denuclearisation of the Peninsula. In this regard, strengthening communication channels, transparency and restraint among all parties remain critical in reducing the risk of miscalculation and unintended escalation.

Engagement through regional platforms such as ASEAN and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) continues to provide a valuable avenue for dialogue, trust-building and the promotion of long-term stability in Northeast Asia.

iv. Middle East

In the first quarter of 2026, the security environment of the Middle East is highly volatile and in a state of severe regional conflict following massive military escalations, in which the escalations constitute a serious violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity and risk triggering a dangerous spiral of violence with severe and lasting repercussions for the region and beyond. Despite ongoing mediation efforts, the continuation of hostilities raised serious concerns about good faith and undermined prospects for a negotiated solution. Furthermore, connectivity and international trade are severely impacted with widespread airspace closures and suspension of major commercial shipping lanes.

Brunei Darussalam strongly condemns the attacks against the Islamic Republic of Iran on 28 February 2026, which resulted in the loss of innocent civilian lives and provoked retaliatory strikes in the Kingdom of Bahrain, State of Kuwait, State of Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Brunei Darussalam reiterates its firm opposition to the use of force and calls for full respect for international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

B. Non-Traditional Security

While lingering traditional security issues remain, the region has also seen growing non-traditional security challenges that are increasingly complex, cutting across different sectors, in turn undermining prosperity and progress, as well as the well-being and livelihood of its people.

i. Terrorism, Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

The global reach of terrorism and the spread of violent and extremist influence in societies remains a top concern for countries worldwide. The Islamic State group's attack on a concert at Crocus City Hall in the outskirts of Moscow in March 2024 proved that large-scale terrorist threats still occur, not just within its traditional domains (Middle East, South Asia, Sahel etc.), but also in developed and well-secured countries. The attack confirms that IS continues to fuel terrorism, radicalisation and violent extremism, not excluding those towards our region. Such threats can be compounded by weak governance, political dissatisfaction, local dynamics and broader geopolitical tensions.

Terrorism today is increasingly adaptive, leveraging technological advancements such as cryptocurrency and the Dark Web for financing and recruitment, misinformation campaigns for propaganda, and AI as well as drone technologies for surveillance and targeted operations. Years of counter-terrorism effort have shifted the threat landscape toward small cells or lone actors inspired by larger organisations or extremist ideologies, including those emerging from protracted regional conflicts. In this context, the longstanding historical grievances and humanitarian challenges faced by Gaza and Palestine as a whole, remain important factors to consider in understanding the broader dynamics of radicalisation and violent extremism. These developments underscore the need for Brunei Darussalam and ASEAN member states to strengthen intelligence-sharing, community resilience, and regional cooperation, ensuring early detection and prevention of radicalisation while addressing the root causes that fuel extremism.

Brunei Darussalam enforces robust legislative measures, including the Internal Security Act, which empowers the Internal Security Department to detain individuals pre-emptively if deemed a threat to national security. Individuals involved in terrorism-related activities have been detained under this Act and placed in tailored rehabilitation programmes to address extremist beliefs and support reintegration. National-level exercises are conducted regularly to strengthen coordination among agencies and emergency responders. Efforts to counter terrorism financing are led by the National Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism Committee, while the Ministry of Finance and Economy enforces key regulatory frameworks.

Sociocultural strategies grounded in the national philosophy of Melayu Islam Beraja underpin preventive efforts. Educational initiatives, including the National Service Scheme, promote resilience among youth, while outreach programmes raise public awareness and encourage collective responsibility. A whole-of-government approach ensures access to both general and religious education, supported by scholarship schemes to reduce marginalisation. The Ministry of Religious Affairs oversees religious teachings, certifies leaders, and counters extremist narratives through sermons and public engagement.

Although no terrorist cells are currently identified, Ministry of Defence Brunei Darussalam remains active in regional cooperation, strengthening capacity through information sharing, training, and collaboration with international partners such as the ASEAN Our Eyes (AOE) and the Counter-Terrorism Information Facility (CTIF) in Singapore.

ii. Climate Change

Climate change is increasingly recognised as a critical threat multiplier within the regional security environment, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and introducing complex, transboundary challenges. In 2026, the intensification of climate-related phenomena, including rising sea levels, prolonged heatwaves, more severe storms, shifting precipitation patterns and land degradation, continues to affect infrastructure, food and water security, and population centres, particularly in low-lying and coastal areas across Southeast Asia. These developments heighten humanitarian risks while also carrying broader implications for economic stability, public health, biodiversity, and social cohesion.

The security dimension of climate change is becoming more pronounced as its impacts intersect with resource availability, internal displacement, and urbanisation pressures. The increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events have disrupted livelihoods, particularly in agriculture and fisheries, which remain vital sectors for many ASEAN Member States. This raises the potential for localised instability, while large-scale displacement, both internal and cross-border, may place additional pressure on governance systems and regional cooperation mechanisms. At the same time, critical infrastructure, including energy systems, transportation networks, and coastal installations, faces growing exposure to climate-related risks, underscoring the need for enhanced resilience and adaptive capacity.

Additionally, regional efforts have increasingly focused on strengthening climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable development frameworks. ASEAN-led mechanisms and international partnerships continue to emphasise capacity-building, information sharing, and climate financing. At the national level, Brunei Darussalam has aligned its response through frameworks such as the Defence White Paper 2021 and the Brunei National Climate Change Policy (BNCCP), which recognise climate change as an emerging non-traditional security challenge requiring a whole-of-government approach. This is further reinforced by the development of the National Adaptation Plan, expected to guide adaptation priorities across critical sectors including infrastructure resilience, water security and coastal protection. Institutionally, coordination mechanisms such as the Adaptation and Resilience Working Group facilitate inter-agency collaboration, where the defence sector plays a supporting role in logistics, disaster response and contingency planning. However, disparities in resources, technical capabilities, and institutional readiness remain key challenges to implementing comprehensive and coordinated responses. Moving forward, more integrated approaches that bridge environmental policy and security planning will be essential in supporting long-term resilience and regional stability as well as mitigating long-term risks.

iii. Emerging Technologies

The unprecedented scale of investment and development of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous systems, cyber capabilities, robotics, and the Internet of Things (IoT) continues to shape the evolving security landscape in the post-pandemic era. These developments reflect both significant technological progress and intensifying strategic competition among states and private actors. In the defence sector, such technologies are transforming traditional concepts of military operations by enhancing connectivity, situational awareness, predictive capabilities, and decision-support systems. In Southeast Asia, their application remains largely dual-use, supporting conventional defence functions as well as non-traditional security roles such as maritime domain awareness, disaster response, law enforcement, and the protection of critical infrastructure.

At the same time, the increasing integration and proliferation of these technologies present a range of emerging security challenges. Uneven access and differing levels of technological capacity among ASEAN Member States may contribute to capability gaps and concerns over technological dependency. The incorporation of AI and autonomous systems into security and defence operations also raises questions related to accountability, transparency, and operational risks, including the potential for miscalculation. In parallel, the growing sophistication of cyber threats highlights the need for sustained vigilance, resilience, and adaptive strategies, particularly as digital systems become more deeply embedded in both military and civilian domains. These challenges are further compounded by the pace of innovation, which continues to outstrip the development of comprehensive regulatory and governance frameworks.

In response, regional efforts have increasingly focused on promoting the responsible use of emerging technologies, strengthening cybersecurity resilience, and enhancing cooperation among ASEAN Member States and dialogue partners. Existing platforms, including ASEAN-led defence mechanisms, have emphasised confidence-building, information sharing, and the development of shared norms and best practices. However, variations in institutional readiness, technical expertise, and resource availability continue to pose challenges to achieving coordinated and comprehensive approaches.

Within this broader regional context, Brunei Darussalam continues to contribute to efforts aimed at strengthening cyber and defence capabilities. Moving into 2026, the country remains focused on advancing its technological capacities while reinforcing cybersecurity resilience through collaboration with regional partners. These efforts are aligned with wider regional priorities to address emerging technological risks, promote responsible innovation, and support a secure, stable, and resilient regional security environment.

II. National Security and Defence Policy

A. Overview of National Security and Defence Policy

Brunei Darussalam's fourth Defence White Paper published in May 2021, continues to be a blueprint and guidance for its national security and defence policy. Brunei Darussalam's defence policy has consistently focused on comprehensive, robust, and integrated efforts to protect and promote the nation's peace and stability. The defence strategy aligns with the national development agenda in the National Vision 2035 and aims to uphold sovereignty and stability. This strategy emphasizes three core priorities: deterrence and response, defence diplomacy, and holistic defence.

Brunei Darussalam is dedicated to enhancing its armed forces to effectively address security challenges. The country is also focused on fostering strong relationships with defence establishments and armed forces globally. A comprehensive defence strategy involves local agencies working together to maintain peace and security, which in turn supports the nation's political and economic progress and development.

III. National Contributions to Promote Regional Peace and Security

Brunei Darussalam is committed to cooperating and engaging with other countries in the region to protect its interests and fulfil its responsibilities as a member of the international community. By participating in multilateral regional platforms like the ARF, ADMM, and ADMM-Plus, Brunei Darussalam has the opportunity to engage in constructive dialogue and collaborate on addressing common security challenges.

A. Defence and Security Achievements and Initiatives

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 ASEAN Direct Communication Infrastructure (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 the 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 the 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 Cybersecurity 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, has recently concluded the co-chairmanship of the EWG in MM for the 2021-2024 cycle. Born 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 address the concerns around the pandemic.

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 and 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.

B. 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, an 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 the conduct of a 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 the 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.

C. 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 – 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 Darussalam'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 Darussalam remains resilient against both internal and transnational extremist risks.

From a societal perspective, countering radicalisation and violent extremism in Brunei Darussalam should prioritise community resilience, religious moderation, youth engagement, and digital awareness. By empowering communities, religious institutions, educational systems, and civil society actors, Brunei Darussalam 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.

D. 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). From 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 the 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, demonstrate Brunei Darussalam's commitment to ASEAN solidarity and people-to-people linkages within the ASEAN Community.

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

Brunei Darussalam, as a small nation, recognizes 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 universalizing 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 is 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 Darussalam 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 Darussalam'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 make 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 Darussalam. 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 have 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.

IV. Role of the ARF

The ARF continues to serve as the foremost platform in the Asia-Pacific region for constructive dialogue on peace and security matters, reinforcing ASEAN's central role in shaping the regional security architecture. Aligned with its core objectives of building confidence, promoting preventive diplomacy, and facilitating the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the ARF complements and reinforces the initiatives of both the East Asia Summit and the ADMM-Plus. In addition to its formal processes, the ARF has also acknowledged the importance of informal exchanges through the ARF-Experts Eminent Persons (ARF EEPs) system, which convenes distinguished professionals and experts in specific areas, to provide innovative, practical inputs to advance the Forum's overarching goals.

The defence-related platforms within the ARF have contributed to a deeper understanding of the diverse perspectives on regional security concerns among its members. The ARF Defence Officials Dialogue (DOD) and ARF Security Policy Conference (ASPC) have been instrumental in providing a platform for defence and military officials to establish networks, foster confidence, and promote mutual trust. Moreover, the ARF Heads of Defence Universities, Colleges, and Institutions Meeting (HDUCIM) has played a significant role in promoting best practices in military education and facilitating exchanges of research on security issues.

For Brunei Darussalam, sustained engagements in ARF mechanisms reaffirm its commitment to ASEAN-led multilateralism, reinforces partnerships with AMS and external partners, and enhances cooperative responses to both traditional and non-traditional security threats in the evolving geopolitical landscape of 2026.

A. National Contributions to Enhancing the ARF and Regional Security

During its co-chairmanship of the ARF DOD with Australia in May 2021, Brunei Darussalam suggested that the ARF DOD adopt a regular agenda item dedicated to sharing updates on other regional defence cooperation and security initiatives, including the ADMM and ADMM-Plus, and other relevant mechanisms aimed at promoting confidence-building and the exchange of best practices. This suggestion, aligned with the Guide to ARF Processes, Procedures, Practical and Protocol and the ARF Ha Noi Plan of Action II, continues to guide Brunei Darussalam's engagement in 2025-2026 by supporting practical defence and security cooperation and reinforcing synergy between the ARF and ADMM-Plus frameworks.

Brunei Darussalam's active participation across multiple ARF platforms underscores its ongoing commitment to fostering dialogue, consultations, and mutual understanding among member states. In the context of evolving and uncertain regional security challenges in 2025–2026, Brunei Darussalam emphasises the importance of sustained engagement at both bilateral and multilateral levels to strengthen cooperative mechanisms, enhance trust, and collectively address emerging threats. By contributing to ARF processes and advocating for practical initiatives, Brunei Darussalam also continues to support ASEAN-led regional security architecture and the promotion of peace, stability, and resilience across the Asia-Pacific region.

B. Future of ARF

Looking ahead, the ARF continues to play a crucial role in promoting peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region by supporting political, security, and economic processes for its member states and the broader regional environment. It has been instrumental in capacity building, fostering mutual trust through Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), and facilitating dialogue among the Foreign Ministers and senior officials of its member states, thereby by maintaining a secure regional environment amid increasing external challenges. Brunei Darussalam views the ARF as an essential platform to enhance dialogue, trust-building, and preventive diplomacy, particularly in the context of evolving geopolitical and non-traditional security threats.

Brunei Darussalam encourages the ARF to pursue its capacity-building efforts while reviewing its expanding activities and scope to avoid redundancy and streamline thematic contributions. Recognising the growing significance of non-traditional security challenges, Brunei Darussalam advocates giving greater attention to issues such as climate-related risks, cybersecurity, responsible use of AI, pandemic response, and other emerging threats that have implications for regional stability.



Cambodia

1) Overview of the Regional Security Environment

The international security environment remains highly uncertain and increasingly complex. Competition among major powers has intensified, the global economy is experiencing fragmentation, technological rivalries are escalating, and regional conflicts continue to challenge the effectiveness of multilateral governance and international law.

Adherence to international law—particularly the principles of state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and peaceful dispute resolution—is increasingly influenced by national security priorities, domestic political considerations, and strategic interests.

From a global geopolitical perspective, the world is evolving toward an unstable multipolar system, marked by the emergence of influential powers both regionally and globally, particularly in Asia. Intensified strategic competition among major powers is reshaping the global order, fragmenting economic and technological systems, heightening security tensions, and posing challenges to multilateral cooperation.

Meanwhile, middle powers are seeking to expand or maintain their influence at both regional and global levels. The Asia-Pacific region remains the central arena of geopolitical competition, with strategic significance across economic, trade, military, and technological domains. Numerous hotspots continue to pose significant risks to regional peace and stability. Rising military activities—both regional and extra-regional—coupled with economic and technological tensions, have heightened security concerns, prompting states to strengthen their military capabilities and prepare for nuclear deterrence—a worrying trend.

Southeast Asia, positioned at the heart of the Indo-Pacific, faces growing pressures. ASEAN's longstanding role as a stabilizing force is increasingly challenged by major power competition. The evolving nature of multilateralism, along with changes in U.S. engagement in certain international institutions, has further constrained the capacity of global governance to address contemporary challenges. While multilateral frameworks remain important, states are increasingly navigating the balance between domestic priorities and international commitments.

Amid this complex and evolving geopolitical landscape, it is essential to uphold the principles of sovereignty, independence, and cooperation for all states. Cambodia emphasizes the importance of multilateralism within the framework of international and ASEAN-led mechanisms to foster cooperative mechanisms that deliver mutual benefits, supporting enduring peace, security, and prosperity.

2) National Security and Defence Policy

Cambodia prioritizes border defence, addressing challenges from land demarcation, maritime concerns, and cross-border issues such as the pandemic. The focal points include enhancing political and security dialogue, conducting joint exercises, and developing infrastructure along border areas. The Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) focuses on diplomacy and military preparedness, modernizing its forces and equipment.

Secondly, Cambodia emphasizes internal security, countering subversion and remaining vigilant against terrorism without becoming a target. As stipulated by former Defence Minister Samdech Pichey Sena Tea Banh, he emphasized adopting a preventative approach rather than combating terrorism head-on. Cambodia cooperates internationally, sharing information to prevent extremism and address cybersecurity and emerging technological threats. The RCAF also aims to enhance preparedness in responding to natural disasters as well as pandemics.

Over the next decade, the RCAF will undergo military reforms to refine its structure, command and control systems, personnel management, budget, defence industries, and training.

Lastly, the RCAF is dedicated to enhancing defence cooperation and international security through partnerships based on independence, neutrality, and mutual respect. The RCAF intends to bolster bilateral and multilateral relations through defence diplomacy, supporting regional security frameworks like the ADMM, ADMM Plus, and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Having transitioned from receiving to contributing peacekeeping forces globally, Cambodia emphasizes women's participation in peace operations and has contributed to de-mining and peacekeeping efforts, showcasing its commitment to humanitarian aid and global contributions.

The global geostrategic landscape is in a constant state of fluctuation and remains fragile, requiring vigilant monitoring, assessment, and recommendations due to rapid developments in both traditional and non-traditional security situations. Currently, the region and the world are facing significant challenges, with conflicts and tensions escalating in various areas such as Europe, the Middle East, and the Asia-Pacific. This underscores the importance of a proactive and informed approach to understanding and navigating the complexities of the international security environment.

To ensure that Cambodia remains in step with these evolving dynamics and concurrently in sync with the 7th mandate of the Royal Government of Cambodia's (RGC) Pentagonal Strategy, the Ministry of National Defence of Cambodia is in the process of formulating the Defence Strategic Update 2026 to ensure that Cambodia's defence posture is adaptive to the changing environment.

3) Cambodia's Contributions to Regional Security

i. Counterterrorism

Terrorism poses a threat to social order and global security. It is an international issue that is interconnected across the world, including in our region. Terrorism has no borders and represents a concern for leaders and people worldwide. Cambodia has taken important steps to combat terrorism. The fight against terrorism requires cooperation and coordination at both national and international levels. Although the global security landscape has been affected by factors such as climate change and global crises, leading to shifts in security dynamics, terrorism continues to occur in various regions around the world. Cambodia, too, cannot guarantee absolute safety in all areas, and terrorists may target our country to carry out activities, train forces, and create instability in certain regions. Counterterrorism efforts have therefore re-emerged as a priority. The National Counterterrorism Special Forces Command stands ready at all times, both in training and operations, continuously strengthening knowledge and skills to respond to any potential incidents and to ensure 100% safety for the population.

Efforts are being made to promote research, risk assessment, and consideration of all forms of terrorism. International terrorist organizations have evolved significantly, adopting new plans, more complex structures, and causing indiscriminate destruction. We have organized national and international exercises with our partners to enhance skills, information sharing, and joint operational capabilities. These efforts aim to ensure regional peace by preventing terrorist activities and combating terrorism in order to maintain peace, stability, and security, while promoting regional and global cooperation.

To respond to terrorism threats, the RGC has implemented several key measures, including gathering and sharing intelligence with national and international partners. The government supports partners at all levels in countering various forms of extremism through educational programs and community support initiatives. It promotes "soft approach" strategies to instil positive values, ensure inclusive participation of local communities regardless of religion, ethnicity, or race, and encourage information sharing, open dialogue, and mutual understanding. These measures help protect citizens from radicalization.

Maritime security has also been strengthened through enhancing the capacity of the National Committee for Maritime Security (NCMS) and maritime counterterrorism units. This includes joint training, exercises, workshops, information-sharing sessions, and various training programs. These activities ensure that Cambodia's counterterrorism forces are equipped with improved knowledge and skills. Modernization has been undertaken in both training plans and equipment, in cooperation with partner countries, through joint exercises aimed at reform and updates based on evolving situations, to effectively respond to and manage changing conditions or unforeseen incidents. Measures have also been implemented to improve land and maritime border security, along with close cooperation with partners to strengthen responses to transnational terrorism. This includes monitoring and tracking terrorist movements, activities, and networks, as well as providing logistical support and resources.

To date, Cambodia is capable of conducting fully independent training and operations among its special operations forces. Operational capacity has been enhanced to enable simultaneous responses nationwide, allowing effective management of unexpected situations that require immediate deployment.

At the same time, the government actively participates in cultural, traditional, and religious

events within communities to demonstrate its full support for all citizens with equal rights and freedoms. All people are considered part of one society within the same nation, participating in traditional ceremonies, cultural events, and religious observances. This approach ensures that all citizens feel their cultures and traditions are fully respected and recognized in the country.

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

In 2025 and early 2026, the Kingdom of Cambodia continued to take proactive steps in building national capacity and strengthening international cooperation to prevent the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and enhance regional security. The key achievements are categorized into two main areas as follows:

a. Domestic Activities and Capacity Building (National Level)

Cambodia hosted and organized numerous essential programs, workshops, and training exercises, spearheaded by the National Authority for the Prohibition of Chemical, Nuclear, Biological and Radiological Weapons (NACW) in collaboration with national and international partner institutions. These events saw the active participation of hundreds of inter-ministerial experts, regional countries, and various international organizations, including:

- **Implementation of UNSCR 1540:** The Kingdom of Cambodia is actively advancing the preparation of its National Action Plan (NAP) to ensure the effective and comprehensive implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (UNSCR 1540). Alongside drafting this document, Cambodia organized a national workshop in April 2025, along with various consultative meetings, to meetings, to gather inputs and build the capacity of relevant officials across national institutions.
- **Cooperation with the EXBS Program and Drafting the WMD-STM Law:** Cambodia has been strengthening its close cooperation with the Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) Program of the U.S. Department of State. A significant milestone is the joint effort in drafting the **Weapons of Mass Destruction Strategic Trade Management (WMD-STM) Law**. Furthermore, Cambodia organized crucial meetings, training programs, workshops, and study visits related to the drafting of this law, notably in September 2025 and February 2026.
- **Biosecurity:** The NACW has placed high priority on establishing robust legal frameworks. This included organizing a workshop on the biosecurity legal framework (under Project 81), a workshop on drafting biosecurity legislation in Cambodia (November 2025), and the practical implementation of the National Register of Controlled Biological Agents (NRCB) at the Ministry of National Defencse (March 2026).
- **Medical Preparedness:** Cambodia hosted a consultation and discussion visit for the implementation of Project 98 of the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence (EU CBRN CoE Project 98) on "Strengthening CBRN Medical Emergency Preparedness and Response in Southeast Asia," in June 2025.
- **Cooperation and Nuclear Security:** Cambodia has 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), receiving a familiarization visit from the NSDD team in March 2026. Additionally, Cambodia organized an inter-agency table-top exercise on capacity building for preparedness,

monitoring, and response to incidents involving the illicit trafficking of radiological and nuclear materials in October 2025.

b. 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:

- **ASEAN Framework and Counter-Terrorism:** 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) in Thailand.
- **Prevention of Chemical and Biological Weapons:** 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, Cambodia 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.
- **Cooperation with EU CBRN CoE:** 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 (TEST - Table-top and field Exercises, Simulation, Training) meeting in Laos, the closing conference of Project 81 in Viet Nam, and the regional meeting of Project 98 in Malaysia.
- **Advanced Specialized Training:** Sent officials to attend a CBRN Train the Trainer Course on operations and evaluation in Slovakia, a course on Industrial Safety in Ports Areas, and a Regional Radionuclide Workshop and Integrated Training for National Data Centres (NDCs) in Malaysia.

Cambodia's Commitment: In this spirit, the Kingdom of Cambodia maintains a steadfast stance and remains committed to actively engaging with the international community, organizations, institutions, and development partners in preventing the proliferation of 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 fully contribute 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.

iii. Transnational Crime

a. Overview:

- **Transnational crime** remains a common concern and a complex challenge in the Southeast Asian region, including Cambodia. To date, the prevalence of such crimes has not declined. Transnational crime poses a serious threat to the stability, security, economic development, and public order of every country in the region. Despite ongoing cooperation among regional countries to suppress and prevent these crimes, they continue to evolve along national borders.

- Moreover, criminal groups have become increasingly organized, operating through sophisticated structures and extensive networks. Globalization and regional integration have further facilitated the cross-border movement of people, finances, and technology, making such activities easier and harder to control. In addition, the rapid advancement of information technology has enhanced criminals' ability to communicate and coordinate their operations effectively.

- Cambodia, situated at the heart of the Mekong subregion, is both a source, transit, and destination country for various forms of transnational crime. Its geographic location and economic openness make it vulnerable to cross-border criminal activities.

b. Major Types of Transnational Crime:

There are various types of transnational crimes; the following are some notable examples:

- **Online Scams:** Scams in Southeast Asia have become a mix of cross-border crime, human trafficking, and online fraud, where victims—often tricked by fake job offers—are forced to work in scam centres running romance, phishing, and cryptocurrency scams. The growing use of AI and deepfake technology has made these crimes more advanced, reducing public trust in online systems and creating serious challenges for governments. In Cambodia, many scams take place in compounds run by organized crime groups that use foreign victims as forced workers in scam call centres scams, making the country both a source and transit point in the wider regional scam network. As of 25 February 2026, Cambodia has deported over 10,000 foreigners and shut down more than 200 sites, disrupting online fraud networks. While some ringleaders fled and are being pursued, over 210,000 foreigners have voluntarily left the country.

- **Cybercrime:** Cybercrime has emerged as a major concern in the information technology era. It includes activities such as spreading fake news about legitimate governments, hacking to steal sensitive data from state institutions and private companies, and conducting cyber fraud—all of which cause significant financial losses. At present, cybercrime has become one of the most pressing and dangerous global issues.

- **Illegal Arms Smuggling:** Illegal arms smuggling remains a serious concern that requires close monitoring, particularly amid the growing threats of terrorism and separatism. Weapons obtained through illicit trade may be used by terrorist groups to launch attacks against government forces, posing grave risks to national and regional security.

- **Drug Trafficking:** Drug trafficking continues to be a persistent challenge, especially in areas along the Mekong River. This is due to the flow of narcotics originating from the Golden Triangle region—where the borders of Thailand, Myanmar, and Laos meet. Authorities in the region have intercepted increasing quantities of narcotics intended for distribution abroad. Cambodia has been exploited by international criminal networks as a production, processing, and transit point for various forms of drugs via land, sea, and postal routes. Border provinces, particularly in the northeast, are frequently involved in such activities despite ongoing crackdowns and the dismantling of major criminal organizations. Moreover, criminals often exploit small and less monitored entry points to cross borders illegally, making control efforts increasingly difficult. In 2025, the National Authority for Combating Drugs (NACD) conducted 10,743 operations nationwide, seized 5.89 tons of all types of drugs, 42.81 tons of chemical compounds, arrested 27,884 suspects, and closed 12 commercial centres.

- **Human Trafficking and Exploitation:** Human trafficking and exploitation remain significant challenges in the region. Tens of thousands of victims are trafficked across borders and deceived by brokers into working without pay. Many women are subjected to sexual exploitation and forced to work under harsh conditions and excessive hours. In the first nine months of 2025, Cambodian authorities detained over 200 suspects for human trafficking and exploitation.

- **Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing:** Money laundering and terrorism financing are common concerns both regionally and globally. Criminal syndicates and terrorist organizations often move their illicit funds through cross-border transactions, trade, and business operations to disguise their origins. Cambodia is considered one of the vulnerable countries to such activities; therefore, the government has been actively monitoring and strengthening measures to combat money laundering and terrorism financing.

c. Cambodia's Efforts and Measures:

1. The Government of Cambodia has initiated comprehensive national efforts to combat online scams, including the following measures:

    - On 13 March 2026, the Council of Ministers approved a draft law on combating online scams to strengthen the legal response to such crimes. The law aims to introduce criminal measures to enhance the effectiveness of efforts against technology-based fraud, while reinforcing public security and order and improving cooperation in addressing these offenses. The draft is expected to be submitted to the National Assembly soon.

    - On 4 March 2026, Prime Minister Hun Manet has announced a decisive shift in national policy from "prevention" to the "complete elimination" of online fraud centres, setting an ambitious deadline of April 2026 to eradicate these operations.

    - On 5 January 2026, Cambodia issued **Sub-Decree No. 03** ANKR.BK **on the Management of Safety and Security in Concentrated Residential Areas**, aimed at combating online scams, illegal gambling, and human trafficking, particularly by cracking down on illegal foreign occupants. This regulation imposes strict obligations on property owners and authorizes severe penalties for non-compliance, including for public officials.

    - In early 2025, Prime Minister Hun Manet established the Inter-Ministerial Task Force Committee, a 24-member high-level body coordinating Cambodia's national anti-scam strategy across law enforcement, cybersecurity, international cooperation, public awareness, and rapid response.

    - On 20 February, the RGC also launched the Commission to Combat Online Scams, chaired by the Prime Minister, to translate policy into action, coordinate nationwide crackdowns, mobilize forces, and enforce strict accountability against online scams.

    - Since 2024, the Ministry of Interior's Commission for the Suppression of Online Fraud has coordinated central and local authorities to block fraudulent websites, dismantle scam networks, prosecute or deport offenders, and engage provincial administrations in nationwide cybercrime enforcement.

    - The Cambodian RGC has also established the National Committee for Counter Trafficking (NCCT) alongside specialized anti-cybercrime task forces under the Ministry of Interior to address the growing threat of online scams.

2. Cambodia has established both legal and institutional mechanisms to prevent and combat cybercrime, including:

   - **Digital Government Policy 2022–2035** (adopted on 28 January 2022) — focuses on developing digital government infrastructure and strengthening cybersecurity.
   - **Draft Law on Anti-Cybercrime** — currently under preparation to provide a comprehensive legal framework against cyber offences.
   - **Sub-Decree on the National Internet Gateway (NIG)** — entered into force on 16 February 2021 to enhance state capacity in maintaining and protecting internet safety and security.
   - **Department of Anti-Cybercrime** — established under the General Commissariat of National Police, Ministry of Interior, to investigate and suppress cybercrimerelated offences.

3. To address the threat of illegal arms trade, Cambodia has implemented the following measures:

   - Strict enforcement of inspection and monitoring of goods at target zones and border checkpoints across the country.
   - Enhanced regional cooperation to share intelligence and information on suspected cases and individuals involved in arms smuggling.
   - Be vigilant about sources and purposes that could provide criminals with weapons to illegally trade to various destinations.
   - Improved enforcement of laws on arms control, explosive substances, and ammunition to ensure compliance and accountability.

4. Recognizing the persistent challenges of drug-related crimes, especially along the Mekong region, Cambodia has undertaken the following actions:

   - Strengthened detection capacity through provision of modern equipment for law enforcement institutions.
   - Strict law enforcement and prosecution of offenders involved in drug trafficking.
   - Public awareness and education campaigns, particularly targeting youth, on the risks and harmful effects of drug abuse.
   - Control of dual-use chemicals and drafting of a new law to regulate chemical substances that could be used in drug production.
   - Enhanced international cooperation with neighbouring countries to combat cross-border drug trafficking.

5. Cambodia continues to combat human trafficking through prevention, law enforcement, and regional cooperation, including:

   - Raising public awareness on labour, immigration, and marriage laws, and on the risks associated with irregular migration.
   - Strict enforcement of immigration laws and penalties for offenders in accordance with national legislation.
   - Enhanced border management and close monitoring of corridors with neighbouring countries to prevent illegal crossings and trafficking activities.

6. To counter financial crimes and terrorism financing, Cambodia has established robust legal and institutional frameworks:

   - **Law on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism** — promulgated on 27

June 2020, this law establishes a legal framework for the effective prevention, detection, and prosecution of illicit activities conducted by organized crime syndicates and terrorist groups.

- **National Task Force** formed on 18 January 2022 by the Ministry of Justice to coordinate actions against money laundering, terrorism financing, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Cambodia has actively strengthened its cooperation with ASEAN and international partners to combat transnational crime through policy coordination, intelligence sharing, and operational planning via mechanisms like AMMTC, SOMTC, and ASEANAPOL. Cambodia engages in Mekong regional initiatives, joint law enforcement operations, training programs, and workshops to enhance capacity in tackling drug trafficking, human trafficking, cybercrime, arms smuggling, and money laundering. Cambodia also participates in ASEAN-level dialogues on cybercrime and human trafficking, signs bilateral agreements with countries like China and Thailand for crossborder enforcement and extradition, and collaborates with Interpol and UN agencies to improve victim identification and strengthen its law enforcement response to complex scam operations.

iv. Humanitarian Assistant and Disaster Relief (HADR)

Recently, the global security environment has become increasingly complex due to a range of evolving both traditional and non-traditional threats, including man-made disasters and natural disasters, which are further intensified by wars, conflicts, terrorism, transnational crime, cybercrime, online scam, human trafficking, drug trafficking, and most importantly geopolitical tensions between major world powers. Whereas natural disasters, such as climate change, pandemic diseases, typhoons, hurricanes, floods, landslides, earthquakes, forest fires and droughts continue to be prevalent and intensify. These phenomena exert greater challenges for many nation states across the globe. Access to food, water, medications, shelters and even energy for daily survival will continue to be a major problem. Compounded with the major power rivalries and conflicts, such as the Russia-Ukraine war, United States/Israel-Iran war, Pakistan-Afghanistan war and other civil wars (Syria, Myanmar, Sudan); the world has continually been prone to become more vulnerable, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA).

Moreover, in the Asia-Pacific region, security concerns are shaped by strategic competition and territorial disputes. Certain tensions continue to affect the stability in Southeast Asia, particularly the South China Sea dispute, cross-strait tensions, Myanmar civil war, and Thailand-Cambodia border conflicts. Additionally, Southeast Asia is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world, frequently experiencing traditional and non-traditional threats that have increased at an alarming rate. In this context, the economic prosperity, security stability, and the wellbeing of our peoples have been significantly affected. This combination of security tensions and recurring disasters highlights the need for regional cooperation mechanisms that can address both traditional and non-traditional threats, that exceed the capabilities of individual states, in an orderly manner in providing humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief responses.

Even though, Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) is no longer a major threat to the region and the world, the RGC has been continuously working endlessly with its ASEAN Member States (AMS), civil authorities, national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to enhance cooperation amongst defence forces of AMS in cross-border pandemic containment, initiate and update new mechanisms, guidelines and regulations on disaster management. In addition, the RCAF and especially the Royal Cambodian Gendarmerie (RCG) have been

actively working with the Commission for Combatting Online Scams (CCOS) to combat cybercrime, online fraud and human trafficking. The RCAF and RCG have also implemented and participated through both bilateral and multilateral training exercises on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) with AMS as well as regional militaries in line with the ASEAN Charter, agreements, protocols and other existing mechanisms. The Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia is committed to support the joint defence cooperative activities administered by AMS and regional militaries. To further contribute to regional, national and international security, the Royal Cambodian Government, the RCAF and the RCG have always been carrying out activities and measures in disaster relief operations through the implementation of national legislations and national policies; certainly, through the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM).

In line with the ASEAN Civil-Military Coordination (CIMIC) visions, the RCAF continue to participate in Command Post Exercises, Field Training Exercises (CPX/FTX), workshops and seminars. Based on the vision of the ASEAN CIMIC, it will undoubtedly reinforce the capacity of our armed forces in performing humanitarian and disaster relief operations. For instance, recently the RCAF and the RCG had participated in the bilateral Dragon Gold HADR Table-Top Exercise and Field Training Exercise with the Chinese People Liberation Army. Furthermore, in the near future, the RCAF and the RCG anticipate conducting the Angkor Sentinel with the U.S. Pacific-Command with both Table-top Exercises (TTX) and Field Training Exercises (FTX). As a result, by continuing our efforts to work with the U.S. Pacific Command and implementing more frequent pragmatic cooperative defence activities, the armed forces of the two countries will undoubtedly strengthen their relationship through the building of trust, confidence, professionalism, and experience sharing.

In either case, AMS' military will possess the capabilities, skill sets, and intellectual knowledge to respond to these challenges while anticipating and preparing for those of tomorrow. In order to succeed, we must harness and integrate all aspects respectively and work accordingly with allies, friends and partners to prepare for disaster management protocols and readiness. These are key elements to the strategic blueprint for the ASEAN Community to hedge against this uncertainty as well as the key element to promote a successful outcome and turning vision into reality.

In conclusion, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) has become an essential component of regional security cooperation in Southeast Asia. We strongly believe that promoting closer defence cooperation and implementing more pragmatic defence cooperative exercises among the AMS through either bilateral or multilateral training exercises would significantly enhance our military's tactical, operational, and strategic capability which eventually help strengthen our national and regional's security, and the world's security as a whole.

v. Maritime Security

The Royal Cambodian Navy (RCN) has played a pivotal role in safeguarding Cambodia's peace, stability and prosperity by deterring all maritime threats to Cambodian interests. The RCN has continued to proactively cooperate and collaborate with its neighbouring countries and regional partners through peaceful means to fully contribute its responsibilities for regional maritime security and stability and peace. In 2025, the RCN as well as the NCMS of the Kingdom of Cambodia actively participated in various regional mechanisms such as ADMM, ADMM-Plus EWG on MS and related meeting.

At the regional level, the RCN has actively participated in regular regional mechanisms such as the ASEAN Navy Chief's Meeting (ANCM),

ASEAN Multilateral Naval Exercise (AMNEX) and many other activities. More importantly, on August 2025, the RCN hosted the 3rd ASEAN Navy Training Experience Exchange Program (ANTEEP) which shared practical experience as well as to strengthened regional trust and interoperability amongst ASEAN naval personnel. Additionally, the RCN also proactively promotes young leadership programs by encouraging and participating in regional activities such as the Emerging Leadership Interaction Program under the WPNS, contributing to ANCM Young Officer Interaction (ANYOI) under the ANCM program, ASEAN Cadet Sails and Indo-Pacific Cadet Sails Program hosted by Indonesia.

In the spirit of good neighbourliness, the RCN has actively engaged with its neighbouring countries within the Gulf of Thailand by conducting regular and peaceful joint patrol with the Viet Nam People's Navy to ensure the safety and security at sea of the life of Cambodian and Viet Namese fishermen and mariners around the historical water. Furthermore, the RCN and the Viet Nam People's Navy as well as NCMS and the Viet Nam Coast Guard continue to exchange maritime information regularly to strengthening mutual trust and confidence amongst each other.

The RCN is currently and will continue to resolve maritime disputes/disagreements through peaceful means with neighbouring countries by using recognized international law and regulations and reject all unilateral claims that could provoke or escalate the situation. The RCN fully commits to regional maritime security and safety by implementing confident building measures by actively participating in regional maritime events such as the ANCM, ASEAN-Plus maritime exercises-namely-ASEAN-U.S. Multilateral Exercise (AUMX). Moreover, the RCN is currently working with ASEAN, regional and international security partners to counter illegal maritime crimes such as IUU fishing, smuggling, and especially scams, which could lead to illegal human trafficking and labour issues. Additionally, the RCN is also working with regional and international security partners on protecting Critical Underwater Infrastructure which are critical assets under our maritime domain.

Cambodia remains steadfast in its commitment to the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) aims: to accelerate economic growth, social progress, and cultural development while promoting regional peace based on the rule of law and United Nations principles. This includes a rules-based community of shared values and norms; a cohesive, peaceful, stable, and resilient region with shared responsibility for comprehensive security; and a dynamic and outwardlooking region in an increasingly integrated and interdependent world.

The NCMS is the lead agency for Cambodia's maritime strategy, aligning national operations with ASEAN's broader goals for regional peace and stability. It translates high-level APSC goals into functional maritime operations, focusing on current priorities such as the recent update on the ratification of UNCLOS. Cambodia underscores that upholding freedom of navigation and overflight is essential for regional trade and security and for avoiding military conflict over overlapping claims, thereby promoting the "Regional Peace" envisioned in the APSC. Furthermore, the Prime Minister of Cambodia has vowed to completely "clear out" online scam operations in Cambodia, declaring them a "black economy" that brings no benefit to the nation. He emphasized permanent, intensified crackdowns rather than seasonal efforts, stating, "scams have no place in a 'white economy'; Cambodia will eliminate them completely."

The NCMS as Cambodia's national maritime security body responsible for coordinating inter-agency policy implementation, fostering legal frameworks across government, and strengthening international partnerships. The NCMS prioritizes combating transnational maritime crimes such as Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, piracy, drug smuggling, human trafficking. In maritime security fora, the NCMS is an active

participant in the ADMM, ADMM-Plus, AMF, EAMF, and ARF inter-sessional meetings through enhanced regional cooperation and capacity building. We also emphasize strengthening Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) and information sharing for effective threat response, while promoting comprehensive Search and Rescue (SAR) cooperation to improve regional responsiveness. Cambodia continues to work closely with other partners to promote constructive and collective participation through intelligence exchange and interactive platforms by stationing an International Liaison Officer (ILO) at the Information Fusion Centre (IFC). The NCMS translates high-level ASEAN peace goals into functional operations. Whether it is combating IUU fishing, drug smuggling, or piracy, we are moving from seasonal crackdowns to permanent, intensified vigilance. We do not work in isolation. Through the Information Fusion Centre and our active roles in ADMM-Plus and the ARF, Cambodia is your steadfast partner in intelligence and action.

Peace is not just the absence of conflict, it is the presence of the rule of law. By upholding UNCLOS and strengthening our SAR capabilities, we ensure that our seas remain a bridge for trade, not a barrier to security. Let us continue to build a region that is not only dynamic and outward-looking but fundamentally resilient against all threats, both traditional and non-traditional alike.

4) Role of ASEAN Regional Forum

Cambodia recognizes the ARF as a vital platform for dialogue and cooperation in promoting peace, stability, and security in the Asia-Pacific region. From Cambodia's perspective, the ARF plays a crucial role in fostering mutual trust among ARF Participants through confidence building measures and preventive diplomacy, while also addressing both traditional and non-traditional security challenges, including terrorism, transnational crime, cyber threats, and humanitarian emergencies.

The Forum's inclusive and multilateral nature enhances ASEAN Centrality and provides all participating countries, regardless of size, with meaningful opportunities to engage constructively in regional security discussions. At the same time, Cambodia acknowledges the evolving security landscape, where rapid technological advancements, cross-border threats, and complex geopolitical dynamics require greater operational effectiveness within the ARF.

In this regard, Cambodia supports efforts to reinforce the Forum's capacity for timely and practical responses, enhancing institutional mechanisms to ensure measurable outcomes, and fostering closer synergy with relevant frameworks, including the ADMM-Plus. Through these measures, Cambodia envisages an ARF that continues to serve as a dynamic and relevant instrument for sustaining peace, stability, and security in the region.

5) Information and Communications Technology Security

Cambodia continues to harness the transformative potential of digital technology while remaining vigilant against increasingly sophisticated cyber threats. The RGC actively engages in regional and global mechanisms to strengthen a resilient digital ecosystem, mitigate cross-border risks, and build long-term public trust.

In terms of legal frameworks, the RGC, through the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MPTC), is drafting a Law on Cybersecurity for the protection of Cambodia's cyberspace. A robust cybersecurity regime will build confidence and trust in digital technology systems supporting the development of Cambodia's digital economy and society. The draft law, expected to be enacted this year, will enable the RGC to designate critical information infrastructure and raise their cybersecurity standards, ensuring the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of their systems. In addition, a draft Law on Personal Data Protection is under review by the MPTC and will be subsequently submitted to the Office of the Council of Ministers in the first half of 2026. The Draft Law will complement the Draft Law on Cybersecurity by mandating security safeguards, thereby ensuring that operators implement appropriate security measures against data breach and cyber threats with responsibility, transparency and ethical conduct.

Furthermore, the RGC, through the Ministry of Interior, is also drafting a Law on Cybercrime that will enhance the capabilities of competent authorities to combat cybercrime. To safeguard the national digital economy and protect citizens from the rising threat of cyber-enabled financial crimes, Cambodia has recently enacted the Law on Combating Online Scams. This initiative strengthens the capacity of national authorities to detect, disrupt, and dismantle sophisticated fraud networks, while enhancing public trust in digital platforms.

Cambodia continues to prepare robust strategies and policies, aligned with national priorities and determined foundational security measures, including, Common Guidelines on Cybersecurity Management, Data Governance Framework, Cloud-first Policy, and National AI Strategy.

MPTC has also issued Internal Regulations on Cybersecurity Management in June 2025 to strengthen the protection its digital infrastructure and the operation of digital platforms. These regulations can be adopted and used in other ministries. Moreover, over the past years, MPTC, with the support of various partners, has conducted the Cambodia Cybersecurity Maturity Assessment, and formulated the Cybersecurity Roadmap to understand the cybersecurity landscape and direction. Also, through the support of the Government of Japan, the Security Operation Centre (SOC) of MPTC has been modernized and upgraded to monitor, prevent, protect, and respond to cyber-attacks against MPTC's system, as well as other line ministries.

In recognizing the cross-border nature of cyber threats, Cambodia actively engages in multilateral cooperation as a member of ASEAN. Through platforms such as the ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee, Cambodia promotes regional coordination, cross-sectoral collaboration, and collective efforts to combat transnational cybercrime and strengthen cybersecurity in the region.

Over the past seventeen years, Cambodia has consistently made significant national contributions to the successful collaborative and cooperative efforts of ASEAN-Japan in the realm of cybersecurity. This cooperation encompasses a wide range of strategic actions, such as joint awareness initiatives, remote cyber exercises, table-top exercises (TTX), critical information infrastructure protection (CIIP), voluntary mutual notification, capacity building, and ASEAN-Japan online communities aimed at enhancing regional readiness.

In June 2025, Cambodia conducted a capacity-building program on international cyber law with support from Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), strengthening expertise in the application of international legal frameworks in cyberspace. During the same month, Cambodia hosted the 16th ASEAN Network Security Action Council (ANSAC) Meeting on 9 June, where AMS discussed national cybersecurity developments, capacity-building initiatives, the operationalization of the ASEAN Regional Computer Emergency Response Team, and progress under the ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy 2021–2025. This was followed by the Workshop on the Development of the ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy (ACCS) 2026–2030 on 10–11 June, which provided a platform to address emerging threats, enhance incident response mechanisms, and shape ASEAN's strategic cybersecurity direction.

In October 2024 and 2025, Cambodia and the U.S. co-chaired the 5th and 6th ASEAN-U.S. Cyber Policy Dialogue, held as featured high-level engagements alongside the 9th and 10th Singapore International Cyber Week (SICW). This strategic dialogue served as a critical platform for ASEAN and the U.S. to address evolving regional and international cyber threats. Through this leadership role, Cambodia facilitated the exchange of progress on cybersecurity policies and strengthened the collective framework for capacity building and technical expertise. Cambodia remains committed to bridging regional and international cooperation with global partners to enhance the security of the digital ecosystem and ensure a stable, rules-based environment in cyberspace with a shared vision of "a peaceful, secure and resilient regional cyberspace."

In March 2026, Cambodia conducted the "Cybersecurity Training for Digital Government 2026," equipping government officials with expertise in cybersecurity governance, regional trends, and incident response. This initiative reflects Cambodia's continued investment in strengthening digital government and human capital as a core pillar of national development. Aligned with the Digital Economy and Society Policy Framework 2021–2035 and the Digital Government Policy 2022–2035, the training enhanced the capacity of officials across ministries and institutions to address evolving cybersecurity challenges. Through these efforts, Cambodia ensures that the national digital transformation is supported by a highly skilled workforce, fostering national stability and public trust in the digital era.

In April 2026, the MPTC, in collaboration with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), hosted the Cambodia–UNIDIR Cyber Capacity-Building and Policy Training in Phnom Penh. The program enhanced awareness of evolving national and regional ICT challenges and equipped officials with the knowledge needed to strengthen resilience against emerging cyber threats. This initiative served as a vital platform for increasing awareness of evolving national and regional ICT challenges while equipping officials with the specialized knowledge required to strengthen resilience against multi-vector cyber threats.

Under the technical cooperation project "The Project for Improvement of Cyber Resilience," supported by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Cambodia continues to conduct training and awareness-raising activities for the general public and cybersecurity personnel in both public and private sectors.

Internally, MPTC, through the Cambodia Academy of Digital Technology, has trained more than 400 government officials in charge of cybersecurity from various line ministries.

Various capability building programs strengthen cybersecurity capacity, enhance preparedness for responding to cybersecurity threats and implementation of security measures, as well as to make Cambodia's cybersecurity landscape more in line with internationally accepted standards.



China

I. Overview of the Security Environment of the Asia-Pacific

In 2025, Asia maintained overall stability and rapid development, serving as a global growth engine and an oasis of peace and stability. The regional economy sustained steady growth momentum, and regional cooperation continued to advance. China and ASEAN jointly signed the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area (CAFTA) 3.0 Upgrade Protocol, and the Leaders' Meeting of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) was convened again after a five-year interval. The underlying trend of good-neighborliness, friendship, and win-win cooperation among countries in the region remained unchanged. Regional hotspot issues were generally under control and remained on the track of political settlement. At the same time, uncertainties and unpredictable factors in the regional landscape increased. Certain countries outside the region continued to reinforce military presence in the region, impose arbitrary tariffs, and pursue "decoupling," disruption of industrial and supply chains, and "small yards, high fences." Some countries in the region pushed for military expansion and arms buildup in an attempt to break with post-war norms, posing threats to regional peace and stability. Non-traditional security threats, including terrorism and transnational crime, became increasingly acute.

Safeguarding peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific and promoting regional development and prosperity remain arduous tasks that call for greater joint efforts from all parties to uphold the UN-centered international system and the international order underpinned by international law, practice true multilateralism, and uphold the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. Efforts should be made to build a balanced, effective and sustainable security architecture, actively foster an Asian security model built on recognizing a common stake, seeking commonality despite differences, and championing dialogue and consultation, so as to safeguard the hard-won peace and stability in Asia and continue to contribute to peace, security, prosperity and progress of the region and the wider world.

II. China's Defense Policy and Multilateral Military Diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific Region

China firmly pursues a national defense policy that is defensive in nature. China's nature as a socialist country, its strategic choice to follow a path of peaceful development, its independent foreign policy of peace, and the peace-loving tradition of Chinese culture determine its unswerving commitment to the defensive national defense policy. Never seeking hegemony, expansion or spheres of influence is a salient feature of China's defense in the new era. When it comes to peace and security, no major country has a better record than China. In recent years, the Chinese military has been actively providing security public goods for the international community, including peacekeeping, maritime escort and epidemic response. History has proven and will continue to prove that the Chinese military remains a staunch force for world peace.

China conducts active defense. It adheres to the principles of defense, self-defense and post-strike response. China pursues coordinated progress of national defense and economic development, and maintains an appropriate scale of defense expenditure. In recent years, in a bid to safeguard China's sovereignty, security and development interests and to better fulfill China's international responsibilities and obligations as a major country, the Chinese government has in general kept a reasonable and steady growth of defense expenditure on the basis of sustained and sound economic and social development, so that its national defense capabilities and economic strength grow in sync. In 2026, RMB 1.94 trillion yuan is earmarked as defense expenditure in China's general public budget.

Through international military cooperation, the Chinese military contributes to defending China's sovereignty, security and development interests, to safeguarding world peace and stability, and to building a community with a shared future for humanity. The Chinese military faithfully acts on the Global Security Initiative (GSI). It strengthens exchanges and cooperation with Russia under existing bilateral and multilateral mechanisms, further deepening mutual trust between the two militaries; it maintains overall stability in military-to-military relations with the United States, and urges the US side to work with China in the same direction in implementing the common understandings reached by the two presidents, keeping lines of communication open, addressing disputes and differences properly, and strengthening crisis management; it actively conducts international cooperation on the implementation of arms control treaties, resolutely safeguards national strategic interests, and upholds global strategic stability. China sent a military delegation to the Shangri-La Dialogue and hosted the 12th Beijing Xiangshan Forum.

III. China's Efforts in Promoting Security in the Asia-Pacific

In the face of a volatile and turbulent international and regional landscape, China upholds the vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity, actively implements the GSI, and remains committed to the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. China engages in exchanges and cooperation with the international community to jointly address various traditional and non-traditional security challenges and provides viable solutions for improving global security governance and addressing the security dilemmas facing humanity. Under the guidance of the GSI, China actively explores and practices approaches with Chinese characteristics to resolving hotspot issues and promotes the building of an Asian security model built on recognizing a common stake, seeking commonality despite differences, and championing dialogue and consultation, thereby injecting stabilizing factors into peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region.

1. Relations and Security Cooperation with Major Countries (Organizations) in the Region

(1) China-ASEAN Cooperation

China always takes ASEAN as a priority in its neighborhood diplomacy. It firmly supports ASEAN's community building, supports ASEAN centrality in regional architecture, and supports ASEAN in playing an even greater role in regional and international affairs. China has organized friendly exchanges between defense think tanks and middle-aged and young military officers from China and ASEAN, actively participated in the exercises, training activities and assistance projects of various expert groups of the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), and helped ASEAN strengthen its capacity building in such fields as counterterrorism, demining, disaster relief and military medical science.

In October 2025, Premier Li Qiang attended the 28th China-ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He stressed that China and ASEAN countries should maintain unity and self-reliance with greater resolve, build greater synergy, remove external disturbances, defend their legitimate rights and interests through mutual support and coordinated action, and promote steady and sound economic growth by leveraging their complementary strengths and deepening cooperation. Premier Li noted that China stands ready to work with ASEAN countries to strengthen the alignment of development strategies, deliver on the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2026–2030), and continue advancing the building of an even closer China-ASEAN community with a shared future. First, to further consolidate strategic mutual trust. The two sides should strengthen strategic communication and properly handle differences. China will continue to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes between Cambodia and Thailand in the ASEAN Way. Efforts should be made to speed up consultations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) and strive for its early conclusion. Second, to promote deeper convergence of interests. The two sides should take the CAFTA 3.0 Upgrade Protocol as an opportunity to accelerate trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, and strengthen industrial integration and interconnection. China will continue to replenish the China-ASEAN cooperation fund. China stands ready to work with ASEAN countries to establish a China-ASEAN digital academy, a platform for AI cooperation, and a center for maritime development and technological cooperation, and deepen cooperation in transportation, digital economy, green economy, disaster prevention and mitigation, climate change and other areas. Third, to forge stronger people-to-people bonds.

China will work with ASEAN to hold a successful closing ceremony of the China-ASEAN Year of People-to-People Exchanges and designate 2026 as the China-ASEAN Year on the Fifth Anniversary of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, speed up the establishment of meeting mechanisms of tourism and education ministers of China and ASEAN countries, and make good use of the China-ASEAN Network of Academies on Governance and Public Administration and Think Tanks. China is ready to march forward together with ASEAN countries and promote the sustained and steady development of China-ASEAN cooperation.

(2) China-Russia Relations

China and Russia are each other's biggest neighbor and comprehensive strategic partner of coordination for the new era. As the world's two key major countries and permanent members of the UN Security Council, China and Russia enjoy a relationship grounded in a clear historical logic, driven by strong internal dynamics, and underpinned by profound civilization. It has become a fine example for major-country relations featuring lasting good-neighborliness and friendship, comprehensive strategic coordination, and mutually beneficial, win-win cooperation.

The year 2025 marked the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union and the World Anti-Fascist War. It was also the 80th anniversary of the founding of the UN. President Xi Jinping and President Vladimir Putin met in Moscow and Beijing respectively, and maintained close communication through phone calls, correspondence and other means, jointly steering China-Russia relations into a new stage of development. President Xi and President Putin jointly signed and issued the Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Further Deepening the China-Russia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Coordination for a New Era on the Occasion of the 80th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, the Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War, and the Founding of the UN. The two countries have maintained close coordination on the international stage, firmly upheld the UN-centered international system and the international order underpinned by international law, actively safeguarded peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, and made positive contributions to advancing an equal and orderly multipolar world and reforming and improving global governance.

(3) China-US Relations

In 2025, President Xi Jinping had four telephone conversations with US President Donald Trump and met with him in Busan, the Republic of Korea, in October. The two heads of state maintained good communication and reached a series of important common understandings, fostering overall stability and development of China-US relations, which was widely welcomed by both countries and the international community. President Xi pointed out that China and the US should be partners and friends. This is what history has taught us and what reality needs. The two countries do not always see eye to eye with each other, and it is normal to have frictions now and then; the key is to respect each other's core interests and major concerns and find a proper solution. The description of China–US cooperation benefiting both sides and confrontation hurting both sides reflects a common sense that has been repeatedly proven by experience, and the vision of China and the US helping each other succeed and prospering together is a tangible prospect within reach. The two sides should keep moving forward in the right direction on the basis of equality, respect and mutual benefit, lengthen the list of cooperation and shorten the list of problems, so as to make more positive progress, create new space for

China-US cooperation and bring more benefits to the people of both countries and the world.

In 2025, the US continued to contain and suppress China in the fields of economy, trade, and science and technology. It slapped high tariffs on China under various pretexts, stepped up restrictive measures against China in chips, artificial intelligence and data among others, and arbitrarily imposed sanctions on Chinese enterprises and individuals. China firmly opposes such actions and took resolute measures to safeguard its sovereignty, security and development interests. The economic and trade teams of the two sides had held five rounds of consultations and reached a series of common understandings on addressing respective concerns. Meanwhile, China and the US made some positive progress in areas such as diplomacy, military-to-military relations, economy and trade, counter-narcotics, law enforcement, and people-to-people and cultural exchanges. Law enforcement authorities of the two countries maintained communication and exchanges and carried out cooperation on issues such as the repatriation of illegal immigrants. President Xi's initiative of "inviting 50,000 young Americans to China on exchange and study programs in the next five years" delivered encouraging results, with more than 27,000 American youths coming to China under this initiative throughout the year.

(4) China-Japan Relations

China and Japan are close neighbors, and both are important countries in Asia and the world. Before November 2025, the two sides maintained the momentum of high-level exchanges. On the sidelines of the 32nd APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, President Xi Jinping met with Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi at the latter's request. In March 2025, Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Japan to attend the China-Japan-ROK Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting, on the sidelines of which he met with senior Japanese officials, specifically Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba (then in office) and Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya (then in office). Foreign Minister Wang Yi also co-chaired the Sixth China-Japan High-Level Economic Dialogue with Foreign Minister Iwaya.

On November 7, 2025, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi made erroneous remarks concerning Taiwan, insinuating the possibility of military intervention in the Taiwan Strait. These remarks constitute a gross interference in China's internal affairs, gravely violate the one-China principle, the spirit of the four political documents between China and Japan, and the basic norms governing international relations, and fundamentally undermine the political foundation of China-Japan relations. Despite China's solemn representations, the Japanese side refused to retract the remarks and openly emboldened "Taiwan independence" separatist forces. In essence, Takaichi's erroneous remarks use "the right of collective self-defense" as a pretext to pursue military expansion, interfere in China's internal affairs, and harm China's core interests. In recent years, Japan has significantly adjusted its security and defense policy, increased its defense spending year after year, revised the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, and has been developing long-range strike capabilities. These actions gravely violate Japan's own Constitution and domestic norms and undermine the institutional safeguards put in place after World War II to prevent the resurgence of Japanese militarism. Japan's neo-militarism is threatening regional peace and stability. The international community should remain highly vigilant and firmly oppose such developments. China has and will continue to take all necessary measures to firmly safeguard its national sovereignty and security as well as regional peace and stability.

(5) China-India Relations

In 2025, China-India relations witnessed improvement and development. High-level

exchanges guided the development of bilateral ties, and coordination and cooperation were carried out on both bilateral and multilateral fronts. In August 2025, President Xi Jinping met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Tianjin. President Xi pointed out that it should be the right choice for China and India to be good-neighborly friends and partners that help each other succeed and have the dragon and the elephant dance together. Cai Qi, Member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau and Member of the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee, also met with Prime Minister Modi. In April 2025, President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang, and Foreign Minister Wang Yi exchanged congratulatory messages with Indian President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, respectively, in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. In February 2025, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar in Johannesburg. In June, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs Wang Yi met with India's National Security Advisor Shri Ajit Doval in Beijing. In July, Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar visited China, during which Vice President Han Zheng met with him and Foreign Minister Wang Yi held talks with him. In August, Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited India. He met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, held talks with Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and reached ten outcomes. He also held the 24th Round of Talks Between Special Representatives of China and India on the Boundary Question with National Security Advisor Shri Ajit Doval and reached ten points of consensus. In addition, the two countries maintained communication and coordination under frameworks such as BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and the G20.

(6) Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Since its establishment more than two decades ago, the SCO has remained committed to upholding regional security and stability and advancing the common development of all nations. The Organization has sustained a sound and steady growth momentum. Firmly upholding the Shanghai Spirit, member states have continued to expand cooperation in the political, security, pragmatic, people-to-people and cultural fields, and actively engaged in external exchanges. The big family of the SCO continues to expand and grow, and the Organization's global influence has risen significantly. Among all regional organizations in the world today, the SCO covers the largest geographical area and population. It has set an example of building a new type of international relations.

From August 31 to September 1, 2025, President Xi Jinping hosted the SCO Summit in Tianjin and delivered a series of important remarks. At the 25th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO, President Xi put forward important proposals of seeking common ground while putting aside differences, pursuing mutual benefit and win-win results, championing openness and inclusiveness, upholding fairness and justice, and striving for real results and high efficiency to better tap into the potential of the SCO. At the "SCO Plus" meeting, President Xi solemnly put forward the Global Governance Initiative, calling for adhering to sovereign equality, abiding by international rule of law, practicing multilateralism, advocating a people-centered approach, and focusing on taking real actions. Shortly after it was put forth, the initiative received welcome and support from more than 150 countries and international organizations. Leaders of the member states signed and issued the Tianjin Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO, approved the SCO Development Strategy to 2035, and issued a statement on the 80th anniversary of the victory of World War II

and the founding of the United Nations, and a statement on supporting the multilateral trading system. They adopted 24 outcome documents covering cooperation in security, economy and people-to-people exchanges. The leaders jointly witnessed the inauguration of the SCO Universal Center for Countering Security Challenges and Threats, the Center for Combating Transnational Organized Crime, the Information Security Center, and the Anti-Drug Center. In November 2025, Premier Li Qiang also attended the 24th Meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of Member States of the SCO in Moscow.

2. Cooperation on Non-Traditional Security

(1) Cooperation on Counterterrorism and Combating Transnational Crime

China is resolute in combating all forms of terrorism. The international community should foster a sense of a community with a shared future for humanity; support the UN in playing its central and coordinating role; take a holistic approach and address both the symptoms and root causes of terrorism; and oppose double standards, politicization and instrumentalization of counterterrorism. In 2025, in building a collective effort to combat the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and other East Turkistan terrorist forces, China has continued to deepen and expand practical cooperation with neighboring countries and actively participated in multilateral cooperation mechanisms such as the UN, the SCO, BRICS, and the Global Counterterrorism Forum.

China attaches great importance to combating transnational crime. It fully leverages bilateral law enforcement and judicial cooperation mechanisms and multilateral platforms to actively collaborate with other countries on preventing and combating transnational crime. In response to the grave threat to the world posed by gambling and telecom fraud crimes in Myanmar's Myawaddy, China, Myanmar and Thailand established a ministerial-level coordination mechanism for combating telecom and cyber fraud crimes in February 2025 and launched joint actions in Myawaddy. Through trilateral efforts, Myanmar has detained and held 14,000 foreign nationals, with 12,000 of them repatriated or transferred, and China has received more than 7,600 repatriated fraud-related personnel, which has been well recognized by the international community. In August 2025, the 10th Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) Foreign Ministers' Meeting circulated the document Progress, Challenges, and Pathways for Strengthening Non-Traditional Security Cooperation under the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Mechanism, which reviewed the progress of cooperation in addressing non-traditional security challenges such as transnational crimes in the region and put forward proposals on deepening non-traditional security cooperation under the LMC framework. On November 14, 2025, China, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam held a ministerial meeting on combating telecom and cyber fraud crimes in Kunming, China, and officially upgraded the trilateral mechanism to a six-party mechanism, further building consensus and pooling strength among regional countries.

Under the framework of the six-party mechanism, the "Safe Lancang-Mekong" operation advanced steadily. All countries took strong measures and carried out multiple rounds of joint operations, achieving remarkable results. China is an initiator and staunch supporter of the UN Convention against Cybercrime. In October 2025, the Convention opened for signature in Viet Nam, and China became one of the first signatories, demonstrating its political will to work with the international community to combat transnational cybercrime. In addition, China is working actively for the creation of an international alliance to combat telecom and cyber fraud, with the purpose of jointly developing a more focused, professional,

efficient and action-oriented global law enforcement cooperation mechanism for combating telecom fraud with other countries. China will carry out cooperation with ASEAN member states and all other countries at greater depths.

China has actively participated in activities such as the online annual meeting of the Southeast Asia Justice Network, and had in-depth exchanges with other countries on cooperation in extradition and criminal judicial assistance and practices. China has also worked through bilateral and multilateral channels to carry out joint law enforcement operations and case-related intelligence verification, actively provided training, financial and technical support, and shared China's law enforcement practices and their effects to help strengthen capacity building in law enforcement and improve the effectiveness of investigation and handling of cases.

The China Coast Guard closely monitors transnational organized crime such as smuggling, human smuggling and drug trafficking. From 2024 to the end of 2025, it has dismantled more than 100 smuggling gangs, solved over 150 human smuggling cases, and seized approximately 13.5 tons of drugs. In February 2025, the China Coast Guard carried out joint anti-drug operations with the anti-narcotics authorities of the Philippines, Thailand, the US and other countries, and successfully seized 4.973 tons of methamphetamine.

(2) Cooperation on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament

China is firmly committed to the path of peaceful development and the policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons, upholds a nuclear strategy of self-defense, and keeps its nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for national security. The modernization of its nuclear forces is aimed at safeguarding national strategic security and maintaining global strategic stability. China firmly upholds the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, strictly fulfills all its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), stands for and advocates the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, and undertakes not to use nuclear weapons first at any time or under any circumstances, and not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states and nuclear-weapon-free zones unconditionally. In November 2025, China issued the White Paper on China's Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation in the New Era, which systematically expounded China's views and policy propositions on international security and arms control in the new era. China stands ready to work with all peace-loving countries to advocate an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization, consolidate and develop the UN-centered international arms control system, and join hands to build a community with a shared future for humanity.

China has maintained that nuclear disarmament should follow fundamental principles such as "maintaining global strategic stability" and "undiminished security for all." Nuclear disarmament should be a just and reasonable process of gradual reduction toward a downward balance and should proceed in a step-by-step manner. Countries with the largest nuclear arsenals should continue to fulfill their special and primary responsibilities in nuclear disarmament, and should further make significant and substantive reductions of their nuclear arsenals in a verifiable, irreversible and legally binding manner, so as to create conditions for attaining the ultimate goal of complete and thorough nuclear disarmament. China worked actively for the release of the Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races in January 2022, which emphasized that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, and reaffirmed the commitment not to target nuclear weapons at each other or at any other country.

China firmly upholds the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and believes that eliminating the risks of nuclear proliferation is crucial for international and regional peace and stability. All countries should abandon the Cold War mentality and fully respect each other's legitimate security concerns. The international community should pursue peaceful resolution of regional nuclear hotspot issues through political and diplomatic means and oppose double standards in non-proliferation and placing one's own geopolitical self-interests above the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. States Parties to the NPT should pursue nuclear policies that comply with their Treaty obligations. States participating in the "nuclear sharing" and "extended deterrence" arrangements should take concrete measures to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national and collective security policies, including not upgrading current arrangements, not conducting nuclear exercises or exchanging nuclear information, and not replicating new "nuclear sharing" and "extended deterrence" arrangements. The relevant nuclear-weapon states should withdraw their nuclear weapons deployed overseas.

The Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) is of great significance to strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and promoting regional peace and stability, and is in line with the fundamental security interests of ASEAN countries. As a comprehensive strategic partner and amicable and close neighbor of ASEAN, China has always firmly supported the SEANWFZ. China attaches great importance to the signing of the Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, supports the resolution on the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty) adopted at the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly and its First Committee and participated in the consensus-building process for the resolution. In July 2025, during the China-ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting and the ARF Foreign Ministers' Meeting, China reiterated that it is willing to take the lead in signing the Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone as a concrete step supporting the building of SEANWFZ. China will continue to maintain close communication with ASEAN on this matter.

Japan's disposal of nuclear-contaminated water from the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station is a concern for the global marine environment and public health. China's opposition to the discharge remains unchanged. Acceptance of long-term international monitoring and independent sampling and monitoring by stakeholders including China are solemn commitments made by Japan on the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water from the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station. China will work with the international community to jointly urge Japan to faithfully fulfill its commitments, ensure that China and other stakeholders can continue to conduct independent sampling and monitoring, and that the discharge remains under rigorous international oversight. China also supports a greater role for all stakeholders in international monitoring, including putting forward proposals on formulating monitoring plans and increasing monitoring sites.

Japan has long been manufacturing and storing plutonium far exceeding its actual civilian nuclear energy needs. Among all state parties to the NPT, it is the only non-nuclear weapon state that possesses reprocessing technology, has the ability to extract weapons-grade plutonium, and maintains operational reprocessing facilities. Japan has been making ambiguous statements about the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, continuously breaking through the bounds of its exclusively defense-oriented policy, accelerating its rearmament, and pushing for the strengthening of the so-called "extended deterrence." There have also been persistent voices within Japan calling for possessing nuclear submarines, clamoring for nuclear sharing, and even advocating for independent nuclear armament. These negative words and deeds seriously run counter to Japan's

pacifist commitment and its international nuclear non-proliferation obligations and threaten peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

AUKUS and the cooperation in nuclear submarines and other cutting-edge military technologies initiated and advanced by the US, the UK and Australia fuel arms races, stoke group politics and military confrontation, increase strategic risks, erode mutual trust among major countries, and seriously undermine peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. The nuclear submarine cooperation involves the transfer of large quantities of weapons-grade highly enriched uranium, thus posing serious nuclear proliferation risks. Relevant safeguards issues have sparked huge controversy in the international community. Such cooperation will undermine the regional security cooperation architecture and run counter to the efforts of ASEAN countries to build the SEANWFZ.

China consistently advocates the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), including chemical weapons, and supports continuous efforts to enhance the validity, authority and universality of international legal instruments, including the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). China strictly fulfills its obligations under the CWC, remains committed to resolving hotspot issues in chemical weapons in accordance with the CWC, opposes political manipulation of hotspot issues, and actively promotes international cooperation on the peaceful uses of chemical science and technology. China urges Japan to cleanly and thoroughly destroy the chemical weapons it abandoned on the territory of China at the earliest date, and work with other parties to build a world free of chemical weapons.

China strictly fulfills its international obligations to non-proliferation, firmly upholds multilateralism, and supports the UN in leading international non-proliferation efforts. China consistently maintains that rule-making and mechanism-building in non-proliferation should fully protect and promote the representation and right to participate of all countries, especially developing countries. China is deeply engaged in the implementation and comprehensive review process under UN Security Council Resolution 1540, and supports international and regional cooperation on non-proliferation export controls.

China has established a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework for export controls with the Export Control Law of the People's Republic of China as the overarching legislation. This framework covers dual-use items (including nuclear, biological, chemical, and missile-related materials), military products, and nuclear-related items, and has brought about the legalization and standardization of export control governance.

China supports a balanced approach to development and security, and advocates promoting international cooperation on the peaceful uses of technology while preventing proliferation. It emphasizes safeguarding the development rights of developing countries and enhancing the fairness, rationality and non-discriminatory nature of the international non-proliferation regime. China rejects the use of export controls as a tool for "decoupling and disruption of industrial and supply chains" and opposes the abuse of export controls and unilateral sanctions under the pretext of safeguarding international security and non-proliferation. China will work with all parties to actively promote the implementation of the resolution titled "Promoting International Cooperation on Peaceful Uses in the Context of International Security" adopted by the 79th Session of the UN General Assembly, and explore the formulation of guiding principles in accordance with the mandate of the resolution.

As a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), China advocates for the Group's work to be guided by the goal of strengthening the universality, authority and effectiveness of the NPT. China actively participates in discussions on updating the NSG's export control rules and lists.

It supports the legitimate propositions of developing countries, and recognizes that multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive, and non-discriminatory agreements are the best means to address non-proliferation concerns. Consistent with the above position, China maintains engagement with mechanisms such as the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Australia Group, and the Wassenaar Arrangement, and encourages these regimes to maintain their technical nature and honor their commitments to not impeding peaceful uses and global trade in relevant fields, so as to contribute constructively to common security and universal development.

(3) Cooperation on Disaster Relief

China has actively promoted multilateral and bilateral cooperation on disaster relief in the Asia-Pacific region and established the Belt and Road International Cooperation Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Management (BRIDRREM). In April 2025, China co-hosted the ARF Workshop on Risk Reduction, Preparedness and Disaster Response with Indonesia, the European Union and Thailand. China has also conducted bilateral exchanges and cooperation on disaster relief with countries including Russia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. The South China Sea Tsunami Advisory Center (SCSTAC) operated by China has continued to provide stable and efficient 24/7 tsunami early warning services. From January 2025 to date, it has produced and issued 10 tsunami warning bulletins for 10 tsunami events, all of which were disseminated promptly to countries around the South China Sea and ASEAN members. The Maritime Silk Road Navigation Safety Guarantee Service Information Platform and the Southeast Asia High-Resolution Early Warning System have continued to provide high-quality support to ASEAN countries and the neighboring region. China has continued to support marine capacity building of ASEAN countries, facilitating the sustainable development of the marine economy and disaster prevention and mitigation. In 2025, China hosted in Tianjin the China-ASEAN Advanced Training Course on Ocean Information Technology 2025 under the theme of "Sea Level Rise and Its Impacts on Coastal Zones under Climate Change" in May, and the Training Program on Ocean Governance and Sustainable Development 2025—with special reference to the BBNJ Agreement in September.

On March 28, 2025, a strong 7.9-magnitude earthquake struck Myanmar, causing heavy casualties and property damage. China acted promptly to provide emergency humanitarian aid supplies to Myanmar, and dispatch multiple rescue and medical teams to assist in search and rescue and reconstruction efforts. These actions have won wide acclaim from the international community. China welcomes Asia-Pacific countries to jointly build the BRIDRREM. China stands ready to strengthen communication and coordination with all parties to promote the development of disaster management cooperation under the ARF and other frameworks.

(4) Cooperation on Maritime Security

Peace and tranquility at sea bear on the security and development of all countries. The maritime policy stance of the Chinese government is highly consistent and stable. China is firm in safeguarding its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, and committed to properly resolving differences through dialogue and consultation. It upholds the international rule of law in maritime affairs, and promotes the building of a maritime community with a shared future. China stands ready to continue to work with other countries in the region to deepen dialogue, exchange and practical cooperation, jointly address traditional and non-traditional maritime security challenges, and build oceans of peace, tranquility, prosperity and sustainable development.

In 2025, China actively participated in maritime security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific and made positive contributions to the maintenance of maritime security in the region. China and ASEAN countries continued to fully and effectively implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), actively advanced consultations on the COC, and carried out practical cooperation at sea. China actively participated in meetings and activities on maritime security cooperation within ASEAN-led mechanisms. In April 2025, China hosted the 16th ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security in Beijing. Nearly 100 representatives from ARF Participants attended the meeting online or in person.

China and the US maintained dialogue and communication on maritime affairs, with a view to managing maritime risks and avoiding misunderstandings and miscalculations. China and the ROK conducted the 3rd Meeting of Maritime Affairs Dialogue and Cooperation Mechanism, as well as the 14th round of Talks of the Working Group for Negotiations on Maritime Delimitation.

China attaches great importance to the security of sea lanes. It continued to take an active part in regional cooperation mechanisms including the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP). In March 2025, the Chinese delegation attended the 19th Governing Council Meeting of the ReCAAP Information Sharing Center (ISC). In September, CHINA MRCC, together with the China Shipowners' Association (CSA) and other relevant parties, continued to organize and carry out joint anti-piracy ship-shore drills, further prompting and guiding shipping enterprises to strengthen their anti-piracy capacity building. In October, the Chinese delegation attended the 21st Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting (HACGAM), held discussions with representatives from the ReCAAP ISC and countries including Viet Nam, Cambodia and Sri Lanka, and enhanced communication and exchanges in areas such as maritime search and rescue.

China attaches high importance to the construction, development and protection of international submarine cables. It stands ready to work with all countries to deepen exchanges and cooperation on the joint construction and maintenance of submarine cables, and to promote establishing universally recognized and binding international rules on submarine cables, with a view to enhancing global digital connectivity.

The South China Sea is a bridge of communication and a bond of peace, friendship, cooperation and development between China and its neighbors. Peace and stability in the South China Sea are vital to the security, development and prosperity of regional countries and the well-being of people in the region. Realizing peace, stability, prosperity and development in the South China Sea is the shared aspiration and responsibility of China and ASEAN countries. It serves the common interests of all countries.

China actively carried out dialogue and communication with countries concerned in the South China Sea. They properly managed maritime differences and promoted maritime cooperation through bilateral maritime mechanisms, and worked together to uphold peace and stability in the South China Sea. In 2025, China and the Philippines held the 10th meeting of the China-Philippines Bilateral Consultation Mechanism on the South China Sea (BCM). The two sides properly resolved differences through communication and effectively managed the maritime situation. Regarding the Beibu Bay, China and Viet Nam held the fifth Consultation on the Agreement on the Sustainable Development and Cooperation of Fishery, carried out joint patrol between the Chinese and Viet Namese coast guards, and continued to hold joint events for the propagation and release of fishery resources. The two countries advanced joint development and

delimitation work in parallel, actively carried out cooperation in less sensitive fields, and steadily deepened maritime law enforcement cooperation, so as to jointly safeguard maritime security and stability. China and Malaysia held the second Bilateral Dialogue on the Management of Maritime Issues in the South China Sea and its first working group meeting. The two sides discussed practical cooperation in various maritime fields including joint study, and promoted the visit of the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency vessel to Sanya and the first round of working conference between the coast guards of the two sides. China continued to advance cooperation on joint development with countries such as Indonesia and Brunei.

In 2025, China and ASEAN countries held two rounds of Senior Officials' Meeting on the Implementation of the DOC and five rounds of the Meeting of the Joint Working Group, which produced a series of important outcomes. At the 50th Meeting of the Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the DOC held in Kunming in November 2025, all parties fully recognized the positive progress and sound momentum of the COC consultation and agreed to accelerate the consultation process, with a view to reaching a COC at an early date and jointly maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea.

(5) Cooperation on Cybersecurity

China has always been a builder of, defender of and contributor to global cybersecurity. China is working actively for a community with a shared future in cyberspace, and is committed to fostering a cyberspace featuring greater fairness, equity, openness, inclusiveness, security, stability and vitality. To this end, China has put forward the Global Initiative on Data Security, issued a China-League of Arab States Cooperation Initiative on Data Security, and reached the Data Security Cooperation Initiative of China+Central Asia (C+C5) with the five Central Asian countries. China also proposed the Global Cross-Border Data Flow Cooperation Initiative, with a view to building an open and win-win international cooperation framework for cross-border data flow. China stands ready to discuss and develop rules for global digital governance with other parties on the basis of these initiatives to jointly advance global governance on cyberspace.

China consistently supports the UN in playing a central role in the global governance and international rule-making of cyberspace. China supports the establishment of the UN's 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. It calls for formulating international rules governing cyberspace that are widely acceptable to all countries under the UN framework, and discussing the formulation of legally binding international instruments. China supports the UN in playing a leading role in global digital governance and rule-making, and promotes the implementation of the Global Digital Compact. China supports the efforts to foster an open, fair, inclusive, and non-discriminatory digital development environment, safeguard the integrity of global supply chains for digital products and services, and formulate globally interoperable digital rules.

China actively engages in dialogue and cooperation with Asia-Pacific countries on cyberspace, with a view to jointly maintaining peace and security in cyberspace. It hosted the second China-ASEAN Digital Governance Dialogue, the China-ASEAN Cybersecurity Workshop, the Cybersecurity Forum for Technology Development and International Cooperation at the 2025 World Internet Conference Wuzhen Summit, the 2025 China-ASEAN Network Security Emergency Response Capacity Building Seminar and other events. China has actively promoted the cybersecurity processes of the ARF, BRICS, and the SCO, deepened bilateral cooperation in this field with such countries as Indonesia,

Malaysia and Thailand, and expanded practical cooperation with the rest of the world in such areas as digital technology and cyber infrastructure.

(6) Cooperation in Other Fields

1. Global AI Governance

China actively implemented the Global AI Governance Initiative, and unveiled the AI Safety Governance Framework 2.0 on the basis of the 1.0 version, further building international consensus on AI governance. China released its Initiative on Deepening China-ASEAN Cooperation on Digital Governance, to promote practical cooperation in such fields as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, cross-border data flow between China and ASEAN countries, and advance the construction of China-ASEAN AI Security Demonstration Center and its supporting parks. China hosted the China-ASEAN "Silk Road Escort" Artificial Intelligence Security Competition, focusing on the core areas of AI security, to boost the in-depth integration of AI security technology, talent exchange and industrial cooperation between China and ASEAN. China also issued the report of Advancing a Global Framework for AI Safety and Governance for the Well-Being of Humanity, providing a reference for deepening global exchanges and cooperation in artificial intelligence.

On AI's military applications, China elaborated the concept of "people-oriented military AI" at multiple levels in the Global AI Governance Initiative, the Position Paper on Regulating Military Applications of Artificial Intelligence submitted to the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and documents submitted to the UN Secretary-General, proposing pathways for the responsible development and use of AI in the military domain. China believes that strengthening the regulation of AI's military applications and preventing and managing potential risks will help enhance mutual trust among countries, safeguard global strategic stability, prevent arms races, and alleviate humanitarian concerns. It also contributes to building inclusive and constructive security partnerships, and to advancing the building of a community with a shared future for humanity in the AI domain. The international community should uphold the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, act on the vision of a community with a shared future for humanity, seek consensus through dialogue and cooperation on norms for AI, and promote the establishment of an open, fair and effective governance mechanism.

The white paper titled China's Arms Control, Disarmament, and Non-proliferation in the New Era released by China explicitly states that China advances intelligent military development in accordance with global trends of military revolution, the practical needs of national security, and the realities of its defense and military development, and that China does not and will not engage in any AI arms race with other countries.

2. Biosecurity Cooperation

China vigorously promotes national biosecurity development, fully and strictly fulfills its biological arms control and non-proliferation obligations, calls for full compliance with and further strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and advocates negotiating a legally binding protocol with an effective verification mechanism. China advocates responsible bioscience research, and encourages all stakeholders to voluntarily adopt the Tianjin Biosecurity Guidelines for Codes of Conduct for Scientists. In November 2025, with the support of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, China and Malaysia co-hosted the Second Regional Workshop on Implementing the Biological Weapons Convention and Promoting Biosafety and Biosecurity in Southeast Asia. At the workshop, representatives held discussions on topics including implementing and strengthening the BWC, enhancing national biosecurity, and promoting

regional and international cooperation. All parties welcomed the prioritization of strengthening biosecurity as a key area of cooperation under the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2026-2030), and expressed their readiness to jointly implement the Plan of Action and build a biosecurity defense line in the region.

3. Assistance and Cooperation on Mine Clearance

China has long been committed to promoting international humanitarian assistance and cooperation on mine clearance and regards it as one of the important measures to build a community with a shared future for humanity and implement the GSI. To date, through donations, equipment aid, training, field instruction and other ways, China has provided over 40 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America with more than RMB 300 million yuan worth of assistance, and trained over 1,000 mine clearance professionals. ASEAN countries have been the main recipients and partners of China's mine clearance assistance, and demining cooperation is an important part of the China-ASEAN comprehensive strategic partnership. In recent years, China has increased assistance to ASEAN and its Member States to help remove risks posed by mines. In 2025, China provided Cambodia with over RMB 30 million yuan in cash in support of its mine clearance, and mine detection and clearance equipment worth RMB 3 million yuan. China also provided funds to the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority for hosting the first Regional Seminar on Mine Action in the Lancang-Mekong. China and all ASEAN members have actively implemented the ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers' Joint Statement on Strengthening Humanitarian Mine Action Cooperation. China also provided fund to ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center for hosting the Regional High-Level Dialogue, providing a platform for all parties to exchange experience on mine clearance and expand cooperation.

IV. China's Views on the Future Direction of the ASEAN Regional Forum

The ARF, as the premier multilateral platform for security dialogue in the Asia-Pacific, has made important contributions to maintaining regional peace, stability, and prosperity. China stands ready to work with all Participants to strengthen dialogue and exchanges, jointly promote the implementation of the GSI, carry out cooperation in areas of shared interests, and inject greater vitality and momentum into confidence-building activities and preventive diplomacy in various fields through concrete actions.

1. Upholding the Vision of Peace

China is committed to multilateralism and accommodating the interests and concerns of all parties. China firmly upholds the international system with the UN at its core, the international order underpinned by international law, and the basic norms of international relations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. China resolutely resists and opposes the Cold War mentality, unilateralism, bloc confrontation, and hegemonism, all of which run counter to the vision of enduring peace and prosperity in the region.

2. Revitalizing the ARF

China supports the centrality of ASEAN in regional architecture and is in favor of improving and enhancing the efficiency of the work of the ARF. At the same time, ARF reform concerns the role, mode and direction of the Forum, which should be advanced steadily and prudently on the basis of full consultation and broad consensus among all ARF Participants. First, effective principles since its inception should be followed, including decision-making by consensus, non-interference, going step-by-step and moving at a pace comfortable to all. Second, the principle of cooperation rather than interference should be upheld. Confidence-building measures should be carried out throughout the development of the ARF. Practical cooperation in preventive diplomacy should prioritize non-traditional security fields. Third, the issue of ARF membership expansion should be carefully studied to avoid affecting ARF's efficiency or increase disputes. Fourth, the participation of Track II mechanisms such as the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) in ARF work must strictly follow the existing rules.

3. Deepening Practical Cooperation

Efforts should be made to address both traditional and non-traditional security threats in a coordinated manner, and to advance all inter-sessional processes in a balanced way. The Forum should also broaden its agenda, expand areas of shared security interests, and actively respond to emerging security challenges such as climate change, marine disaster, social security, and artificial intelligence.

4. Managing Hotspot Issues

China has always advocated resolving differences and disputes among countries through dialogue and consultation in a peaceful manner, opposed using the ARF platform to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, and objects to turning the ARF into an arena for geopolitical rivalry. ARF Participants ought to increase strategic communication, enhance mutual security trust, resolve disagreements, manage differences, eliminate the root causes of crises, and all parties to conflict should be encouraged to build mutual trust, resolve disputes and promote security through dialogue.



India

1) Overview of the Regional Security Environment

- India's security architecture remains inextricably linked to the wider Indo-Pacific region - a seamless strategic space stretching from the west coast of North America to the eastern shores of Africa. This expansive maritime corridor continues to serve as the global economic center of gravity, carrying roughly **65 percent of world trade**, **90 percent of world energy**, and contributing over **60 percent of global GDP**. A substantial volume of India's external trade and vital energy flows cross these waters, underscoring why the maritime domain remains a core national interest. The evolving security challenges across the region—intensified by escalating overlapping territorial claims in the South China Sea, gray-zone maritime maneuvers, and resource competition—remain matters of serious concern. Simultaneously, transcontinental challenges such as climate-induced displacement and cross-border terrorism demand institutionalized multilateral mitigation.
- The foundational civilizational philosophies of "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*" (the world is one family) and "*Sarve bhavantu sukhinah*" (may all be at peace) continue to steer India's foreign policy approach. These enduring principles form the bedrock of India's vision for a ***free, open, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific***, built on the rules-based international order, respect for sovereignty, and equality.
- In order to translate this vision into tangible collaboration, India's **Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (IPOI)**—first introduced by PM Narendra Modi at the East Asia Summit (EAS) in Bangkok in 2019—has advanced from conceptual alignment to operational frameworks. As an open, non-treaty-based global cooperative mechanism, the IPOI optimizes existing regional architecture across its seven designated pillars:
  - Maritime Security
  - Maritime Ecology
  - Maritime Resources
  - Capacity Building and Resource Sharing
  - Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
  - Science Technology and Academic Co-operation
  - Trade Connectivity and Maritime Transport.
- Through practical milestones, including India's evolving **MAHASAGAR** (*Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions*) policy and active bilateral tracks, these spokes are delivering concrete maritime domain awareness and capacity-building initiatives across the regional littoral states
- India's strategic nexus with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) serves as the cornerstone of its **'Act-East' Policy (AEP)**. Over the past year, this relationship has scaled new heights following the renewal of the *ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2026–2030)*. Reflecting this deeper integration, **2026 has been designated as the 'ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation'**, building upon institutionalized security exercises and joint patrols. To foster economic resilience and mitigate supply chain vulnerabilities, India and ASEAN are prioritizing the overhaul of the *ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA)*, balancing a bilateral trade portfolio that has scaled past **USD 121 billion.**
- India remains unwavering in its commitment to **ASEAN *Neutrality and Centrality*** as the indispensable core of the Indo-Pacific's security architecture. This synergy is driven

by the practical operationalisation and alignment of India's **IPOI** with the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific **(AOIP)**.

- ASEAN-India Joint Statement on Strengthening ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership for Peace, Stability and Prosperity in the Region in the context of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) with the support of India's Act East Policy (AEP) was adopted on the occasion of the 21st ASEAN-India Summit, held on 10 October 2024 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The Joint Statement focused on freedom of navigation and overflight in the region, and other lawful uses of the seas, including unimpeded lawful maritime commerce and to promote peaceful resolutions of disputes, in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS; on maritime security, maritime cooperation, counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, military medicine, transnational crime, defence industry, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and peacekeeping; and strengthening multilateralism and comprehensive reform of the multilateral global governance architecture, including the United Nations and international financial architecture, international financial institutions, and multilateral development banks, to make them fit for purpose, democratic, equitable, representative and responsive to the current global realities and the needs and aspirations of the Global South.

- India is actively engaged with various Indo-Pacific frameworks including the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), East Asia Summit (EAS), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC).

- India also joined the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) as a Development Partner in July 2019 and became an Observer at Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) in March 2020. India is also a part of various other multilateral constructs. Through participation in such fora, India contributes effectively to holistic maritime security of the Indo-Pacific Region.

- The International Sea Lanes passing through the South China Sea are critical for peace, stability, prosperity and development of the Indo-Pacific region. It is natural for the international community to have vital stakes in ensuring freedom of navigation and over flight, and unimpeded commerce in these international waterways. This commitment was also reflected in the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea. India hopes that all parties to that Declaration would strictly abide by it, in letter and spirit, and will not take any actions that would jeopardize peace and security in this region. India hopes that the Code of Conduct negotiations will lead to an outcome that is in keeping with all relevant international laws, including UNCLOS and that the negotiations are not prejudicial to the legitimate rights and interest of the nations that are not party to these discussions.

2) National Contributions to Regional Security

i) Counter Terrorism

- Terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, is a grave and universal threat with implications for international peace, security and economic progress. Any acts of terrorism is criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of the motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed. All the States must take credible, verifiable, irreversible and sustained action against terrorism and terror financing which are emanating from the territories under their control. The acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable; and therefore, the world must show zero tolerance for terrorism.
- Counter Terrorism cooperation is an important aspect of our shared agenda and underscores our shared commitment to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and further enhance collaboration to address the evolving challenges in this sphere. Holding regular counter terrorism dialogue is important for further strengthening our cooperation in combating the menace of terrorism.
- India unequivocally condemns terrorism and violent extremism in all their forms and manifestations, including cross-border terrorism, and rejects justification of terrorism on any ground, whatsoever. India's zero tolerance for terrorism is manifest through its actions. This includes our right to defend ourselves against terrorism. India has called upon the international community to isolate and expose those countries which harbor terrorist, provide them with safe haven and abet cross-border terrorism.
- It is imperative that those who sponsor, nurture and utilize terrorism for their ends are made to pay a high cost. Some countries use cross-border terrorism as an instrument of their policy and provide shelter to terrorists. There should be no place for such double standards. India has been emphasizing on the disruption of terrorist financing networks, dismantling of terror infrastructure and bringing the perpetrators of terrorism to justice swiftly.
- India calls for concerted and decisive action against all UN-designated terrorists and terrorist entities, including those in the UN 1267 Committee, as well as their associated proxy groups, facilitators and backers
- India has been actively participating in ARF activities related to Counter-terrorism and transnational crime pillar including participation in 20th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ARF ISM on CTTC), in May 2024.
- India and ASEAN have endorsed a Work Plan on Cooperation to Combat Transnational Crime (2023-2027) and are in the process of its implementation.
- Addressing the 22nd ASEAN-India Summit, in virtual mode, on 26 October 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi termed terrorism as a serious challenge to global peace and security, and stressed the importance of unity in the fight against terrorism
- The Delhi Declaration on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes' was adopted unanimously by the under the Indian Chairship of UNSC Counter Terrorism Committee CTC in 2022. The declaration has emphasized the need for UN Member States to act cooperatively to prevent and counter the use of new information and communications technologies, and other emerging technologies for terrorism, including recruitment and incitement to commit terrorist acts, as well as the financing, planning and preparation of their activities and stressed the

importance of cooperation with civil society and the private sector in this endeavor.

- India conducts various Joint Military Exercises with friendly foreign countries to share best practices in training and promote inter-operability in Sub-Conventional Military/ Counter Terrorism Operations under the UN Mandate of Chapter VII.
- India and Malaysia are the co-chairs for the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus (ADMM Plus) Experts' Working Group on Counter Terrorism for the current cycle (2024-2027). The 16th ADMM-Plus EWG on CT and Final Planning Conference for table Top Exercise(TTX) was conducted in India from 14-16 Jan 2026. Indian delegation co-chaired the #ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus Experts' Working Group (#ADMMPlusEWG) on Counter Terrorism (CT) Table Top Exercise (TTX) on 22 April, at M Resort and Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. The exercise focused on multinational coordination and validating regional crisis protocols and further paving the way Field Training exercise scheduled in India in 2027.

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

- India accords great importance to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540. With its longstanding commitment to global non-proliferation, India has established a strong law-based, national system to implement the provisions of Resolution 1540.
- As a part of the last comprehensive review of resolution 1540, UNSCR 1540 Committee reviewed India's matrix to the 1540 Committee that assesses national level implementation of UNSCR 1540 provisions; and it has been assessed that India fulfils the requirements of UNSC Resolution 1540 in terms of prohibitions, measures and controls in the relevant areas. Further, India participated actively in the consultations on the Comprehensive Review report related to status of UNSCR 1540 implementation and the UNSC Resolution 2663 that extended the 1540 Committee's mandate for another 10 years (till 30 November 2032).
- India has also supported 1540 Committee's mandate and its work, wherever possible, by offering to share its knowledge and technical expertise in various areas as part of the Committee's assistance framework. Recognizing the role of the industry, academia and other key stakeholders in facilitating the States' implementation of resolution 1540, India has been organizing outreach events involving these stakeholders at the national level, and in the region. This includes India's annual National Conference on Strategic Trade Controls (NCSTC), organized in an expanded and revised format since 2024, which addresses issues related to Strategic Trade Controls (STC) and facilitates substantial dialogue through wider participation of various government organizations, industry stakeholders across relevant sectors, academia and research institutions, and involvement of foreign delegates including from India's neighborhood.
- India and UNODA organized the second edition of the annual Capacity Building Programme on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1540 and Strategic Trade Controls (STC) for Asia-Pacific Countries at National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics, Palasamudram from 10-13 February 2026. Over the two editions since 2025, close to 50 government experts from 17 countries have participated in the programme, where representatives of the UNSC 1540 Committee, UNODA and Indian government agencies and industries shared their implementation experiences

and best practices on relevant aspects of the UNSC Resolution 1540 and STC.

- With the pronounced threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and related materials, equipment and technology to the terrorist groups and other non-State actors, India is of the view that full implementation of Resolution 1540 assumes far greater importance now than when it was adopted in 2004.
- India recognizes the important role of multilateral export control regimes in the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems and related materials, equipment and technologies, including to terrorists and other non-State actors.
- India has been engaging actively in the multilateral export control regimes of WA, AG and MTCR, including by sharing our best practices or implementation experiences in the area of export controls, participation in the development of guidelines for export controls and lists of materials, equipment and technologies regulated under these regimes. India was the Plenary Chair of WA for a period of one year from 1 January 2023, further establishing India's recognized credentials on export controls and non-proliferation matters.
- As a responsible nuclear weapon State, India has a policy of maintaining a credible minimum deterrence based on a No First Use posture and non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States.
- India remains committed to universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. India believes that nuclear disarmament can be achieved in a time- bound manner through a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework. India's Working Paper (CD/1816) presented to the Conference on Disarmament in 2007 encapsulates this approach.
- In line with its vision, India supports the commencement of negotiations on a Comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention at the Conference on Disarmament.
- India's annual resolutions at the UNGA on the 'Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons' and on 'Reducing Nuclear Danger' are adopted with widespread support. Without prejudice to the priority attached to disarmament, India looks forward to commencing negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty based on CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein.
- India has participated in the meetings of the 25-member Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Nuclear Disarmament Verification (NDV) established by the UN Secretary General, and participates in the 'Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament' (CEND) initiative, and the ARF ISMs on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and related workshops and seminars.
- India is mindful of the rapid pace of developments in science and technology which, while offering tremendous benefits, also pose potential challenges to international peace and security. India's annual resolution at the UNGA on the "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament," adopted by consensus, mandates the UNSG to submit a report on current developments in science and technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts.
- As part of India's commitment to promote disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control education, and in order to equip young diplomats with knowledge and skills in these fields, the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service in collaboration with Disarmament

and International Security Affairs (D&ISA) Division organized the sixth edition of the D&ISA Fellowship for foreign diplomats from 12-30 January 2026. It saw participation of diplomats from 39 countries. The initiative fulfills the mandate of UNGA Resolution 'United Nations Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education' and is in line with the focus on 'Disarmament Education' in UN Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament '*Securing our Common Future.*'

- India values the role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in facilitating adoption of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and at the national level strengthening nuclear security and safety. India participates in the Review Meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

- India believes that it is imperative to strengthen collective commitment to disarmament instruments including the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which is a unique instrument within the UN framework for progressive controls over certain categories of conventional weapons.

- India is fully committed to the CCW and the humanitarian principles enshrined in the Convention and is a party to all the five protocols of the CCW. The Convention, while stipulating measures to mitigate humanitarian concerns arising from the use of specific weapons, strives to strike a balance with the military necessity of such weapons. India has also been participating actively in the deliberations of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) within the framework of the CCW and recognizes the progress made in the discussions at the GGE on LAWS in recent years and reiterates its support for the eleven guiding principles adopted.

- India is deeply concerned about the challenges posed by illicit transfers of conventional weapons as well as ammunition management, including small arms and light weapons (SALW), to unauthorized recipients such as criminals, terrorists and non-State actors, which pose a major threat to international peace and security. India accords high importance to the UN Programme of Action as the cornerstone of multilateral efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trade in SALW and successfully hosted the first-ever UN Fellowship Training Programme for Asia-Pacific countries on SALW Control at MCMM (Military College of Materials Management), Jabalpur from 16 February to 06 March 2026. The full and effective implementation of the UN Progress of Action and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) is a priority for India, especially as a means for combating terrorism and transnational crime. Towards this, India put forth a futuristic vision for regional cooperation in the recent UNRCPD regional consultations on United Nations Programme of Action on SALW at Kathmandu. Indian Army women officers have participated in "Fostering Gender-Responsive Small Arms Control: Perspectives from the Asia-Pacific Region on the UN Programme of Action (PoA) on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW).

- Indian delegation participated in the 'Preparatory Meeting of States on the GFA' at New York, 23-27 June 2025 wherein it supported the thematic work of the Technical Experts Committee to be formed and suggested topics for consideration, in addition to other suggestions such as timelines of meetings and the reporting procedure refinements. This also marked the the first time participation of an Indian Navy woman ammunition expert at the UNGA Meeting.

- In line with the commitment towards women-led development, an increasing number of women officers from India have

contributed effectively in the field of global ammunition management. Indian women AATOs (Armament and Ammunition Technical Officers) are regularly invited to train international women ammunition experts in ammunition management. This has inspired women from many nations to work towards objectives of GFA. An Indian woman AATO was deputed as trainer in the UN SaferGuard Training for Women Ammunition Technical Experts on the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) at Wiener Neustadt, Austria from 30 June to 11 July 2025. Indian women AATOs also attended the UN Safer Guard Technical Review Board working group on Physical Security and Stockpile Management at Geneva from 03-07 November 2025.

- India is committed to refine the IATG, wherein India has been added as the 11th member of the TRB (Technical Review Board) of IATG. Towards safer and secure ammunition management, India was an active participant in the OEWG on Conventional Ammunition (under the UN auspices) and was instrumental in the drafting of a Global Framework on Ammunition Management to prevent diversion to unauthorized recipients, including criminals and terrorists. The global framework has been adopted by UNGA in the 78th session on November 2023.

iii) Transnational Crime

- India is concerned about the access to and misuse of technology by terrorist organizations. Cyberspace, encrypted chat applications and social media platforms are being used extensively for radicalization, misinformation, propaganda, terror funding, training, recruitment and execution of terrorist attacks. Crypto-financing, access to the Dark Web and other technologies have multiplied the threat quotient for India. The repeated use of drones from across India's western borders is presenting new challenges for the Indian security agencies.
- Growing cyber threats have imperilled the national, regional and international security environment. It is of paramount importance to secure the critical information infrastructure and combat the growing incidents of cybercrime and cyberterrorism. Cooperation in countering terrorism and extremism on the internet, removing the propaganda material on the internet and jointly investigating terrorist attacks, waged through the use of ICTs, could go a long way to foster confidence-building measures among countries.
- India faces significant challenges in border security posed by Transnational Organized Crime (TOC). The country's geographical location, shared borders with the nations with high organized crime rates, and poorly-monitored borders, have added to the problem. Geo-political tensions with neighbouring countries are hindering cooperation in combating TOC, limiting intelligence sharing and collaborative law enforcement efforts.
- India is actively engaged in regional and global bilateral and multilateral cooperation for addressing the issues related to TOC. India has signed a number of MoUs and Letters of Intent to foster cooperation in capacity building, security and information exchange with partner nations and international organizations. With the implementation of its "Look East Policy," India has improved its strategic, political and economic ties with the ASEAN countries.
- India and the ASEAN have agreed on the following cooperative measures:
    - Enhance cooperation to support the implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action in Combating Transnational Crime (2016-2025);

- Deepen cooperation on mutually-agreed areas of transnational crime, including through the implementation of relevant documents;
- Explore cooperation between ASEAN and India in the sphere of cybercrime;
- Enhance cooperation in combating international terrorism and addressing the rise of radicalization and violent extremism by supporting the implementation of the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism, ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counter Terrorism and the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism (2018-2025), and the 2003 ASEAN-India Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism.

- Data is increasingly becoming an important source of economic growth, and cooperation should be enhanced for trusted sources, respecting privacy and ensuring data protection. Growing cyber threats have the potential to disrupt national, regional and international security environments. Securing critical information infrastructure and tackling growing incidents of cybercrime and cyberterrorism are paramount.
- Cooperation on countering terrorism and extremism propaganda on the internet, in removing such content, in alerting each other of such activities and in investigating terrorist attacks mounted through the use of ICTs could be an essential part of confidence-building measures among countries. Ransomware attacks have become sophisticated and pervasive over the last decade. They now have the potential of disrupting critical cyber infrastructure and government organizations. The ongoing Ad Hoc Committee to elaborate a comprehensive international convention against the use of ICTs for criminal purposes is an important process under the aegis of the United Nations and India has been actively participating in it.
- India actively participates in regional and global bilateral and multilateral cooperation to address the issues related to TOC. India has signed a number of MoUs and Letters of Intent to encourage cooperation in capacity building, security and information exchange with partner nations and international organizations. Such cooperation is particularly manifested in India's relations with the UNODC and INTERPOL. Besides, with programmes like the "Look East Policy," India has improved its strategic, political and economic ties with the ASEAN countries.

(iv) Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

- India has established itself as a 'First Responder' and a credible 'Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Provider' by its consistent HADR efforts at global level. Aligning with age old philosophy of "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*—the whole world is one family," India has executed numerous HADR operations to provide timely HADR assistance. In addition, India has continued extending need-based and request-based medical aid and relief supplies to its partner countries. Whereas the disaster relief focuses on providing timely assistance to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain and protect human dignity during and post-disasters, the need-based assistance helps build stronger health systems and disaster preparedness.

- India's HADR operations consist of various key components including the immediate supply of essential and emergency aid and facilities, search and rescue assistance, the provision of Army field hospitals, the restoration of connectivity infrastructures, etc. to provide immediate assistance and mitigate the disaster impact. India's HADR efforts and measures align with the ARF Statement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response and the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Assistance, which stipulate to *"enhance networking and coordination between national SAR and other relief agencies of ARF participants and with INSARAG; promote coordination among donors, relief agencies, international communities to carrying out short, medium and long-term rehabilitation, reconstruction and risk reduction efforts...; earmarking assets and capacities for regional standby arrangements for disaster relief and emergency response....etc."*

- During the recent Op Sagar Bandhu in Sri Lanka, India supplied over 1100 metric tons of HADR, in which 53 tons of disaster relief, including Arogya Maitri and BHISHM Cubes for emergency medical aid, was delivered within the initial three days of launching the operation. India was the first country to send 80-member NDRF Search and Rescue Teams, including K9 SAR units and IAF assets, which, in coordination with the Sri Lankan Air Force rescued over 450 individuals from remote and worst-affected areas. Likewise, during Operation Brahma in Myanmar and Operation Dost in Turkey, the Indian Search and Rescue teams played a crucial role in rescuing human lives.

- India has traditionally been the first responder to natural disasters in the region, especially in the immediate and extended neighborhood with increasing frequency. India has also been a credible regional partner with demonstrated capabilities to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) materials for affected people. India aims to strengthen its role in disaster response by enhancing inter-ministerial coordination and ensuring that relief supplies meet stringent international standards. The country has developed 01 Heavy INSARAG-classified USAR team to support specialized rescue operations aligning with international standards. Indian Naval ships and aircraft are regularly deployed to facilitate security to the Indian and international maritime community, provide HADR assistance and respond to any maritime incident in the region.

- India's efforts also focus on consolidating the logistics chain to expedite mobilization of HADR consignments, improving preparedness by pre-positioning relief source (non-perishable) on a rotational basis, and improve synergy among all stakeholders and line ministries to ensure timely and effective humanitarian assistance.

- Following are the details of HADR extended by India to ARF members in recent past:

Sl. No.	Country	Year	HADR Operation/Medical/Disaster Relief Supplies
•	Indonesia	2025	On request from Indonesia, India supplied 3600 Prussian Blue capsules to Indonesia in October 2025 to help counter Cesium-137 radioactive contamination.
•	Myanmar	2025	Under **Operation Brahm**a, India provided over 1000 MT of HADR supplies, including tents, blankets, sleeping bags, hygiene kits, gensets, essential medicines, medical consumables and food aid, including rice and cooking oil, 20 prefabricated structures and cement to Myanmar following the devastating 7.7 magnitude earthquake that struck Myanmar in March 2025. An 80-member heavy Search and Rescue (SAR) specialist team from NDRF, a 127-member Indian Army Field Hospital team, a 6-member Engineers Reconnaissance team, 9 IAF aircraft and 5 IN ships were also deployed.
		2026 *(ongoing)*	As part of the Quad Moonshot Initiative, India is also in the process of supplying HPV sampling and diagnostic/testing kits to Myanmar.
•	Philippines	2026	India provided 30 tons of relief materials comprising essential medicines and medical equipment and the advanced BHISHM Cube to the Philippines in January 2026 to support relief and recovery efforts following the devastation caused by the super typhoon.
•	Thailand	2025-2026	Since March 2025, in coordination with the Governments of Thailand and Myanmar and the concerned Indian Missions, the Government of India has repatriated 1732 Indian nationals who were trapped in online scam centres operating in regions along the Myanmar-Thailand border. The most recent operation was undertaken in February 2026.
•	Timor-Leste	2025	India supplied 10,000 doses of rabies vaccine and 2,000 vials of rabies immunoglobulin to Timor-Leste in December 2025 to help contain the rabies outbreak in Timor-Leste.

v) Maritime Security

- Maritime security is an important dimension of India's international engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. India supports freedom of navigation, overflight, and unimpeded commerce based on international law as reflected in the UNCLOS. India believes that the 1982 UNCLOS is the basis for determining maritime entitlements, sovereign rights, jurisdictions and legitimate interests in maritime zones, and it sets out the legal framework under which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. This should be observed and respected by all countries. India stands for development, peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region, including maritime security due to the dependence of the growing economies of the region on a stable maritime environment. There are diverse challenges to security in the region, including traditional and non-traditional threats to security, such as terrorism, piracy, contraband smuggling, irregular human migration, IUU (irregular, unreported and unregulated) fishing, hybrid threats, other transnational crimes and maritime safety incidents.

- As the President of the UNSC in August 2021, India identified maritime security as the theme for a high-level debate, which concluded with a UNSC Presidential Statement on maritime security. It emphasizes the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and suggests a broader approach to address common concerns of maritime safety and security.

- India also participated actively in the UNSC High-Level Open Debate on 'Maintenance of International Peace and Security—Strengthening Maritime Security through International Cooperation for Global Stability,' held on 20 May 2025. India's Permanent Representative delivered India's perspective in the event and supported the Greek initiative. India also participated actively in the UNSC High-level Debate on the theme "Maritime Security—Prevention, Innovation and International Cooperation to Address Emerging Challenges" under the agenda "Maintenance of International Peace and Security" held on 11 August 2025. India also co-organised (along with Greece and Philippines) Arria Formula meeting in UNSC on 'Maritime Safety and Security; protection of seafarers' on 21 November 2025

- In the IOR, India is concerned about the proliferation of narcotics originating from the Makaran Coast and from the eastern edge of IOR. India continues to collaborate/ cooperate with like-minded partners towards a secure and stable IP region.

- The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) is a Maritime Security construct launched by India to address regional vulnerabilities. India has assumed the IONS Chairmanship for the 2026-2028 cycle. The IONS initiative is the largest in the region in terms of membership of countries, with 25 'full-time' members and 9 'observers,' with the latest exercise being conducted in Mar 2026.

- Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) Sagar is an initiative towards continued cooperation with IOR nations. In 2025, one Indian Naval ship (*INS Sunayna*) was deployed to the Southwest IOR with a combined crew of India and nine Friendly Foreign Countries (Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and South Africa). Reaffirming India's commitment to collaborative maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region, the second edition of Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR commenced on 16 Mar 2026 . It involved training multinational crews from 16 IONS nations aboard the Indian Naval Ship *INS Sunayna* to strengthen interoperability, conduct joint exercises, and

promote regional stability. The initiative builds on India's long-standing maritime cooperation efforts and reflects the Government of India's vision of MAHASAGAR—Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions.

- IOS SAGAR is designed as a unique operational engagement programme that enables naval personnel from Friendly Foreign Countries to train and sail together onboard an Indian Naval Ship. By integrating international participants into shipboard activities and professional training modules, the initiative promotes practical cooperation, interoperability and shared understanding of maritime operations. As part of the current edition of IOS SAGAR, naval personnel from 16 Friendly Foreign Countries (including 03 ARF member countries) participated in the programme.

- With our geographical location and national capabilities, we take up efforts towards addressing the maritime challenges—both traditional and non-traditional. We have deployed Indian Naval Ships under *Op Sankalp* (since 2008) to prevent piracy in the IOR and had been instrumental in the removal of the High Risk Area (HRA) of Piracy. Over the last two years, in response to shipping attacks and rising incidents of piracy in the Western Arabian Sea, the Indian Navy has deployed over 35 ships in the region, carried out more than a 1000 boarding operations and has responded to over 30 incidents. The credible and swift actions of the Indian Navy saved more than 520 lives, irrespective of the nationality and crew. Since October 2023, the Indian Navy has safely escorted over 500 merchant vessels, carrying over 18 million metric tons of cargo, valued at over 7.5 billion USD.

- In the recent past, Indian Navy, including IFC-IOR (Information Fusion Centre-IOR), has been at the forefront of operations to monitor and share information and counter-piracy incidents. India's involvement in the cases of MV Ruen, MV Lila Norfolk, and MV Abdullah and rescue from Somali pirates of fishing vessels Al Naeemi, Iman, Omari, and Al-Kambar 786 as well as fishing trawler Lorenzo Putha 04 are well known among many others. In addition, the Indian Navy has executed, and continues to carry out, numerous boarding ops against suspicious vessels in the area to thwart piracy attempts. Over the last two years, in response to shipping attacks and rising incidents of piracy in the Western Arabian Sea, the Indian Navy has deployed over 35 ships in the region, carried out more than 1000 boarding operations, and has responded to over 30 incidents. The credible and swift actions of the Indian Navy saved more than 520 lives, irrespective of the nationality and crew. Since Nov 2023, the Indian Navy has safely escorted over 380 merchant vessels, carrying over 15.3 million metric tons of cargo, valued at over 6.5 billion USD.

- The inaugural ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise 2023 was an important milestone in engagement with ASEAN. Such exercises serve to hone skills, develop mutual confidence, and create an environment to counter the flow of threats and challenges encountered at sea through inclusive and cooperative efforts. India is looking forward to the next edition tentatively scheduled from 28 Sep to 02 Oct 2026 and seeks the support of ASEAN to take this trusted partnership further.

- India participated actively in the 16th ARF ISM on MS co-chaired by China and Cambodia at Beijing, China on 24-25 April 2025 and shared perspectives on maritime security, including the successes achieved by Indian maritime security agencies, working independently as well as with like-minded partners in the region. India offers its wholehearted support for the ASEAN initiatives in the maritime

domain. India also co-chaired the 15th ARF ISM on MS at Jakarta on 06 May 2024, along with the USA and Indonesia. India would continue to work shoulder to shoulder with ASEAN, in line with the objectives laid out in the ASEAN Maritime Outlook (AMO). In the ISMs, India was also happy to put forth and support various proposals for knowledge sharing (ARF workshops for Maritime Law Enforcement, protection of critical infrastructure, dealing with climate change issues, etc.) as well as substantive initiatives (such as a digital Best Practices Manual for ISPS code implementation) to fill in the gap between the pillars of Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution in the ARF calculus.

- India took forward the agenda of the 26th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Ministerial Meeting and successfully concluded (as co-chair) the second leg of the ARF Training Series and *Best Practices Manual on Intentional Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code* on "Process, Training, Cyber and Emerging Threats" from 11-14 April 2023, in Mumbai. Part 3 of the ARF ISPS Code Training series was scheduled at Papua New Guinea (PNG) on 23-25 April 2024, wherein India co-chaired the same with the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, and the USA. India participated actively and delivered training through a multiministerial delegation towards the formulation of a Best Practices Manual, *which successfully completed in July 2025.*

- As regards maritime safety, India has extended hydrographic support to safely chart the waters of the region. India is a partner in the maintenance of Aids to Navigation in the Strait of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS) through technical cooperation as well as the annual financial contribution of USD 50000.

- India took over chairship of IORA in Nov 2025. India is currently the coordinating country for the Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security and Blue Economy (WGMSS). India hosted the 10th Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD), a track 1.5 flagship initiative of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), from 07 to 08 May 2026 in New Delhi, India. The Dialogue, centered around the theme "Indian Ocean Region in a Transforming World," comprised six sessions focusing on: Maritime Safety and Security, Blue Economy, Disaster Risk Management, Economic Trade and Investment, Climate Change, Science and Technology Development and Women Empowerment. Thereby highlighting India's commitment, under its IORA Chairship, to a safe, secure, and stable maritime domain guided by the MAHASAGAR vision and strengthened through partnership, multilateralism, and sustainable developments.

- India hosted the 28th Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in New Delhi on June 15–16, 2026. The summit focused on advancing and reinforcing collaborative efforts for maritime security, sustainable development, and regional prosperity. Discussions centered around maintaining a peaceful and prosperous Indian Ocean Region (IOR), navigating emerging geopolitical challenges, and handling institutional matters. Member nations reviewed ongoing institutional priorities and laid the groundwork for the next comprehensive Action Plan running from 2028 to 2032.

- As an observer in WPNS (Western Pacific Naval Symposium), India has had an excellent working relationship with ASEAN Member States. India hopes to continue the cooperation to achieve maritime security benefits for the region. India proposes to be part of the Working

Groups in WPNS to be able to contribute more to the construct. India has also proposed some activities that could be organised in the future.

- India participated in the 13th EAMF (Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum) scheduled in Malaysia on 11 Sep 2025. India spoke specifically on the aspect of "Inclusivity and Cooperation in Regional Maritime Trade' as well as "Regional Efforts in preserving and conserving marine environment sustainability.

- India is an active member of ReCAAP (Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia) and contributes to the construct as an important stakeholder for maritime security in the region. India is humbled by the overwhelming support of ASEAN countries (in ReCAAP) for the Indian Executive Director (ED), Mr. VD Chafekar, at the ReCAAP ISC (Information Sharing Centre) as the next ED for the years 2025-28. India will continue its efforts, with increased vigour, for maritime safety and security of the 'global commons.' India is honoured to collaborate with like-minded partners in this endeavour.

- India's Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), at Gurugram, has provided a useful platform for developing maritime domain awareness (MDA). India currently has 15 International Liaison Officers (ILOs) in IFC IOR, including a multilateral ILO representing 22 States. India continues to enhance the infrastructure of the IFC-IOR to facilitate more partnerships, increase the scope of the information network, greater ability for analysis and provision of quicker real-time actionable information.

- An Indian Coast Guard delegation participated in the 21st Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting (HACGAM), held in Sydney, Australia from 13-15 Oct 2025. HACGAM is a premier regional forum consisting of 21 member countries from Asia and beyond, one Region (Hong Kong) and two Associate Members (UNODC & ReCAAP), fostering cooperation among Asian Coast Guard agencies on issues relating to maritime safety, security, environmental protection, and law enforcement. India, as the Chair of the Maritime Search and Rescue (M-SAR) Pillar, and member of working groups on Environmental Protection, Prevention and Control of Unlawful Activities at Sea, Information Sharing, and Joint Exercises, contributed actively to the discussions and collaborative initiatives. The origin of HACGAM can be traced back to the successful interception of the MV Alondra Rainbow by the Indian Coast Guard in 1999, following a piracy incident. The forum also promotes capacity building, mutual trust, and interoperability among participating agencies. During the meeting, the ICG delegation shared India's experience in maritime security operations, disaster response, and marine environment protection while exploring avenues for joint exercises, training programs, and enhanced operational coordination with regional partners. India's participation in HACGAM 2025 underscores its enduring commitment to the Indo-Pacific Maritime Vision, aimed at ensuring a safe, secure, and sustainable maritime domain in the region.

- India's engagement with the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) has deepened significantly over the past year, and we are proud to highlight a landmark milestone in this regard. In February 2026, the Indian Navy assumed command of Combined Task Force (CTF) 154 — the training and capacity-building arm of the 47-nation CMF coalition. As Commander of CTF 154, India is now in a position to systematically institutionalise the transfer of knowledge, operational doctrine, and best practices that the Indian Navy has accumulated through

years of mission-based deployments across the Indian Ocean Region. We intend to make full use of this platform to engage like-minded partners—including ASEAN member states—in substantive, practical capacity-building that goes beyond training simulations to real-world interoperability.

- India is an active member of CGIMA (Contact Group on Illicit Maritime Activities), Chair of EWG on MS (Experts Working Group on Maritime Security) in BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) and Observer in DCOC-JA (Djibouti Code of Conduct – Jeddah Amendment), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS). India is also a Friend in the G7++ FOGG (Friends of Gulf of Guinea) construct. India's joining of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), based in Bahrain, as a Member, offers opportunities for greater cooperation in the region. India actively engages in ASEAN-centric fora and initiatives such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), apart from the Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (IPOI).

- India would like to develop with all interested partners the Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative (IPOI) announced by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the 14th East Asia Summit on November 04, 2019, in Bangkok. The focus areas of IPOI include partnership on marine ecology; maritime security; marine resources; capacity building and resource sharing; disaster risk reduction and management; science, technology and academic cooperation; and trade, connectivity and maritime transport and marine ecology. India is happy that Singapore is co-leading the IPOI pillar on Science, Technology and Academic Cooperation, Thailand is co-leading the IPOI pillar on Marine Ecology and Indonesia is co-leading the IPOI pillar on Marine Resources. India would welcome other ASEAN Member States to co-lead pillars of the IPOI to enhance the collaboration in the maritime domain.

- India has been actively involved in capacity building, capability enhancement and training of the maritime entities of various countries in the region, providing Lines of Credit, patrol aircraft and helicopters, patrol vessels and boats for patrolling their vast EEZs, training of personnel, deploying training teams for enhancing maritime security capacities and providing hydrographic assistance to countries in the region. In the last years, 2022, 2023 and 2025, India sent a ship on regular deployment into the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) for preventing illicit maritime activity (IMA) in the region. India also conceptualised and participated in the inaugural India-EU maritime collaboration in the GoG, which included exercises in the maritime domain and jointly held training for regional partners. India participated in the Plenary meeting of the Friends of Gulf of Guinea (G7++ FoGG) from 05 to 07 December 2023 at Dakar, Senegal, where India's role in enhancing the maritime security in the region was appreciated, and also, participated in the stocktaking meeting in Rome, Italy, on 02-03 December 2025.

- MILAN is one of the largest multilateral exercises in the IOR, hosted by the Indian Navy biennially. MILAN 26 was conducted from 15 to 25 Feb 26 at Vishakhapatnam with participation of more than 70 countries, including nine ASEAN member states.

- India participated in all exercises and engagements under ADDM-Plus EWG on Maritime Security. Indian delegation participated in 23rd ADMM-Plus Experts Working Group (EWG) on Maritime Security (MS), Table Top Exercise and Final Planning Conference (FPC) for Maritime Security Joint Cooperative Activity (MS JCA) held from 25-27 March 2026 at Tokyo, Japan

- Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh led the Indian delegation that participated in the 12th ADMM-Plus Meeting held in Malaysia from 31 Oct to 01 Nov 2025. The 2nd edition of the ASEAN-India Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting was held on the sidelines of the 12th ADMM-Plus. The Defence Minister announced two initiatives during the meeting, namely the conduct of the 2nd India-ASEAN course for UN Women Military Officers in Peacekeeping Operations and the conduct of the inaugural India-ASEAN Defence Think Tank Forum.

3) Role of ARF

- India views ARF as a cornerstone of its Act East policy and a premier platform to build consensus on Indo-Pacific stability, maritime security, and counter-terrorism. New Delhi strongly supports ASEAN Centrality and advocates for peaceful dispute resolution, freedom of navigation, and cooperative responses to emerging security threats as an inclusive forum supporting dialogue and cooperation towards stability and security in the region. ASEAN is the driving force of the ARF, and ASEAN's Unity and Centrality will further the objectives of ARF. India believes that the ASEAN way of "dialogue and consensus" has served the grouping well and should remain ARF's guiding principles. ARF provides a valuable platform in which practical cooperation can be forged amongst the Member States in addressing various common challenges.
- India considers the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), an important platform that should continue to develop as a balanced, transparent, and inclusive mechanism for cooperation and dialogue among its partners in dealing with both traditional and non-traditional security concerns. Open and sincere exchanges on regional and global security matters within the ARF have enhanced mutual understanding of differing perspectives and strengthened interaction among member countries. The initiatives and activities carried out under the ARF framework have further promoted confidence-building within the ARF community and beyond. India remains committed to participating actively and contributing constructively to the ARF process.


Indonesia

1. ARF Revitalisation and the Importance of ARF ASO

Indonesia recognises that the current regional and global security landscape is being reshaped by complex dynamics. As the current geopolitical development continues to consist of intensifying great power rivalries, arms race, and the development of disruptive technologies, the region is increasingly being exposed to strategic risks that are testing regional peace, stability, and security. To build resilience, it is necessary for the existing regional mechanisms governing cooperation in the region to adapt, including the ARF.

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has been the only platform that fosters cooperation and collaboration between 26 countries and 1 regional organisation across the Asia-Pacific region. For 33 years, since 1994, the ARF has been promoting regional stability and security through its three stages of cooperation, which encompass confidence-building measures, preventive diplomacy, and conflict resolution.

In the current geopolitical context, amid heightened global and regional uncertainties, the collective commitment of ARF Participants becomes even more critical to ensuring that the Forum's mechanisms remain relevant, inclusive, and effective in addressing emerging threats. It is equally important for the ARF to improve its effectiveness and substance to ensure that cooperation under this mechanism remains relevant and effective in responding to the current regional and international development. In this regard, Indonesia took the initiative to begin the process of revitalising the ARF.

In 2023, the ARF Ministers adopted a statement on the Commemoration of the Thirty Years of the ARF in the 30th ARF Ministerial Meeting to reiterate the importance of strengthening cooperation in the ARF to ensure its relevance and effectiveness amidst the evolving regional and global geopolitical dynamic. The statement was then used as the basis to develop the initiative to revitalise the ARF. The mandate in the statement is then manifested in 2025, through the adoption of the Recommendations to Revitalise the ARF at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting on 25 October 2025, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The recommendations further instigated the substantive discussions on ARF revitalisation between ARF officials.

One important aspect of the revitalisation is improving the substance of discussions in the ARF. In this regard, one of the aspects of the ARF cooperation that can be utilised to enrich discussions and promote transparency for building confidence and mutual trust among the Participants, is the ARF Annual Security Outlook.

Since the first edition of ARF ASO in 2000, the Ministers have agreed to make ARF ASO an annual exercise that can further contribute to facilitating the exchange of views among the ARF Participants, but within the last 5 years, the ARF ASO has been compiled as a document to be published. Indonesia in this regard, see the merit of implementing past ministerial decisions on the ARF ASO, encouraging further enhancement of the value of the ASO to the ARF process, by optimising the utilisation of the ARF Annual Security Outlook (ASO) as a reference for dialogue and activities conducted under the ARF framework and streamlining its significant thematic contributions to avoid redundancy with existing regional initiatives.

2. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

The global security landscape has evolved significantly since the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum, shaped by ongoing conflicts in Ukraine, parts of Africa, and recent hostilities in critical waterways such as the Strait of Hormuz. In this context, Indonesian underscores the continued relevance of core regional and international principles: the peaceful settlement of disputes; strict adherence to international humanitarian law, including the principles of distinction, proportionality, necessity, and humanity; the rejection of double standards; and the exercise of restraint in managing tensions.

Indonesia further reaffirms the centrality of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia as a foundational norm for interstate conduct, and remains committed to promoting an inclusive regional order through dialogue, cooperation, and respect for international law. In this context, ASEAN Centrality must remain the strategic anchor for regional stability, while the ARF should address both traditional and non-traditional challenges, including cyber-enabled crime, online scams, critical infrastructure vulnerabilities, and the growing nexus between security and economic resilience.

3. Overview of National Security and Defence Policy

Indonesia views the regional security environment in 2025–2026 as being shaped by intensifying great power rivalry, growing strategic uncertainty, and the increasing intersection between traditional and non-traditional threats. Indonesia remains committed to ASEAN-led mechanisms as the primary platform for dialogue and preventive diplomacy while upholding UNCLOS 1982, supporting an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, addressing cyber and transnational threats, and advocating peaceful conflict resolution through multilateral mechanisms and international law.

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

In line with this policy, the Indonesian National Defence Forces continue to enhance interoperability through joint exercises, personnel exchanges, and bilateral as well as multilateral military cooperation as a concrete contribution to maintaining regional stability. The National Defence Forces support the conduct of sustained and structured joint military exercises, with particular focus on priority areas such as counter-terrorism, peacekeeping, special forces operations, and the enhancement of interoperability through the harmonisation of standard operating procedures, participant exchanges, and joint exercises at various levels.

Furthermore, the National Defence Forces continue to strive for the strengthening of coordination mechanisms to align exercise planning and doctrine development. The success of these efforts may be measured through improvements in both the quantity and quality of exercises, as well as the outcomes of After Action Reviews, particularly where they demonstrate greater procedural alignment and improved operational effectiveness.

4. National Contributions to Regional Security

I. Developments at the National Level

A. Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime

Indonesia continues to reinforce its national policy framework. On 9 February 2026, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, through the Presidential Regulation Number 8/2026, enacted the second phase of the National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism that Leads to Terrorism, or RAN PE, for the period 2026 to 2029 as a continuation of the first phase implemented from 2020 to 2024.

This updated Action Plan adopts a thematic approach anchored in the concept of human security. It outlines nine priority areas, ranging from national preparedness and community resilience to education, protection of women, youth and children, strategic communication, deradicalisation, governance and human rights, victim support, and international cooperation.

In parallel, Indonesia is also advancing efforts to strengthen early detection and crisis response. A Presidential Regulation is currently being developed to establish an analysis and crisis management center. 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.

Following the recent advancement in Indonesia's national framework on preventing and countering violent extremism, the country has further demonstrated its commitment to strengthening a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. This development not only reinforces policy coordination but also provides a strategic foundation for responding to evolving terrorism

dynamics. In this context, recent analysis by the Indonesia Knowledge Hub (I-KHub) of the National Counter Terrorism Agency (BNPT) offers important insights into the shifting trends of terrorism in Indonesia between 2023 and 2025. The findings highlight both progress and emerging challenges that shape the current threat landscape.

Key Findings from Indonesia's Terrorism Trends (2023–2025):

1) Persistent and Adaptive Threat Despite Zero Completed Terrorist Attacks

   While Indonesia has recorded zero completed terrorist attacks in the observed period, the threat remains persistent and adaptive, as reflected in 27 foiled attack plots involving 31 perpetrators, indicating that intent and operational planning continue to exist.

2) Sustained Terrorist Activity and Support Networks

   Terrorist groups and their support networks remain active, as reflected in 230 terrorism-related arrests, including 150 individuals involved in malign conspiracy (pemufakatan jahat) and 33 in facilitation roles, indicating the continued presence of recruitment and support structures.

3) Dominance of ISIL-Affiliated Networks

   Terrorist activities in Indonesia are currently dominated by ISIL-affiliated groups, especially JAD, while non-ISIL networks such as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) have shown a decline following their formal dissolution in 2024.

4) Consistent Targeting Patterns

   Attack planning continues to target law enforcement personnel and places of worship (notably churches), underscoring the need for sustained protective measures for security forces and vulnerable sites.

5) Demographic Profile of Perpetrators

   Terrorism offenders are predominantly adults aged 31–49, while youth radicalisation remains a concern, with at least 139 young individuals (aged 18–30) identified across arrest, prosecution, and attack-planning datasets.

6) Women's Involvement in Supporting Roles

   There were 11 recorded cases involving women, predominantly in coordinative and behind-the-scenes roles, such as communication facilitation and content management.

7) Three Patterns of Digital-Terror Nexus

   The misuse of digital space for terrorism has grown increasingly complex. Such complexity is reflected in patterns that can mainly be categorised into three:

   a. Offline actors leveraging digital tools;

   b. Online-radicalised individuals transitioning to offline action;

   c. Fully online actors (with at least 17 identified cases)

B. Maritime Security

Maritime security continues to be a strategic priority for Indonesia. As the world's largest archipelagic State, Indonesia is responsible for safeguarding over 17,000 islands and maritime zones that are vital to both national resilience and regional stability. Persistent challenges, including illegal fishing, piracy, maritime terrorism, and jurisdictional encroachments, require sustained vigilance, effective law enforcement, and strengthened cooperation.

Indonesia upholds maritime security through close coordination among BAKAMLA, the Indonesian Navy, the Sea and Coast Guard Unit, and the Water and Air Police, supported by

Presidential Regulation No. 13 of 2022. In the North Natuna Sea, Indonesia continues to assert its sovereign rights in accordance with UNCLOS 1982 and actively monitors activities that may threaten its Exclusive Economic Zone, including the presence of foreign coast guard vessels.

C. Non-Proliferation and Disarmament

Indonesia's national implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 is guided by its recognition of the Resolution's vital role in preventing non-State actors, including terrorists, from acquiring, developing, trafficking in, or using weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Indonesia also underscores the importance of maintaining a balanced approach between the obligations of Member States under the Resolution and the promotion of cooperation and assistance to support its effective implementation.

Indonesia remains committed to ensuring compliance with Resolution 1540 and to continuously strengthening its national legislative, regulatory, institutional, and enforcement frameworks to address the threat of WMD proliferation.

With regard to the institutional framework, Indonesia has designated relevant national agencies to ensure effective coordination in the implementation of WMD-related regimes, including Resolution 1540. These include:

- the Nuclear Energy Regulatory Agency, which coordinates matters related to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;
- the National Authority for Chemical Weapons, established in 2017, which coordinates matters related to the Chemical Weapons Convention;
- the Ministry of Health, which coordinates matters related to the Biological Weapons Convention; and
- the National Counter-Terrorism Agency, which supports national efforts to prevent and counter terrorism-related threats, including those involving weapons of mass destruction.

Indonesia continues to encourage the countries in Southeast Asia that have not yet become parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to accede to the Treaty as a matter of priority. In line with the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025, Indonesia aspires for Southeast Asia to become a region that is not only free from nuclear weapons but also free from all other weapons of mass destruction. To this end, Indonesia stands ready to intensify ongoing efforts between ASEAN and the Nuclear-Weapon States (NWS) to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the SEANWFZ Treaty, 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.

D. Disaster Relief

Indonesia's national policies and capacities for disaster management are grounded in Law No. 24 of 2007 on Disaster Management, which establishes the institutional and operational framework, with the National Disaster Management Authority (BNPB) as the primary coordinating body. In terms of preparedness, policies focus on strengthening early warning systems, developing contingency plans, enhancing human resource capacity, and conducting continuous disaster education and simulation exercises. In the emergency response phase, national capacity is reinforced through the implementation of an emergency command system, readiness of logistics and equipment, rapid mobilisation of cross-agency personnel,

and the utilisation of technology and information systems to support timely and accurate decision-making. This approach aims to ensure an effective response to save lives, protect assets, and minimise the overall impact of disasters.

In the mitigation phase, coordination focuses on integrating disaster risk reduction into development planning and ensuring policy alignment among ministries, agencies, and subnational governments. During the emergency response phase, coordination is strengthened through a centralised incident command system, cross-agency resource mobilisation, rapid data and information sharing as well. In the recovery phase, coordination emphasises synergy between national and local governments in planning and implementing rehabilitation and reconstruction, supported by financing mechanisms, integrated policies, and multi-stakeholder engagement to ensure resilient and sustainable recovery outcomes.

Indonesia's disaster management policy emphasises an integrated, multi-sectoral approach. In the mitigation phase, policies are directed toward mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development processes, strengthening early warning systems, and enhancing the capacities of communities and local governments through education and training. In the emergency response phase, national capacity is enhanced through the strengthening of incident command systems, the readiness of personnel and logistics, and improved data interoperability and inter-agency coordination to ensure a rapid and effective response. Meanwhile, in the post-disaster recovery phase, policies emphasise rehabilitation and reconstruction based on the "build back better" principle, supported by financing capacity, integrated national and subnational planning, and inclusive and sustainable socio-economic recovery.

E. Information and Communication Technology Security

Indonesia has implemented a national cybersecurity strategy as part of its continuous efforts to safeguard information and communication technology and to strengthen national cyber resilience. This strategy is implemented through the National Cybersecurity Action Plan 2024–2028, which encompasses eight focus areas: governance, risk management, preparedness and resilience, protection of critical information infrastructure, national cryptographic self-reliance, enhancement of capabilities, capacity, and quality, cybersecurity policy, as well as international cooperation. The implementation of these focus areas is carried out through a range of activities, including the development of policies and standards, strengthening cross-sectoral coordination, conducting technical guidance and capacity-building programs, developing cyber incident response mechanisms, as well as monitoring and evaluation of program implementation. These efforts have resulted in several key achievements, including the establishment of National Work Competency Standards (SKKNI), Indonesian National Standards (SNI), the development of conformity assessment schemes, the establishment of Cyber Incident Response Teams, enhancement of CSIRT capacity, and development of cyber risk profiles, coordination forums, the establishment and implementation of national cryptography policies, human resource development and cybersecurity literacy programs, CSIRT cooperation, and the implementation of confidence-building measures (CBMs) alongside bilateral and multilateral cooperation initiatives.

In addition, Indonesia continues to strengthen the protection of Critical Information Infrastructure (CII) as an integral part of its national cybersecurity strategy, aimed at ensuring the continuity of public services and critical state functions. The implementation of CII protection is carried out through the CII identification,

assessment of cybersecurity maturity levels, enhancement of human resource capacity, and development of sectoral CII protection roadmaps.

In parallel, Indonesia is currently developing regulatory frameworks related to artificial intelligence (AI), including the formulation of a national AI roadmap and ethical guidelines to ensure the responsible, secure, and trustworthy use of AI technologies.

II. Regional and International Level

A. International Context

Developments in the regional and global security environment are increasingly characterized by complex and multidimensional challenges, both in terms of geopolitics and technological advancement. Intensifying competition among major powers, rising tensions in the Asia-Pacific, and growing geopolitical fragmentation have contributed to heightened uncertainty and may affect regional stability.

Indonesia also identifies several key dimensions as particularly relevant to the ARF agenda, including geoeconomic pressures, the erosion of multilateralism and international law, the proliferation of minilateral arrangements, disruptive technologies, and climate change as a threat multiplier. Trade restrictions, technology controls, supply chain fragmentation, and strategic competition in critical sectors are increasingly blurring the line between economic and security rivalry. In this context, Indonesia calls for the preservation of multilateralism, respect for international law, responsible governance of emerging technologies, and the safeguarding of ASEAN Centrality and inclusivity amid the growing complexity of the regional security architecture.

Further, non-traditional security threats continue to evolve alongside rapid digital transformation. Cyber threats are showing a significant upward trend globally. Various international reports indicate a rise in ransomware attacks, exploitation of software vulnerabilities, and supply chain attacks, with critical sectors such as energy, finance, and healthcare being primary targets. Furthermore, the use of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) by threat actors has increased the effectiveness of attacks, including more persuasive phishing techniques and the spread of AI-driven disinformation such as deepfakes. The development of quantum computing is also increasingly seen as a potential disruption to conventional cryptographic systems, thereby underscoring the importance of developing and adopting post-quantum cryptography (PQC) to ensure long-term information security resilience. Other emerging threats include the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation, transnational cyber-enabled crimes, and growing risks to personal data protection and privacy.

In addressing these challenges, multilateral cooperation has become increasingly important as a means to build trust, enhance collective capacity, and develop shared norms and mechanisms to respond to evolving threats. Collaborative approaches through regional and global platforms are expected to strengthen regional stability and contribute to a more inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable global security architecture.

B. The Role of Indonesia in ADMM, ADMM-Plus, AMMTC and SOMTC

ADMM and ADMM-Plus

Indonesia's Defence Policy in the ADMM and ADMM-Plus Indonesia actively promotes peace and enhanced cooperation in the wider Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean regions through the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM-Plus frameworks. lt plays a pivotal role in the ADMM

and ADMM-Plus frameworks, promoting trust, dialogue, and interoperability across the region.

Last year, Indonesia successfully co-hosted the second ASEAN-U.S. Maritime Exercise (AUMX) held in Batam, Indonesia. The 2nd AUMX is a multilateral maritime exercise involving the Navies of ASEAN Member States and the United States Navy (U.S. Navy).

It is built upon the success of the first AUMX conducted in 2019. The 2nd AUMX has notably fulfilled its objectives, among others are, strengthening maritime cooperation, mutual trust, and interoperability among the participating Navies; maintaining friendly relations between ASEAN Member States and the United States; and enhancing the professionalism of participating naval personnel. Currently, Indonesia is co-chairing the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Military Medicine with the United States for the 2024-2027 cycle as the co-chair of the ADMM-Plus.

Experts' Working Group (EWG) on Military Medicine with the United States for the period of 2024-2027, Indonesia is committed to enhancing regional preparedness and resilience in the military medicine domain. It continues to promote strategic dialogue and practical cooperation among ASEAN Member States and the eight 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 Cybersecurity in September 2026 in Banten Province, Indonesia, simultaneously with the Project-based Community Medical Deployment of Medical Aid Provisions (PCMD/MAP) as the capstone activity of the co-chairmanship.

Indonesia also maintains its active contribution to regional counterterrorism efforts through the ASEAN Our Eyes (AOE) framework. Together with ASEAN Member States, Indonesia continues to exchange strategic information to prevent and counter the threats of terrorism, radicalism and violent extremism. Indonesia will host the 10th ASEAN Our Eyes Working Group Meeting in June 2026 in Yogyakarta.

As the initiator of the ASEAN Peacekeeping Centre Network, Indonesia continues to promote cooperation among the peacekeeping centre networks in ASEAN. This year, Indonesia will host the ASEAN Peacekeeping Exercise in October and November 2026.

Indonesia also continues to encourage other AMS to conduct cooperation project under the ASEAN Outlook on the lndo-Pacific from A Defence Perspective (AOIP DP). Last year, Malaysia hosted the ASEAN Maritime Cybersecurity Conference in November in Putrajaya as the second project of the AOIP DP.

All in all, Indonesia reaffirms its pivotal role within the ADMM and ADMM-Plus mechanism and its steadfast commitment to assuming a greater responsibility in the years ahead. lt remains dedicated to fostering unity and upholding centrality, while working collectively with member states and partners to preserve regional peace, stability, and shared prosperity.

AMMTC and SOMTC

As the voluntary lead shepherd on the terrorism priority area in AMMTC/SOMTC, Indonesia has led the implementation of its regional CT initiatives under the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2018-2026), and its Implementation Work Plan, the Bali Work Plan (2019-2026), within the AMMTC/SOMTC mechanism. Several projects have been successfully conducted by Indonesia, in cooperation with the ASEAN Dialogue Partners,

some of whom are ARF participants, such as Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, who contributed to the development and implementation of the Bali Work Plan.

In its capacity as Chair of the ASEAN SOMTC Working Group on Counter Terrorism and voluntary lead shepherd on the terrorism priority area, Indonesia is currently leading the development of the successor document to the ASEAN Plan of Action on Preventing and Countering the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism, as well as the Bali Work Plan, both of which are set to conclude in 2026. The forthcoming successor document is being designed to reflect seven key thematic priorities, aligned with the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. These include dialogue and conflict prevention, good governance and rule of law, community engagement, youth empowerment, gender equality, education and employment, as well as strategic communication in the digital domain. More importantly, the document will maintain its cross-sectoral and cross-pillar nature, in recognition of the multidimensional character of violent extremism.

C. The Role of Indonesia in ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

Within the framework of ASEAN Regional Forum cooperation, it is well known that Indonesia initiated the ARF Statement on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism in 2019. To this day, Indonesia continues to engage ARF participants in supporting the implementation of this statement, which has strengthened ARF cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism.

Indonesia has also initiated the ARF Statement on the Treatment of Children Recruited by or Associated with Terrorist Groups in 2020, which reflected a strong commitment from ARF participants to address this issue collectively in the region. With the adoption of the statement, all ARF participating countries agreed that the recruitment and exploitation of children by terrorist groups is a serious form of violence against children, with dangerous, widespread, and lifelong traumatic impacts on the physical and mental well-being of the child, as well as their family.

Furthermore, in the context of countering terrorism financing, Indonesia together with the European Union and Laos successfully co-chaired the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Workshop on Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism in Bali, 8-10 March 2023. The workshop aimed to build knowledge and capacity to address the security risks of money laundering and terrorist financing, focusing on the prevention of the financing of terrorism by non-profit organisations related to the intergovernmental Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Recommendations.

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

Amid evolving geopolitical tensions and the continued modernisation of nuclear arsenals, Indonesia underscores that strengthening the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture remains essential to maintaining international and regional security. Indonesia reiterates that multilateralism, underpinned by international law, remains the cornerstone of efforts to address proliferation risks and to advance disarmament in a balanced, transparent, and verifiable manner.

Indonesia has strengthened the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 through concrete national and international measures. Building on its co-hosting of the UNODA National Awareness-Raising Workshop in 2024, Indonesia in 2025–2026 has enhanced inter-agency coordination, export control systems, and border security measures. Indonesia has also facilitated capacity-building and information-sharing initiatives with regional and international partners.

In addition, Indonesia has enhanced cooperation with international organisations, including UNODC and UNICRI, through a February 2026 workshop in Bandung on the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the prevention of chemical and nuclear terrorism.

Indonesia has actively advanced nuclear diplomacy in key multilateral fora. At the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva in February 2025 and 2026, Indonesia highlighted concerns over the regression of the global disarmament architecture and called on Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) to fulfil their legal obligations. Indonesia also played an active role in the third Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), consistently promoting the balanced and effective implementation of the Treaty's three pillars.

Indonesia has strengthened its contribution to nuclear disarmament through sustained advocacy of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), following its ratification in 2023 and deposit in 2024, and continued to promote its universalisation in 2025–2026. Indonesia also supports the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), including through cooperation in monitoring and verification-related activities. At the regional level, Indonesia has always been supportive in advancing the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) by engaging Nuclear Weapon States (P5) to accede to the Protocol and strengthening regional cooperation to maintain Southeast Asia as a nuclear weapon-free region.

Indonesia has addressed emerging proliferation risks, including naval nuclear propulsion in the Indo-Pacific, by promoting transparency, adherence to safeguards, and compliance with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) standards. Indonesia has also enhanced counter-proliferation efforts through its engagement in the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), advancing national risk assessments and strengthening inter-agency coordination to mitigate proliferation financing risks. Furthermore, Indonesia has expanded regional cooperation on nuclear safety and safeguards through ASEANTOM, including contributions to model legislation and capacity-building initiatives in 2025.

Indonesia continues to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy through cooperation with the IAEA, including technical programmes and the implementation of safeguards commitments. Indonesia has also contributed to broader arms control discussions, including hosting the Indo Defence Expo 2025 and participating in United Nations discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), advocating meaningful human control. In April 2026, Indonesia will host the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security in Jakarta, promoting transparency and confidence-building measures (CBMs) to prevent arms competition at sea. Indonesia remains actively engaged in ASEAN and ARF mechanisms to advance trust, transparency, and practical cooperation in non-proliferation, arms control, and disarmament.

E. Transnational Crimes and Terrorism

Online scams, as highly organised cyber-enabled crimes, exploit fast-moving digital finance and centralised scam operations. In 2025, Indonesia established the Indonesian Anti-Scam Center (IASC), led by the Financial Services Authority, to coordinate responses across government and the private sector. Since its inception, IASC has received 225,000 reports, blocked 71,000 illicit accounts, recovered Rp.349.3 billion in public funds, and prevented potential losses of up to Rp4.6 trillion.

On November 14, 2025, Indonesia signed the ASEAN Treaty on Extradition, a milestone in ASEAN's joint commitment to combat transnational crime among member states. The Treaty serves to increase legal certainty by providing standardised frameworks for

extradition, closing jurisdictional gaps by limiting regional safe havens, and deepening regional cooperation and trust in combating sophisticated cross-border criminal networks. This further expands legal and law enforcement cooperation in combating transnational crime, expanding the ASEAN Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty, which entered into force in 2014.

Strengthening ASEAN machineries remains essential to ensuring an effective and coherent regional security architecture. Indonesia supports enhanced coordination and mutual reinforcement across existing ASEAN sectoral bodies and mechanisms, while advancing the development of more specialised, sectoral law enforcement cooperation frameworks—including the ASEAN Prosecutors/Attorneys General Meeting established in 2025—to complement established platforms such as immigration and police cooperation. This approach promotes greater operational synergy across political-security, legal, and enforcement domains, enabling more integrated, timely, and collective responses to evolving transnational threats.

Illicit Drug Trafficking

The World Drug Report 2025 presented a troubling reality: a concerning rise in global drug abuse, the expansion of synthetic drug markets leading to an increase in overdose deaths, and an increase in drug production with cocaine production reaching a record high. In 2024 a record of 236 tonnes of methamphetamine were seized in East and Southeast Asia alone. The region has seen a significant rise in the production and trafficking activities, proliferation of new synthetic drug substances, and growth of a more sophisticated transnational organised crime groups operating in the region.

In 2025, the prevalence of drug abuse in the past year reached 2.11%, equivalent to 4.15 million Indonesians aged 15-64. Meanwhile, the prevalence of drug use reached 2.77%, equivalent to 5.43 million Indonesians aged 15-64 who had abused drugs at least once in their lifetime. Compared to 2023, the prevalence rate in 2025 shows an increase.

The National Narcotics Agency (BNN) is working closely with relevant stakeholders with "ANANDA BERSINAR." This initiative is dedicated to protecting the younger generation, particularly children, from the threats and dangers of narcotics.

The main objective of the initiative is to build self-resilience in children and adolescents from an early age, empowering them with the courage to reject drugs, with the ultimate goal to realise the "2045 Golden Generation"—a future society that is clean and free from narcotics.

The government, in this regard, adopts a humanistic, educational, and promotive approach. It focuses on nurturing students to become intelligent, resilient, and high-achieving individuals without the influence of drugs.

In its implementation, BNN is actively carrying out the dissemination of P4GN (Prevention, Eradication, Abuse, and Illicit Trafficking of Narcotics) information through various channels, including outdoor media, radio broadcasts, and educational visits to schools, as well as involving stakeholders both in family and school environments to create a safe, supportive, and drug-free community.

Indonesia is of the view that promoting enhanced cooperation within the ASEAN region is critical in the effort to address the threat of synthetic drugs and transnational networks through operational cooperation. Cooperation in this can be strengthened through the ASEAN Seaport Interdiction Task Force and the ASEAN Airport Interdiction Task Force.

Measures against Terrorist Financing

Since becoming a member of FATF in 2023, Indonesia has been actively involved in every working group and FATF plenary session. In February 2025, FATF introduced updates to its Recommendations, including revisions to Recommendation 1 and Interpretive Notes (INR) 1, INR 10, and INR 15, as well as adjustments to the Introduction and Glossary sections. These updates aim to strengthen the risk-based approach by emphasising proportionality in the application of preventive and mitigating measures.

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), reflecting continued progress in aligning with international standards. Building on this progress, Indonesia is expected to achieve an upgraded overall compliance status from Partially Compliant to Compliant, which is scheduled for official endorsement at the June 2026 FATF Plenary. This anticipated milestone underscores that Indonesia's financial oversight mechanisms and Financial Intelligence Unit functions are increasingly aligned with international standards in effectively disrupting terrorist financing networks, as reflected in strengthened operational outcomes, including proactive financial intelligence analyses and a growing number of cases reaching final legal standing.

Moreover, at the FATF Plenary in June 2025, regarding the FATF standards related to the NPOs, The FATF agreed on new procedures to ensure that AML/CFT measures do not impede the positive work of civil society. This new process builds on past reforms to ensure that the FATF can identify, consider and address NPO-related unintended consequences of misapplication of FATF Standards wherever they occur in assessment processes including mutual evaluations and the different follow-up processes.

At the same Plenary, FATF officially adopted two key reports in July, 2025. The first is the "Comprehensive Updates on Terrorist Financing Risks" report, with National Counter-Terrorism Agency Republic of Indonesia (BNPT) as part of the project team, representing the most extensive global assessment of terrorist financing risks to date. The report is supported by practical toolkits and risk indicators to help countries strengthen mitigation efforts and cooperation. It also highlights key trends, including shifting geographical threats (e.g. ISIL-K, Syria–Iraq, Sub-Saharan Africa), decentralised financing by small cells and lone actors, and growing use of digital platforms, social media, gaming, and AI. The second is the "Complex Proliferation Financing Sanctions and Evasion Scheme" report, with Indonesia's Financial Intelligence Unit (PPATK) contributing as part of the project team, which updates existing FATF guidance to support Global Network members and the private sector in countering proliferation financing. During the 2024–2025 period, Indonesia, through BNPT, also contributed substantively to the Risk, Trends, and Methods Group (RTMG), including by providing case studies on terrorist financing trends involving the misuse of virtual assets, e-commerce, and social media.

At the regional level, Indonesia has also demonstrated its leadership in advancing collaborative counter-terrorism financing (CTF) efforts within the ASEAN SOMTC mechanism. In this regard, SOMTC Indonesia, in partnership with the European Union and supported by the ESIWA+ programme, has been working on the development of an ASEAN Handbook on Preventing and Mitigating the Abuse of Non-Profit Organisations for Terrorism Financing. The initiative aims to provide practical guidance for regulators and Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) across the region. Subsequent consultations, including a regional workshop co-hosted with Thailand and the European Union in November 2025, further contributed to the development of the draft handbook, which will be circulated among ASEAN

Member States for finalisation and endorsement. Upon its endorsement, the ASEAN Handbook will be published on the ASEAN Secretariat website.

F. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Indonesia, as part of the ASEAN family, has undertaken HADR at various levels: national, regional, and international. These efforts reflect Indonesia's commitment to maintaining security in the region, fostering a sense of solidarity among member states and partners, and strengthening collaboration and coordination in disaster management. In 2025, the Bhakti Kanyini, an international joint training and humanitarian social service operation that brings together personnel from the Indonesian Air Force (TNI AU) and the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) in a comprehensive defence diplomacy mission. Conducted with a primary focus on Eastern Indonesia, specifically in Biak, Papua, this program integrates the "Kanyini" philosophy of the Australian Aboriginal people—meaning selfless love and collective responsibility—with the TNI's "Bhakti" spirit to improve the well-being of communities in remote areas. The 2025 iteration encompasses a wide range of activities, from primary and specialised healthcare services (such as cataract surgeries, dental checkups, and maternal-child health care), renovation of educational infrastructure and public facilities, to outreach programs on hygiene and environmental health. Strategically, Bhakti Kanyini 2025 serves not only as a platform for enhancing interoperability and technical cooperation between the air forces of both nations but also as a vital instrument of soft power diplomacy to strengthen Indonesia-Australia bilateral relations and ensure stability and security in the Indo-Pacific region through a humanitarian assistance approach that directly reaches the grassroots level.

The Indonesian government sent 50.5 tons of humanitarian aid worth more than Rp. 11 billion to Vanuatu on December 27, 2024, in response to the 7.3-magnitude earthquake. The aid consisted of 21 types of items, including emergency tents, mattresses, blankets, generators, lighting equipment, water purifiers, supplies for pregnant women and children, ready-to-eat meals, and rubber boats with engines, as well as medical personnel to support post-disaster recovery. On September 27, 2022, the Indonesian government provided humanitarian aid to disaster victims in Pakistan in the form of approximately 1 million U.S. dollars in cash, as well as basic necessities such as clothing, blankets, and medical supplies. This shipment of aid, consisting of staple goods and vital supplies for victims of the floods and landslides in Pakistan, is the first of two humanitarian flights initiated by the Indonesian government through BNPB.

On February 13, 2023, BNPB dispatched humanitarian aid in phases to the Turkish government, involving a medical team of 119 personnel comprising a joint team from various agencies and institutions. A total of 20 tons of logistical aid, including medical equipment, medicines, and evacuation supplies, was sent, and Indonesia established a field hospital in Turkey to assist earthquake victims. The Indonesian government, through the BNPB, sent humanitarian aid worth 1 million US dollars to Papua New Guinea in July 2024 to assist landslide victims in Enga Province. This 80.5-ton shipment consisted of tents, blankets, mattresses, generators, medicines, supplementary food, and hygiene kits.

As part of disaster preparedness efforts, the ARDEX 2025 (ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise), held on July 21–25, 2025, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. This is a large-scale disaster response simulation exercise aimed at strengthening the vision of "One ASEAN, One Response" by testing standard SASOP procedures and coordination among member states and the

AHA Centre. Under the theme of strengthening ASEAN's resilience and leadership on the global stage, this exercise uses scenarios of major flooding and tropical cyclones to test the readiness of the ASEAN-ERAT team as well as cross-sectoral interoperability through a series of Tabletop Exercises (TTX), Command Post Exercises (CPX), and Field Training Exercises. With the support of international partners such as the European Union, Japan, and South Korea, this activity—guided by Cambodia's National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM)—integrates civil-military capabilities to ensure a faster, more effective, and self-reliant humanitarian response to increasingly complex hydrometeorological threats in the Southeast Asian region.

In terms of supporting ASEAN region needs, ASEAN Member States produce strategies, mechanisms and procedures for humanitarian assistance in every phase of disaster management cycle. Under AADMER, the ASEAN Disaster Management sector as part of Socio-culture Pillar has set standards, involvement and agreement to ensure ASEAN communities become safer countries from natural hazards.

Guided by the Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations within the ASEAN region (SASOP), Indonesia contributes actively in the effort to promote collective, rapid, and in a coordinated manner response to disaster, in the ASEAN region through the streamlining of One ASEAN One Response (OAOR) policy framework and the implementation of ASEAN Joint Disaster Response Plan (AJDRP) as well.

The integration and effective implementation of these three instruments can enable the region to progress collectively and ensure shared security against various threats, particularly natural hazards.

G. Maritime Security

Indonesia promotes maritime governance that is firmly anchored in national and international law. This is pursued not only through domestic measures, but also through ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security, the ASEAN Maritime Forum, the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum, and relevant coast guard and maritime law-enforcement platforms.

In Southeast Asia, the ASEAN Maritime Forum and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum remain important venues for discussing maritime issues in a comprehensive manner. These platforms allow ASEAN to address maritime cooperation across the three Community pillars, namely political-security, economic, and socio-cultural cooperation. Since their strengthening and regularisation in 2023, the AMF and EAMF have provided a more consistent space for ASEAN Member States and partners to exchange views, build trust, and explore practical cooperation. Indonesia has actively supported these processes, particularly by encouraging a more integrated approach to maritime security, maritime connectivity, sustainable use of marine resources, and protection of the marine environment.

Indonesia also attaches great importance to the ASEAN Maritime Outlook, which was launched during its ASEAN Chairmanship in 2023. The Outlook serves as a useful reference for ASEAN in identifying common maritime priorities and strengthening cooperation across the three Community pillars. It is also expected to support ASEAN's broader efforts to build a secure, stable, resilient, and prosperous region, while providing a stronger basis for engagement with external partners on maritime issues.

Combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing remains one of Indonesia's key maritime priorities. At the national level, Indonesia has strengthened surveillance and enforcement through, among others, satellite-based monitoring,

vessel monitoring systems, port inspections, and closer inter-agency coordination. At the regional and international levels, Indonesia continues to work with partners through relevant ASEAN mechanisms, the Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices, the FAO framework on Port State Measures, and relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organisations. These efforts are important not only for protecting marine resources, but also for ensuring that fisheries activities are conducted in a lawful and sustainable manner.

Indonesia's commitment to responsible fisheries governance is also reflected in its active participation in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission. Through this mechanism, Indonesia contributes to regional efforts to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean. Indonesia also continues to strengthen cooperation with relevant international organisations, including UNODC and IMO-related mechanisms, in order to improve coordination, capacity-building, and information-sharing in addressing maritime crime, port security, and other emerging maritime challenges.

Indonesia has also deepened its bilateral maritime and defence cooperation with several ARF Participants. With Australia, cooperation was strengthened through the Defence Cooperation Agreement signed in August 2024, and further reinforced by the Indonesia-Australia Treaty on Common Security signed in February 2026. With India, Indonesia signed cooperation agreements in January 2025, including on maritime safety and security, covering areas such as crime prevention, search and rescue, and capacity-building. With the Philippines, Indonesia has continued to enhance coordinated maritime patrols in the Sulawesi Sea and waters near Mindanao, particularly to address shared threats such as piracy, maritime terrorism, and other transnational crimes. These efforts reflect Indonesia's view that maritime security is best advanced through practical cooperation, mutual trust, and respect for international law.

The protection of submarine cable infrastructure has also become an increasingly important issue for Indonesia. As an archipelagic State that relies heavily on undersea cables for internet connectivity, digital services, and economic activity, Indonesia has a strong interest in ensuring that such infrastructure remains secure and resilient. Recent incidents in various parts of the world have shown that submarine cables are vulnerable to both accidental damage and deliberate disruption. In this regard, Indonesia sees the need for clearer procedures, better situational awareness, and stronger international cooperation to prevent, respond to, and mitigate incidents affecting critical submarine cable infrastructure.

Indonesia also remains actively engaged in other regional initiatives that support maritime law enforcement and practical cooperation. These include the Maritime Law Enforcement Dialogues, which provide a platform for Southeast Asian countries to exchange experiences and good practices, as well as the Contact Group on Maritime Crime in the Sulu and Celebes Seas, which helps promote a common understanding of threats and coordinated responses in those waters. In the ARF context, Indonesia's co-chairship of the Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security with India and the United States further demonstrates its commitment to advancing inclusive, practical, and rules-based maritime security cooperation in the region.

H. ICTs Security

The increasing complexity of the geopolitical landscape and growing polarisation within the ARF, which brings together major powers with diverse and, at times, competing interests, require careful navigation. In this regard, Indonesia seeks to prevent the politicisation of technical issues, maintain its non-aligned position, and bridge differing approaches between Western countries and other stakeholders, particularly in the area of

cyber governance. Guided by these considerations, Indonesia actively engages in regional and multilateral cyber/ICT security discussions. In this regard, the National Cyber and Crypto Agency (BSSN) serves as a key institutional actor in articulating Indonesia's positions, facilitating cooperation, and promoting confidence-building measures across regional and multilateral platforms.

BSSN actively participates in various international forums, particularly within the ASEAN framework. In the context of regional cooperation, BSSN serves as the national focal point for the ASEAN Network Security Action Council (ANSAC), the ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee (ASEAN Cyber-CC), the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Working Group, as well as cyber dialogue with ASEAN Dialogue Partners. BSSN further contributes to regional engagement by serving as Co-Chair of the ASEAN–Australia Cyber Policy Dialogue in 2025.

In addition to serving as the national focal point and even as the lead in several ASEAN forums, BSSN also actively contributes to various other regional forums by providing substantive inputs, including in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting (ADSOM), ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC), East Asia Summit (EAS), as well as the ASEAN Plus One mechanism. BSSN's participation in these forums includes the following:

1. ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Working Group, held on 18–19 February 2025 in Vientiane, Laos; 27–28 May 2025 in Boracay, the Philippines; 6–7 August 2025 in Jakarta, Indonesia; and 10-11 February 2026 in Malaysia.
2. ASEAN Network Security Action Council, held on 9–10 June 2025 in Siem Reap, Cambodia.
3. ASEAN-Australia Cyber Policy Dialogue, held on 2 July 2025 in Putrajaya, Malaysia.
4. Critical Information Infrastructure Protection (CIIP) Workshop, within the framework of the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Working Group, held on 5 August 2025 in Jakarta, Indonesia.
5. ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Policy Meeting, held on 7–9 October 2025 in Tokyo, Japan.
6. ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity, held on 21-22 October 2025 in Singapore
7. ASEAN-US Cyber Policy Dialogue, held on 23 October 2025 in Singapore.
8. ASEAN-Russia Dialogue on ICT Security, held on 24 October 2025 in Sochi, Russia
9. ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee, held on 25-26 November 2025 in Bangkok, Thailand.
10. China-ASEAN Digital Governance Dialogue, held on 4 December 2025 in Beihai, China.
11. ARF Workshop on Lesson Learned in Governance of Security of and in the Use of ICTs, held on 9-10 February 2026, attended virtually.

Further, Indonesia has also taken significant steps to safeguard its rapidly growing digital sector, particularly in combating online scams. Indonesia served actively as Rapporteur in the development of the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime, which was opened for signature in October 2025. The Convention is significant as it establishes a comprehensive global framework to criminalise key cyber offences, including online fraud, scams, ransomware, identity theft, and the misuse of digital platforms for money laundering, while strengthening international cooperation on investigation, evidence-sharing, and extradition options to address increasingly sophisticated transnational cyber threats.

The United Nations Convention against Cybercrime directly addresses prevalent regional

threats in Southeast Asia, such as cross-border scam networks, ransomware operations, online financial fraud, and illicit digital financial flows, by harmonising legal definitions, enhancing more practical information and evidence sharing, and facilitating faster cross-border law enforcement cooperation. For ASEAN, this strengthens existing regional mechanisms by reducing jurisdictional gaps, improving interoperability among law enforcement and judicial authorities, and supporting more coordinated, collective responses against cyber-enabled transnational crime.

5. Future of the ARF: Revitalisation

At a time when the regional strategic environment is becoming more contested, fragmented, and unpredictable, the ARF must remain relevant not only as a forum for dialogue but also as a platform that can help shape practical responses to emerging security challenges. The region continues to face a wide range of issues, from major-power rivalry, maritime tensions, cyber threats, terrorism, and transnational crime to climate-related security risks and the spillover effects of conflicts beyond the region. Against this backdrop, the ARF should make fuller use of its comparative strengths, particularly its broad membership, ASEAN-led character, and ability to bring together civilian, defence, and security stakeholders in one political-security conversation.

It is worth recalling that the ARF was never intended to be a static institution. Its value lies in its gradual and evolving process, where countries in the wider Asia-Pacific region build trust, develop habits of dialogue, and carry out confidence-building measures in a way that is acceptable to all participants. As the ARF continues to strengthen its work on confidence-building and preventive diplomacy, it should ensure that its mechanisms become more focused, substantive, and responsive to present-day challenges.

The revitalisation of the ARF should therefore be pursued with a clear common purpose, that is, to keep the Forum credible, useful, and forward-looking as one of the region's key platforms for consultation on political and security issues. This means sharpening the ARF's contribution in areas where it can add real value, while avoiding overlap with other ASEAN-led mechanisms and regional initiatives.

One practical step would be to make better use of the ARF Annual Security Outlook. The ASO should not be treated merely as an annual compilation

of national views, but as a reference point for identifying shared concerns, guiding discussions, and shaping more targeted ARF activities. Used in this way, the ASO can help ensure that the ARF's work remains connected to the actual security landscape and contributes more meaningfully to regional and global peace, stability, and security.


Japan

Japan consistently supports ASEAN Centrality and unity for peace and prosperity in the region, and thus attaches high importance to ASEAN-led frameworks such as East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Particularly on the ARF, Japan recognizes its unique role in improving the regional security environment by promoting mutual confidence building through dialogue and practical cooperation. As the trusted partner of ASEAN, Japan will proactively engage in the discussions and activities in the forum to maintain peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

1. Japan's Overview of the Regional Security Environment

The world is now at a turning point in history, and the security environment we all face is most severe and complex since the end of WWII. In Europe, Russia's aggression against Ukraine continues, and that has been eroding the foundation of the international order that the international community has nurtured. We cannot deny the possibility that a similar situation may arise in the future in the Indo-Pacific region. In this region, power balances have been changing obviously. Turning the eyes to the vicinity of Japan, military buildups, including those of nuclear weapons and missiles, are rapidly advancing. Moreover, grey zone situations over territories, cross-border cyberattacks on critical civilian infrastructures, and information warfare through spread of disinformation, are constantly taking place, thereby further blurring the boundary between contingency and peacetime. The scope of national security has expanded to include the fields previously considered non-military such as economic, technological and others, and thus the boundary between military and nonmilitary fields is no longer clear-cut either.

We all benefit from the oceans and seas that connect the world, and therefore, thorough respect for the rule of law at sea is a common interest of the international community. Japan has been continuously promoting a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), striving to make the Indo-Pacific region one that respects freedom and the rule of law, free from coercion and force.

However, unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the maritime and air domain including in the East China Sea and the South China Sea have been intensified such as intrusions into the territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands. Japan reiterates its strong opposition against such attempts and express its unchanged position to respond to them calmly and resolutely while enhancing coordination with the relevant countries.

Japan also reiterates the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and encourage the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues through dialogue.

In the South China Sea, dangerous and coercive activities against coastal states and others have been rampant, including the further militarization of disputed features, interference with offshore resource development, the repeated obstruction of freedom of navigation and overflight, and the dangerous maneuvers by military aircraft and coast guard and maritime militia vessels, especially the unsafe use of water cannons and ramming or blocking actions in the South China Sea. Japan is seriously concerned about these repeated actions that heighten regional tensions. Japan strongly opposes any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the South China Sea, which escalate tensions and undermine regional stability.

The issue concerning the South China Sea is a legitimate concern of the international community, directly related to the peace and stability of the region, and is of paramount importance to Japan, a nation which has achieved prosperity through maritime trade. Therefore, Japan has consistently upheld the rule of law at sea and emphasizes the importance of freedom of navigation and overflight, as well as the security of sea lanes.

In the context of the peaceful resolution of disputes based on international law, Japan maintains its position that the award rendered by the Arbitral Tribunal in 2016 is final and legally binding on the parties to the dispute, and reiterated our strong expectation that this award serves as a useful basis for a peaceful resolution of disputes in the South China Sea, as was expressed in the Foreign Minister's statement last July.

Furthermore, regarding the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC), Japan has expressed its position that it should be effective and substantive, consistent with international law including UNCLOS, and should respect the legitimate rights and interests of all stakeholders utilizing the South China Sea. Japan will continue to cooperate with the international community including ASEAN Member States, the United States and other like-minded countries, as well as the broader international community to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

On the situation in Myanmar, Japan is seriously concerned about the deteriorating political, economic, humanitarian and security situation in Myanmar. Japan will continue to strengthen its efforts to improve the situation, including urging the cessation of airstrikes and other acts of violence, as well as the release of those who are detained.

At the same time, Japan will continue to work closely with the international community and support ASEAN's unified efforts to the maximum extent, so as to ensure the steady implementation of ASEAN's "Five-Point Consensus."

Amid the ongoing difficult situation, humanitarian assistance for the people of Myanmar is an urgent challenge. Since the coup, the Government of Japan has provided approximately 200 million US dollars in humanitarian assistance through international organizations, NGOs etc. Japan will continue to actively provide humanitarian assistance and pay close attention to the needs of the people of Myanmar, who are facing difficult circumstances, while urging the Myanmar military to allow safe and unhindered humanitarian access.

On North Korea, it is totally unacceptable that Norh Korea has been advancing its nuclear and missile development, including the launches of the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)-class ballistic missiles. Furthermore, Japan is seriously concerned about the development of the Russia-North Korea military cooperation as it not only further deteriorates the situation in Ukraine, but also affects the security environment surrounding Japan and the region.

In view of above, it is imperative for each country to fully implement the relevant UN Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs), and Japan will work closely with the international community toward the full implementation of the relevant UNSCRs.

With regard to Japan-North Korea relations, Japan's basic policy remains unchanged. Japan will achieve the normalization of relations with North Korea, in accordance with the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration, by comprehensively resolving outstanding issues of concern, such as the abductions, nuclear and missile issues, as well as settlement of the unfortunate past.

On the situation in Gaza, it has worsened since the terrorist attacks by Hamas and other terrorist groups against Israel in October 2023, and the conflict structure in the international community has become more complex. Furthermore, the use of the Internet and social networking services to spread extremist ideology and recruit, and the use of cryptographic assets to acquire funds for terrorist activities have become prominent trends.

The situation in the Strait of Hormuz has served as a poignant reminder to the international community that free, open, and stable oceans are vitally important for our lives and economic activities. The Strait of Hormuz must remain open and safe for international navigation, serving not only as a vital artery for global commerce but also as an international public good.

2. National Security and Defense Policy

a. Japan's Security Policy

On December 16, 2022, the National Security Strategy of Japan was decided by the National Security Council and the Cabinet. Today, compared to 2022, changes in the security environment are occurring at an accelerated pace across various areas. In order to appropriately respond to such rapid changes, Japan has decided to revise the three strategic documents concerning Japan's security policy (the National Security Strategy, the National Defense Strategy, and the Defense Buildup Program) by the end of 2026. IN the meantime, the following is the gist of the National Security Strategy of 2022.

Amid the deepening divisions and confrontations in the world, there is a number of issues to be addressed that transcend national borders and values, and the international cooperation has become more important than ever. In response to this situation where it is in the most severe and complex security environment in the post-WWII era, Japan will steadily implement the National Security Strategy and other documents.

The following five points describe the fundamental principles of Japan's national security, and are prerequisites for the execution of the associated policies that strive to protect of our national interests.

- Japan will maintain the policy of "Proactive Contribution to Peace" based on international cooperation. In order to further embody this principle in the international community and to protect our own national interests in the time ahead, and based on the recognition that the primary responsibility for defending Japan lies with itself, Japan will squarely face the ever-changing security environment by decisively taking on necessary reforms and reinforcing our national security capabilities and roles.
- Japan will execute its security policy in a manner that maintains and upholds universal values such as freedom, democracy, respect for fundamental human rights, and the rule of law. As one of the most mature and stable advanced democratic countries in the world, even amidst a complex and severe security environment, Japan will strive to maintain and uphold universal values and principles in cooperation with other countries, and lead the international community by example.
- As a peace-loving nation, Japan will adhere to the basic policy of maintaining an exclusively national defense-oriented policy, not becoming a military power that poses a threat to other countries, and observing the Three Non-Nuclear Principles. The Japan-U.S. Alliance, including the provision of extended deterrence, will remain the cornerstone of Japan's national security policy.
- Japan will attach importance to coexistence and co-prosperity alongside other countries, cooperation with like-minded countries, and multilateral cooperation.

The National Security Strategy first identifies diplomatic power as an element of Japan's overall national strength for security. While linking diplomacy and defense, Japan will organically and effectively link its various soft powers, such as its strong economy, advanced technological capabilities, and rich culture, to pursue a comprehensive foreign and security policy. In addition, Japan will steadily implement Official Security Assistance (OSA) and actively work on the promotion of cybersecurity and economic security.

Against international information warfare in the cognitive domain through manipulation of information including proliferation of disinformation, etc., we will collect and analyze information from various angles and strategically

disseminate it, as well as build and strengthen information security infrastructures.

b. Japan's Defense Policy

(1) The National Defense Strategy

On December 16, 2022, Japan issued the National Defense Strategy and the Defense Buildup Program as replacements to the National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG), and the Medium Term Defense Program (MTDP).

The Strategy states Japan's three defense objectives and three approaches to achieve those objectives. Japan's defense objectives are as follows.

1) Shape a security environment that does not tolerate unilateral changes to the status quo by force.

2) Deter through cooperation with our ally, like-minded countries and others, unilateral changes to the status quo by force and such attempts that concern Japan's peace and security. Should such an eventuality occur, our objective is to swiftly respond in whatever ways and bring the situation under control at an early stage so that the situation would not lead to invasion of Japan.

3) Should deterrence fail and invasion of Japan occur, to rapidly respond to the invasion in a tailored and seamless manner; to take primary responsibility to deal with the aggression; and, while receiving support from the ally and others, to disrupt and defeat the invasion.

The three approaches to realize Japan's defense objectives are stated as follows:

1) In an effort of strengthening of Japan's own architecture for national defense, to fundamentally reinforce Japan's defense capabilities, which constitute the core of national defense, and to reinforce the defense architecture of the whole country.

2) Further reinforce joint deterrence and response capability of the Japan-U.S. Alliance by further strengthening cooperation with the United States, our ally.

3) Reinforce collaboration with like-minded countries and others with whom Japan cooperate to uphold and reinforce a free and open international order.

Amid the most severe and complex security environment since the end of WWII, Japan needs to squarely face the grim reality and fundamentally reinforce Japan's defense capabilities, with a focus on opponent capabilities and new ways of warfare, to protect the lives and peaceful livelihood of Japanese nationals. Japan also needs to strengthen Japan's architecture for national defense that integrates various elements of national power. Thinking strategically, Japan should promote these two lines of effort as a coherent whole. It is this undertaking that provides the way forward to bolster Japan's deterrence capabilities and further strengthen the Japan-U.S. Alliance, and which forms the foundation of security cooperation with like-minded countries and others.

(2) The Defense Buildup Program and Defense-Related Expenditures

The current Defense Buildup Program is the first five-year defense buildup plan developed to achieve the targeted levels of defense capabilities as set forth in the National Defense Strategy. The expenditure earmarked from FY2023 to FY2027 amounts to approximately 43 trillion. In addition to the cost of maintaining and operating the JSDF, defense-related expenditures in Japan also include the cost of improving the living environment in the vicinity of defense facilities and support for US forces stationed in Japan. As the FY2026

defense-related expenditures budget is based on the National Defense Strategy and the Defense Buildup Program, it includes an array of projects aimed at the establishment of a Multi-Domain Defense Force. The expenditure budget for FY2026 has been increased by 334.5 billion yen (or 3.9% growth) from the previous fiscal year to 8,809.3 billion yen, marking the fourteenth consecutive year of growth. It includes expenditure which will be transferred from Digital Agency (51 billion yen).

In addition to the expenditure budget based on the Defense Buildup Program, including the costs related to the Special Action Committee on Okinawa or SACO (the cost of implementing the SACO Final Report to mitigate the impacts on people in Okinawa),and the US forces realignment-related expenses (the portion allocated for mitigating the impact on local communities), the total expenditure budget for FY2026 amounts to 9,035.3 billion yen, an increase of 334.9 billion yen, or growth rate of 3.8% from the preceding fiscal year.

c. Japan-US Security Arrangements

Given an increasingly severe and complex security environment in the Indo-Pacific region, securing the forward deployment of U.S. forces based on the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty and strengthening Alliance deterrence and response capabilities are essential not only for the security of Japan, but also for peace and stability in the region. Japan's decision to fundamentally reinforce its defense capabilities under the strategic documents formulated in December 2022 will lead to more effective employment of U.S. capabilities and will further strengthen Alliance deterrence and response capabilities. In concrete manner, the two countries will expand and strengthen cooperation in a wide range of areas, such as ballistic missile defense, cyberspace, outer space, and information security.

In light of the recent security environment, the U.S. will strengthen its presence in the Indo-Pacific region, and Japan will assume larger roles and responsibilities in the Alliance with its fundamentally reinforced defense capabilities. Japan and the U.S. will further enhance cooperation with allies and partners in the region.

3. Japan's Contributions to Regional Security

a. Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime

On terrorism, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al-Qaida and their affiliates remain a threat to international peace and security, and Japan continues to make efforts against international terrorism and violent extremism in cooperation with the countries and the regional and international organizations concerned.

Japan has continuously held multilateral and bilateral counter-terrorism consultations with partner countries, including those in the Indo-Pacific region to address global threat of terrorism and enhance international cooperation. In 2025, Japan held the bilateral consultations with Pakistan, France and Tunisia in Tokyo, also actively joined the dialogue between Australia-India-Japan-US in New Delhi. Moreover, to further strengthen cooperation with ASEAN countries in this field, Japan actively participates in meetings such as, the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime plus Japan (AMMTC+Japan), and the Senior Official Meeting on Transnational Crime plus Japan (SOMTC+Japan).

In the Indo-Pacific region, Japan has also been stepping up its efforts to support for capacity building to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism, as well as to combat transnational crimes such as illicit drug trafficking, trafficking in persons and cybercrime including online scams, through financial contributions to the projects implemented by international organizations such as the UNODC, the INTERPOL and the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ). The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has conducted a "Project for Strengthening Regional Network for Combating Trafficking in Persons (TIP) in Mekong Region" including support for the Mekong Region Workshop, since January 2022. Japan has also actively participated in multilateral dialogues at the frameworks such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), etc. In addition, Japan organized three Counterterrorism and Rule of Law workshops in Tokyo, targeting Southeast Asia, Central Asia and South Asia respectively in 2024 and 2025, in collaboration with IIJ, United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offender (UNAFEI), UNODC, France and EU.

Many countries are suffering enormous economic and human damage due to international organized crime in Southeast Asia, where organized crime groups are deeply involved in illicit activities such as organized fraud, money laundering and illegal drug trafficking. Due to their regional expansion, it is impossible for a single country to respond, making cooperation between countries in the region important. In this regard, Japan will continue to work closely with regional partners and intends to continue providing support for building law enforcement capabilities to countries facing serious threats posed by these crimes.

In light of the growing problem of criminal organizations recruiting young people online and forcing them to participate in online fraud and other crimes in the East Asian and Southeast Asian regions, Japan contributed approximately 7 million USD to counter fraud projects conducted by UNODC and ICPO in 2026.

b. Non-Proliferation and Disarmament

As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings during war, Japan has the responsibility to lead international efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. Japan will continue to advance realistic and practical

efforts toward a world without nuclear weapons, maintaining and strengthening the regime centered on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the only universal framework in which both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States widely participate.

The global security environment has become even more severe in recent years. There exists an apparent divergence of views on how best to advance nuclear disarmament, a divergence that exists not only between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States but also among non-nuclear-weapon States that are exposed to the threat of nuclear weapons and those that are not. Considering these circumstances, it is necessary to persistently advance realistic and practical efforts with the involvement of nuclear-weapon States in order to promote nuclear disarmament.

It has become increasingly important under the current severe security environment that the international community maintains and strengthens the NPT. Japan has made a series of efforts to this end, such as the submission of the United Nations General Assembly resolutions on the elimination of nuclear weapons, as well as close cooperation through the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) and the Stockholm Initiative for nuclear disarmament and the NPT.

Furthermore, Japan will continue to work on promoting effective nuclear disarmament measures such as the universalization and early entry into force of the CTBT as well as the immediate commencement of negotiations on an FMCT, and building a reliable international verification mechanism. For this purpose, Japan announced in the Ministerial Meeting of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in March 2024, the establishment of the "FMCT Friends," a cross-regional group with the participation of both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States which aims to maintain and enhance political attention on an FMCT and to contribute to expand the support for the negotiation of an FMCT. Japan held the High Level Meeting to launch the "FMCT Friends" in September 2024 and the First Ministerial Meeting in September 2025.

Furthermore, the emergence of new technologies has heightened the risk of the diversion of dual-use technologies to military uses. Under these circumstances, Japan has been implementing its non-proliferation policies through international initiatives and frameworks including in the aera of export control, while also taking non-proliferation measures domestically as well as promoting close coordination with and capacity building support for other nations.

To this end, Japan supported regional workshops for the implementation of UNSCR 1540, by contributing 1,000,000 USD in 2018 and additional 720,000 USD in 2025 to UNODA. Japan has also been hosting a range of meetings each year, including the Asia Senior-Level Talks on Non-Proliferation (ASTOP) and the Asian Export Control Seminar in order to promote a better understanding of the non-proliferation regimes and strengthen regional efforts, mainly in Asian countries. Japan has also actively participated in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) exercises and hosted PSI "Pacific Shield 25" in 2025 as a PSI rotation exercise in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, Japan has actively contributed to efforts on enhancing safeguards system in the international society, such as the universalization of the Additional Protocol (AP), and capacity building in safeguards implementation by sharing its experience and knowledge, including through the Asia-Pacific Safeguards Network (APSN).

c. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Japan has provided active support in response to large-scale natural disasters in the Indo-Pacific region. During 2021, Japan provided emergency relief goods in four cases to assist the people affected by major natural disasters in the region.

During 2022, Japan provided emergency relief goods in six cases to assist the affected people. In addition, for the volcanic eruption and tsunami disaster in Tonga, Japan dispatched the Self-Defense Force Units as the Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Team for transporting relief goods and providing desalinated drinking water. During 2023, Japan provided emergency relief goods in two cases to assist the affected people. In addition, for the oil spill disaster off the Coast of Mindoro Island, Philippines, Japan dispatched an expert team as the JDR Team for providing advisory on oil removal and control. During 2024, Japan provided emergency relief goods in seven cases to assist the affected people, particularly the one for Viet Nam to support those affected by the Typhoon Yagi. During 2025, Japan provided emergency relief goods in five cases to the affected people. In April 2025, Japan dispatched a Self-Defense Forces aircraft to Myanmar in order to transport medical goods, including medicine and test kits, which were necessary for the JDR Medical Team deployed in response to the earthquake that occurred in March. In December 2025, Japan dispatched the JDR Medical Team in response to the damage caused by the Cyclone Ditwa in Sri Lanka. Japan will continue to work with other ARF participants and contribute to ARF activities in order to make regional disaster relief cooperation more practical and effective.

In addition, Japan is an active player in other regional frameworks as well. Within the framework of Japan-ASEAN cooperation, Japan provides mainly three types of assistance through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre). The first type of assistance concerns the Disaster Emergency Logistic System for ASEAN (DELSA). DELSA has been developing a framework for stockpiling emergency relief supplies at specific locations and transporting these items to disaster-hit areas. Under the DELSA, the AHA Centre also has enhanced the supply chain management for emergency response of ASEAN through innovation, utilization of technology and capacity development. The second type of assistance concerns the capacity building of the Regional ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT). This has helped further enhance a coordinated response to disaster emergencies by the ASEAN-ERAT. The Third type of Japan's assistance through the AHA Centre concerns a human resources development project (ACE Program) in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). This project involves training programs for officials at the DRR organization in ASEAN Member States.

Japan-ASEAN disaster cooperation proved effective in the March 28, 2025 Myanmar earthquake response. The AHA Centre swiftly deployed, with a Japan-trained ASEAN emergency team conducting rapid needs assessments and coordinating relief efforts.

d. Maritime Security

Japan is a maritime nation that has achieved economic growth through maritime trade and development of marine resources and has pursued a "Free and Open Ocean." For Japan, maritime rights and interests, which are the basis for Japan's economic survival, including the freedom of navigation and overflight and use and development of marine resources, are of great importance toward securing peace and security. To ensure these maritime rights and interests in the long-term and in a stable manner, it is indispensable to maintain a maritime order and ensure safe maritime transport. Furthermore, a "Free and Open Ocean," which is upheld by a maritime order governed by law and rules and not by force, is essential for the peace and prosperity not only of Japan, but also of the international community as a whole. To maintain and develop a "Free and Open Ocean," Japan contributes actively to maintaining and strengthening maritime order and ensuring safe maritime transport through various initiatives such as counter-piracy measures

in Asia and Africa as well as close coordination and cooperation with other countries.

As part of its efforts to secure the safety of navigation in Asia, Japan advocated the establishment of a forum to provide EAS participating countries with the opportunity to discuss maritime cooperation and maritime issues in the region, which led to the realization of the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), a Track 1.5 forum. At the 12th EAMF, which was chaired by Malaysia in September 2025, Japan introduced its international cooperation to preserve the marine environment in South East Asia and emphasized the importance of improving capabilities of coast guard agencies to prevent IUU fishing.

In addition, Japan took the initiative in establishing the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP). Since its inception, Japan has been actively contributing to the implementation of the ReCAAP by seconding Executive Directors (until March 2022) and Assistant Director to the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) and by supporting ReCAAP ISC's efforts in the area of information sharing and capacity building through making financial contributions among others. For instance, at the seventh Capacity Building Executive Program(CBEP) , held in October 2024 at Tokyo, Japan Coast Guard explained its efforts to combat piracy and armed robbery against ships and shared its experience of cooperation with Asian littoral states. In December 2025, the virtual CBEP was held as an online event, with 14 participating countries. Japan explained its maritime security policy, efforts to combat piracy and armed robbery against ships, and cooperation with littoral states in the field of maritime law enforcement.

ARF plays an important role in ensuring the rule of law at sea, the freedom and safety of navigation and overflight, and peaceful settlement of disputes based on international law. In this context, Japan welcomes a number of initiatives that have been taken within the framework of ARF such as official events to discuss maritime security issues in the region. Japan co-chaired the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ARF ISM on MS) with the Philippines and the United States from August 2014 to August 2017. Together with the co-chairs, Japan worked on revising the ARF Work Plan on Maritime Security. Furthermore, Japan served with Malaysia as the lead countries for "confidence-building measures based on international and regional legal frameworks, arrangements, and cooperation," which is one of the priority areas for the ARF Work Plan on Maritime Security 2018-2020. In this context, Japan hosted the ARF Seminar on Counter Piracy and Armed Robbery in Asia, in Tokyo in March 2015 (co-chairing with the US, Malaysia, and India), ARF Seminar on Regional Confidence Building and Law of the Sea, in Tokyo in December 2015 (co-chairing with Viet Nam and India), the First ARF Workshop on International Cooperation on MDA in Tokyo in March 2018 (co-chairing with Malaysia) , and the Second ARF Workshop on International Cooperation on MDA in Tokyo in February 2020 (co-chairing with Viet Nam).

In addition to ongoing support for maritime law enforcement agencies to enhance their maritime security capabilities from the perspective of ensuring the rule of law at sea, cooperation with Southeast Asian countries is also being strengthened through OSA. So far, we have delivered unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and rescue boats to Malaysia, and have decided to provide high-speed patrol boats to Indonesia and rigid-hulled inflatable boats (RHIB) to the Philippines.

e. Cyberspace

Cyberattacks are becoming increasingly diversified and sophisticated. How to develop systems and capabilities to protect states and the lives and

property of the citizens from such cyberattacks constitutes a major challenge from both national security and economic perspectives. To this end, Japan is working with other countries concerned to promote a mutual understanding of these issues across a number of areas, while also working to enhance its cyber response capabilities through the enactment of the Cyber Response Capability Strengthening Act and Necessary Arrangement of Relevant Acts in May 2025 and the formulation of Japan's Cybersecurity Strategy in December 2025.

Countries in Indo-Pacific Region are discussing cyberspace issues under frameworks such as ARF and ASEAN+3 meetings. The ARF Work Plan on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs), which was endorsed at the 22nd ARF Ministerial Meeting in 2015, calls for confidence-building measures, awareness-raising, capacity building support, regarding cybersecurity. Japan is proactively participating in international meetings on these issues to boost cybersecurity in the region. From the viewpoint of the increasing importance of the situation surrounding cyberspace, ARF recognizes the value of continuing to exchange views from a comprehensive standpoint with the aim of promoting a peaceful, secure, open, and cooperative ICT environment, and preventing conflicts and crises through capacity-building trust and assistance while building confidence among nations. In this regard, Japan has held the "ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Policy Meeting" every year since 2007 to strengthen international cooperation and efforts between Japan and ASEAN countries in the field of cybersecurity. In the last Policy Meeting held in 2025, ASEAN Member States and Japan exchanged information on the direction of initiatives related to the cybersecurity policies of each country, reviewed the outcomes of collaborative activities undertaken by ASEAN Member States and Japan, and discussed future approaches to further collaborative activities. Furthermore, they concurred on further strengthening collaboration between ASEAN and Japan, including public-private partnerships.

In addition to these efforts, Japan has continued to provide capacity building support mainly to ASEAN countries. For example, since 2017, Japan has established the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC) and conducted cybersecurity exercises, among other initiatives. As of April 2026, Japan has conducted capacity building programs on cybersecurity for more than 4,600 trainees from ASEAN countries. In order to respond to the increasing cyber threats through by multilateral capacity building efforts, Japan has contributed to the World Bank's Cybersecurity Multi-Donor Trust Fund and also Japan will continue to promote human resource development and other relevant efforts. Based on the experience Japan have cultivated to date through support for ASEAN member states and interstate relations with the region, Japan will enhance support in areas in addition to ASEAN, with a focus on the Indo-Pacific region according to the "Basic Policy on Cybersecurity Capacity Building Support for Developing Countries."

f. Peacekeeping Operation

UN Peacekeeping Operations are facing various challenges, including financial constraints, geopolitical conflicts, new technological threats, and gaps between expectations and capabilities. From the perspectives of safety and efficiency, strengthening the capabilities of Peacekeepers is an important issue. For this reason, Japan has been taking a lead in promoting the UN Triangular Partnership Program (TPP) since 2014. To date, Japan has contributed a total of approximately US$100 million and provided training to approximately 16,000 personnel, striving to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Peacekeeping operations and enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers. Considering

that 30% of personnel engaged in Peacekeeping activities are dispatched from Asian region, Japan has implemented a total of seven training sessions targeting Asian and neighboring countries since 2018 until the end of 2025, having trained 151 engineering personnel from 14 countries. In addition, in March 2026, Japan contributed to the launch of training for police personnel within the framework of the TPP as a donor.

In this regard, the 8th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Peacekeeping Experts' Meeting was held in June 2024, co-hosted by Indonesia and Japan. The participants exchanged views on partnerships for training and capacity building to advance the performance of Peacekeeping activities and enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers. Japan will continue to promote initiatives to capacity-building, drawing on the experience gained through its support for ASEAN countries and its bilateral relations with the region. This year June, Japan will co-chair the TPP Stakeholder's Workshop in Ha Noi together with Viet Nam and Australia, where Member States can reflect on achievements and exchange candid views on future partnerships in TPP.

g. Defense Cooperation

The ADMM-Plus provides a framework for addressing a wide range of security issues common to the region. Japan is committed to this framework with the aim of developing the forum into a key pillar of regional security cooperation. Within the ADMM-Plus, seven Experts' Working Groups (EWGs) have been established to increase concrete military-to-military cooperation in handling security issues common to the region. Japan is taking part in each ADMM-Plus EWG to further enhance regional security cooperation by actively exchanging views with other countries and making proposals as follows;

In the first cycle, from 2011 to 2013, Japan acted as a Co-Chair of the EWG on Military Medicine with Singapore, and conducted field training exercises on HA/DR and military medicine in Brunei in June 2013.

In the second cycle, from 2014 to 2017, Japan, together with Lao PDR, co-chaired the EWG on HA/DR. During this period, Japan concentrated its efforts on formulating a standard operating procedure (SOP) for the establishment and management of a Multinational Coordination Center (MNCC) so as to amplify the activities of assisting foreign forces that are accepted by disaster-affected countries in the event of natural or other disasters. In August 2015, for example, a table top exercise (TTX) was conducted in Lao PDR. In September 2016, exercises on HA/DR and military medicine, AM-Hex 2016, were conducted in Thailand in order to test the final draft of the SOP. At the 9th EWG meeting on HA/DR in December 2016, the SOP was adopted and it has been on the track of discussion in the framework of ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) since then.

In the third cycle, from 2017 to 2020, Japan actively participated in and contributed to each EWG.

In the fourth cycle, from 2021 to 2024, Japan assumed with Viet Nam the role of Co-Chair of the EWG on PKO, and successfully convened the first EWG meeting under the new cycle in April 2021 by taking up Women, Peace and Security (WPS) as the main discussion topic. This led to the establishment of the WPS Platform under the fourth cycle of the EWG on PKO, and since then, the Co-Chairs convened WPS seminars by inviting eminent experts from the UN. In September 2023, the Competency Evaluation Program for Prospective UN Peacekeepers (CEPPP) was held in Viet Nam under EWG on PKO. The program consisted of classroom lectures and scenario-based exercise to validate coordination procedures such as how UN Military Observers

should coordinate with engineers and medical personnel. Throughout the cycle, Co-Chairs contributed to enhancing partnerships as well as the knowledge and skills participants require to undertake UN PKO mission tasks, including WPS.

In the fifth cycle, from 2024 to 2027, Japan is co-chairing EWG on Maritime Security with the Philippines. Co-chairs have convened the EWG meeting four times: in November 2024 in the Philippines, in March 2025 in Japan, in October 2025 in the Philippines, and in March 2026 in Japan. Through a series of meetings, participants raised awareness on the climate change and marine environmental protection, disaster response, as well as Women, Peace and Security. Japan will work towards maintaining maritime order governed by the rule of law, not force or coercion through practical cooperation.

The ADMM-Plus is a vital framework that provides the member countries with opportunities to conduct multilateral talks on a wide range of regional security issues in an open manner. Japan believes it is important to keep this framework open without putting any restriction on the issues to be addressed in the forum, while allowing the participating countries to discuss a wide range of issues in a candid manner.

4. Role of the ARF

a. National contributions to enhancing the ARF and regional security

Considering the regional security environment, the role of the ARF in promoting dialogue and cooperation among a wide range of actors and fostering confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the region is more important than ever. Japan has actively contributed to the ARF activities, including through its role as co-chair of all Inter-Sessional Meetings (ISM) on maritime security, non-proliferation and disarmament, counter-terrorism and transnational crime, disaster relief, and cybersecurity.

b. Future of the ARF

In an increasingly complex regional security environment, it has become even more crucial for ARF members to promote confidence-building and advance preventive diplomacy through sectoral cooperation and security dialogue to achieve regional peace and stability. Japan will actively contribute to these efforts based on the ARF Manila Plan of Action (2026-2036), which is expected to be formulated this time.


Lao PDR

I. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

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.

II. 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.

III. National Contributions to 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 153 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, the Xiangshan Forum 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 is honoured to assume the Presidency of the Third Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (the 3RC CCM), which will take place in Vientiane from 14–18 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 on 21–25 November 2022 via videoconference, and the Lao PDR has successfully completed its co-chairmanship with Canada and China of the ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief for the cycle 2018–2023. Additionally, the Lao PDR, Malaysia and the People's Republic of China will jointly host the 3rd ARF Workshop on Urban Emergency Rescue from 17–21 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.

IV. Role of the ARF

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), as a multilateral forum with ASEAN as the primary driving force, has played an important role in promoting mutual understanding, confidence and trust among diverse participants through dialogue and practical cooperation, thereby contributing positively to the maintenance and promotion of peace, stability and development cooperation in the region and in the world.

In light of growing traditional and non-traditional security challenges, and moving forward, all participants should build upon the achievements made thus far, including through joint initiatives, and move the ARF process forward at a pace comfortable to all ARF participants, taking into account the diversity of the Asia-Pacific region, with a view to further enhancing mutual understanding, trust and confidence, and maintaining and promoting peace, stability and cooperation for development in the region and the world at large.

The Lao PDR stands ready to work closely with ARF participants to build upon the ARF's achievements and further strengthen and move the ARF process forward at a pace comfortable to all ARF participants, with a view to further enhancing mutual understanding, trust and confidence, thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of peace, stability and cooperation for development in the region and the world at large.



Malaysia

A. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

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. National Security and Defence Policy

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.

Total Defence Expenditure on Annual Basis

In 2025, operating expenditure is RM13.64 billion and development expenditure is RM7.49 billion, bringing the total defence allocation to RM21.13 billion. This represents 1.1% of Malaysia's gross domestic product (GDP).

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 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 interfaith 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.

D. Role of the ARF

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) remains an indispensable pillar of the regional security architecture, offering a unique and inclusive platform for open dialogue, trust-building, and cooperation among its 27 participants. Following the successful conclusion of Malaysia's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2025, Malaysia remains deeply committed to ensuring the ARF's relevance amid an increasingly complex and dynamic geopolitical landscape.

Since its establishment in 1994, the ARF has fostered meaningful engagement on political and security issues, notably through Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) and Preventive Diplomacy (PD). These efforts have laid the crucial groundwork for mutual understanding and regional stability. However, the evolving nature of global threats, including great power competition, maritime disputes, cyber vulnerabilities, climate change, and public health emergencies — demands a more agile and forward-looking response.

Looking ahead, Malaysia fully supports the implementation of the new ARF Manila Plan of Action that provides a timely roadmap that ensures that the ARF remains relevant, action-oriented and future-ready. As the Forum enters this next phase, it is vital that these blueprints be guided by a thorough assessment of the contemporary security environment, ensuring they address the diverse needs of member states while strictly upholding the principles of ASEAN Centrality and unity.

Malaysia also recognises the critical role of non-state actors in complementing state-led initiatives. Engaging civil society, academia, and the private sector continues to enrich ARF discussions with fresh perspectives, technical expertise, and innovative policy ideas. Inclusivity and multi-stakeholder collaboration are essential to enhance the legitimacy and sustainability of the Forum's initiatives in the coming decade.

Closer coordination between the ARF and other ASEAN-led mechanisms is equally essential. Greater policy coherence across these platforms will allow for more comprehensive and effective responses to security challenges that cut across sectors and borders.

Malaysia remains committed to an ARF that is adaptive, responsive, and fit for purpose — one that builds on the gains of the 2020–2025 cycle while boldly shaping its next chapter. Through sustained dialogue, deeper engagement, and forward-looking ideas, the ARF can remain the premier platform for security dialogue and cooperation across the wider Asia-Pacific.

Ultimately, Malaysia views the ARF as a living institution that must keep evolving to stay effective. Through proactive diplomacy, stronger collaboration, and inclusive policymaking, the ARF can help anchor a resilient, rules-based, and inclusive regional order.

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

Overview of the Regional Security Environment

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 geographically strategic position, connecting the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. In recent times, 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 stipulated in 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. 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 clearly stipulates that:

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

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

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 percent 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, Laos, 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 (2018–2022).

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.

Role of ARF

19. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) plays a vital role in promoting regional peace and stability by providing an important platform for dialogue and consultation on current and emerging security issues, as well as avenues for cooperation. In addressing regional security challenges, ASEAN Member States shall continue to emphasis joint actions and collective efforts towards a more secure and stable region.

20. With regard to the role of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the contributions of ASEAN Member States, grounded in the principles of coordination and cooperation, are essential to maintaining regional peace and stability. Moreover, non-traditional security challenges—including natural disasters, terrorism, maritime security, transnational crime, epidemics, food and energy security, human security, cybercrime, climate change, and global warming—continue to pose significant concerns for the region. In this context, ASEAN Member States should continue to enhance information-sharing, capacity-building, and the conduct of joint exercises and training programmes.

21. ASEAN Member States shall continue to enhance regional peace and stability through strengthened cooperation, and encourage all States Parties to accede to the Additional Protocol to the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ). In this regard, they shall further intensify collaboration in addressing both traditional and non-traditional security challenges that may affect regional peace and stability, including threats posed by extremism and terrorism, disaster management, information security, drug trafficking, human and arms smuggling, transnational crime, irregular migration, money laundering, piracy

and maritime security, climate change, pandemic and infectious diseases.

22. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which follows a three-stage process of security cooperation—namely confidence-building measures, preventive diplomacy, and conflict resolution—was established to promote consultation among countries. As the geopolitical landscape of the Asia-Pacific region continues to evolve, the ARF faces a dynamic set of challenges and opportunities. While the ARF has traditionally focused on confidence-building and conflict resolution, it must expand its scope to effectively address contemporary security concerns in order to remain relevant.

23. Looking ahead, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has significant potential to foster regional stability and security. By promoting a three-stage process of security cooperation, the forum can contribute to the development of a more predictable and constructive pattern of relationships within the Asia-Pacific region. Additionally, the ARF's unique position, with its broad membership encompassing major powers, provides a valuable platform for dialogue and consultation, helping to mitigate tensions and build trust among nations.



New Zealand

Our Region

1. New Zealand and the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have a history of cooperation dating back over 50 years, and we celebrated the elevation of our relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2025. The ASEAN-New Zealand Plan of Action for the period 2026-2030 supports cooperation across four pillars of Peace, Prosperity, People and Planet. This includes flagship initiatives such as the establishment of the ASEAN-New Zealand Vision Fund, expansion of the Manaaki New Zealand Scholarship Programme (MNZSP) for ASEAN and the ASEAN New Zealand Trade Academy.

2. As ASEAN's second Dialogue Partner and now as a Comprehensive Strategic Partner, New Zealand supports ASEAN's valuable contribution to peace, stability and prosperity to the Indo-Pacific region as it is central to New Zealand's own security and economic well-being. The region is facing a number of serious challenges and New Zealand meaningfully engages in the regional security architecture on the key strategic and security issues facing the region and supports regional economic integration and resilience.

3. New Zealand values our participation in ASEAN-led architecture, including the East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) and ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus). These channels provide us with the means to coordinate our efforts with ASEAN and regional actors so that together, we may work collectively to secure a more stable, prosperous and resilient Indo-Pacific. ASEAN centrality is a core tenet of New Zealand's approach to the Indo-Pacific region, in line with New Zealand's overarching objective of regional peace, prosperity and stability. Effective regional architecture plays an important role in shoring up such centrality.

4. Regional bodies such as the ARF, EAS, and ADMM-Plus have an important role to play in promoting the principles, rules and norms that New Zealand values in the Indo-Pacific, such as openness and inclusivity, ASEAN centrality, transparency, freedom of navigation and overflight, adherence to international law, open markets, and respect for sovereignty.

5. When it comes to new and emerging security threats, close regional cooperation is increasingly important as the nature of threats continues to evolve. New Zealand is working to ensure that our country and our region are equipped to deal with the emerging risks such as those posed by the increased use of technology, security impacts of climate change and actors seeking to challenge the existing regional and international rules and norms.

6. We must continue to use the ARF for dialogue and cooperation to build confidence and capacity, to manage differences, and to reduce the risk of misunderstandings that might lead to conflict.

Overview of the Regional Security Environment

Geostrategic Tensions

7. A key security issue discussed amongst the ARF membership is the illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by its neighbour, an ARF member, Russia. The invasion continues to have serious implications for global peace, security and economic stability, including in our Indo-Pacific region. This has been highlighted by the DPRK's deployment of troops and transfer of military equipment to Russia in support of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, in clear contravention of multiple UN Security Council resolutions. We call on Russia to act in a manner consistent with its international obligations and responsibilities and to end this war immediately. New Zealand will continue to stand with Ukraine, and work to uphold the rules-based international system that is critical to ongoing peace and security in our region.

8. New Zealand wants to see the crisis in the Middle East end as quickly as possible through a permanent negotiated solution. It is critical that we work together to mitigate the severe economic disruptions caused by closure of the Strait of Hormuz. These impacts are being felt widely across the Indo-Pacific, including by our smaller Pacific Island partners. Fuel prices have risen and cost-of-living pressures have increased. But our interests also go beyond the immediate crisis. We are deeply concerned that the closure of the Strait, or the imposition of tolls or other restrictions, could set a precedent for other significant international waterways, if free and unimpeded passage is not swiftly restored. It is critical that international law and the principles of freedom of navigation are upheld.

9. New Zealand welcomes the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. It is an opportunity to end the conflict and move towards a lasting peace. However, we remain deeply concerned by the humanitarian situation in Gaza. We continue to urge parties to adhere to the ceasefire, to allow the flow of humanitarian aid into and throughout Gaza, and all parties to abide by their obligations under international law. New Zealand will also continue to advocate for the parties to urgently work towards a two-state solution, where Israelis and Palestinians can live side-by-side in peace, security, and dignity.

10. New Zealand strongly condemns the military coup in Myanmar and reiterates our grave concerns about the political and humanitarian crisis there. We continue to call for a cessation of violence, the release of those unjustly detained, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and inclusive dialogue, and urge all parties to prioritise the protection of civilians in adherence to International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law. New Zealand supports ASEAN's efforts to fully implement the Five-Point Consensus.

11. We remain deeply concerned by increasing tensions in the South China Sea. Any miscalculation or accident could lead to sudden and unpredictable escalation. We consistently call on all claimants to refrain from actions which escalate tensions, and to instead peacefully resolve disputes in accordance with international law, in particular the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the constitution for the oceans. Prosperity and stability in the Indo-Pacific region depends on a secure maritime environment and the peaceful resolution of maritime disputes. All ARF members have an interest in avoiding miscalculations, the maintenance of the regime of maritime zones and the freedoms of navigation and overflight

in the South China Sea, in accordance with international law, in particular UNCLOS.

12. New Zealand has a strong interest in peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. We are concerned by increased tensions and encourage the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues, without the threat or use of force or coercion.

13. The volatility of the Korean Peninsula remains one of the greatest long-term threats to regional security. We are concerned at the intensity of DPRK's ballistic missile tests, in contravention of multiple UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions and are deeply troubled by reports that the DPRK may be preparing for a further nuclear test. It is critical that there is a strong, unified international response condemning the DPRK's actions if it conducts a nuclear test. New Zealand continues to call for the full and effective implementation of sanctions in accordance with all relevant UNSC Resolutions. We urge the DPRK to take steps to ensure the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of North Korea. We also welcome all efforts to reduce tensions, resume dialogue, and achieve peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Trade and Economic Architecture

14. New Zealand is strongly committed to an open, rules-based trading system and considers that enhanced economic integration is one of the most effective means of ensuring longer-term regional security and prosperity. New Zealand is committed to pursuing multilateral, plurilateral and bilateral trade agreements that support this goal. New Zealand also aims to strengthen the broader regional trade architecture to ensure it is resilient to future shocks. For New Zealand, APEC continues to be the premier regional body for pursing trade and economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region.

15. The ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) is an important mechanism for New Zealand to deepen economic ties and grow two-way trade with ASEAN. AANZFTA entered into force in 2010 and was upgraded on 21 April 2025 to modernise the agreement, address barriers faced by exporters and introduce new provisions including on sustainability and supporting the flow of essential goods in times of crisis.

16. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), signed by the then ten ASEAN members plus Australia, China, Japan, Korea and New Zealand, entered into force in January 2022. Covering 30% of global GDP, it is the biggest trade agreement in the world by geographical coverage. The rules and norms set by RCEP make trade simpler to navigate and provide greater confidence to businesses. RCEP is due to be reviewed in 2027 to identify possible improvements to the text. There are a number of economies going through the application process to accede to RCEP.

17. CPTPP is New Zealand's premier open-plurilateral free trade agreement. It involves 11 other economies, four of which are ASEAN economies, including Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Singapore, and Viet Nam. Of the current nine aspirants, three are ASEAN economies - Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. CPTPP economies together account for more than 15% of global GDP and receive more than a third of New Zealand's exports. The CPTPP-ASEAN Trade and Investment Dialogue was launched in November 2025, on the margins of the CPTPP Commission. The Dialogue identified opportunities for cooperation on supply chain resilience and trade facilitation, digital trade, and in support of the global trading environment.

18. In addition to regional agreements, New Zealand has other bilateral FTAs or Closer Economic Partnerships with many other ARF

members, including China, the Republic of Korea, Australia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong and Chinese Taipei.

Climate Change and Security

19. In addition to the traditional security threats, the impacts of climate change and related policy responses on human security, on secure supply chains, on access and servicing of critical infrastructure cannot be underestimated. Climate change is one of the greatest threats to the livelihoods, security, and well-being of peoples in the Indo-Pacific. The ARF membership has a role to play in considering climate change issues and the benefits of effective policy response in the Confidence-Building Measures and Preventative Diplomacy work plan of the ARF.

New Zealand's Security and Defence Policy

20. As a founding member of the United Nations, respect for international norms and law is fundamental to New Zealand's approach to promoting security, stability and peace. While geographically isolated, New Zealand is impacted both by intensifying geostrategic competition and by transnational threats such as climate change, terrorism, arms proliferation, organised crime, and cyber-attacks. The New Zealand Government is working to maintain a secure and resilient New Zealand that is protected as a free, open, and democratic society for future generations. Recognising this, New Zealand is highly committed to multilateral solutions to security threats and the promotion of effective international rules. New Zealand takes a multi-layered approach to security that includes strong bilateral relationships, multilateral avenues, regional partnerships, and support for regional architecture and institutions. We see ASEAN-centred regional security architecture as having an increasingly important role in bringing countries together and providing a forum for discussions. These forums fulfil an important role promoting understanding, embedding habits of dialogue and facilitating practical military-to-military cooperation.

21. New Zealand has a strong interest in fostering and maintaining a network of robust international relationships. Efforts to achieve this include:

    - Significantly increasing New Zealand's focus on and resources applied to Southeast Asia, South Asia (in particular India), and North Asia
    - Applying renewed attentiveness to traditional and like-minded partners;
    - Sustaining our deeper and comprehensive focus on the Pacific, working closely with Pacific leaders, Australia, and other partners;
    - Targeted multilateral engagement on global or transboundary issues;
    - Supporting new mini-lateral groupings; and
    - Supporting Pacific and Indo-Pacific regional security architecture such as the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting (SPDMM), the ARF and the ADMM-Plus, in addition to the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (the Bali Process).

22. New Zealand's 2025 Defence Capability Plan states that New Zealand is facing its most challenging and dangerous strategic environment for decades. Intensifying strategic competition is increasing global and regional tensions and raising the prospect of military confrontation and conflict. The Indo-Pacific is a primary geographic theatre for strategic

competition, most visibly between China and the United States. China's assertive pursuit of its strategic objectives can challenge both international norms of behaviour and the security of other states. Of particular concern is the rapid and non-transparent growth of China's military capability.

23. Competition and tensions in the wider Indo-Pacific are also playing out in New Zealand's immediate region, which spans from Antarctica through to the South Pacific. Climate change remains the primary security concern for Pacific Island countries, and both climate change and growing strategic interest in the Pacific are layering on top of other regional security challenges.

24. In response to this deteriorating strategic environment, the 2025 Defence Capability Plan established new strategic defence policy settings – Strategic Defence Policy 2025 – that reflects the Government's high ambition for New Zealand's defence policy. This includes: a particular focus on enhancing New Zealand's alliance with Australia and New Zealand's other most important security partnerships; increasing New Zealand's contributions to global collective security efforts that strengthen the existing international rules-based order; and emphasising the critical and non-discretionary importance of ensuring the security of New Zealand's immediate region.

25. Within an overall policy approach that prioritises acting early and deliberately to protect New Zealand's defence interests and deter actions contrary to New Zealand's security, Strategic Defence Policy 2025 set out three new Defence Policy Objectives: protect and promote the security of New Zealand and the immediate region; enhance the ANZUS alliance with Australia and New Zealand's most important security partnerships; and contribute to achieving New Zealand's global interests.

26. Strategic Defence Policy 2025 recognises that New Zealand has a particular interest in Indo-Pacific security. This is where New Zealand's security partners are closely engaged, where Defence contributions would be expected, and where New Zealand's economic and strategic interests converge. New Zealand Defence will focus on contributing to activities that reinforce the existing international rules-based order, such as exercising rights and obligations under UNCLOS, and supporting the sovereignty and security of regional states.

New Zealand's Contribution to Regional Security

27. New Zealand is as an active contributor to regional security across a broad range of areas including Counter Terrorism, TSOC, Disarmament, Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief, Maritime Security, and the Cyber domain, as well as support for the Pacific and the Pacific Islands Forum.

28. New Zealand remains firmly committed to countering and preventing terrorism and violent extremism in all forms, and to combatting transnational organised crime. Under the New Zealand Transnational, Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2026-2030, New Zealand aims to unify its efforts through an end-to-end system-wide governance model to prevent, detect, and dismantle TSOC threats. A strong focus of the Strategy is international partnerships and New Zealand engages to prevent, detect, and respond to offshore threats. New Zealand works at the multilateral, regional, sub-regional and bilateral levels, with a particular focus on the Indo-Pacific region.

29. Dedicated funding helps New Zealand complete its Plan of Action with ASEAN, particularly in areas of border control; legislation; law enforcement; policy; irregular migration; and prevention/counter radicalisation and

countering the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs). Most recently, New Zealand established a Peace Pillar flagship under our Plan of Action with ASEAN aimed at disrupting transnational organised crime activity by providing sustainable capacity and capability building to ASEAN law enforcement and border management agencies to detect, disrupt, and dismantle transnational criminal networks.

30. In line with our commitment to reduce the risk of Southeast Asia being a target or source of terrorism we continue to strengthen efforts to support partners to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks. This includes activities to counter the root causes of violent extremism by building resilient communities, and invigorating mechanisms that promote coordination of counterterrorism policy both within governments and across the region.

31. Breaking down the silos that impede cooperation within governments and the barriers that hinder cooperation between governments is necessary to tackle these significant and complex transnational security threats. New Zealand seeks to work closely with our partners in the region to help achieve coherence in policy and practice, including ASEAN-centred initiatives such as those under the umbrella of the ARF.

32. Capacity building in Southeast Asia is a significant focus of New Zealand's global counterterrorism engagement. We have long-standing relationships with institutions in the region such as the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation and the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (Malaysia). New Zealand also contributes Defence personnel to the multinational Counter Terrorism Information Facility located in Singapore.

33. New Zealand agencies continue to deliver scheduled courses in the region, primarily through New Zealand Police, New Zealand Customs Service and Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). They include:

- Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) through Community Engagement Course – delivered in person in May 2025 with further courses planned for 2026. The course focuses on cooperation between Counter Terrorism (CT) units and Police, and Government / Non-Government Organisation (NGO) stakeholders to develop a multi-agency approach to CVE. New Zealand Police (NZ Police) provided two trainers to support the development and delivery of training content through the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC).
- International Cybercrime Investigations Workshop (ICIW) – jointly delivered by the NZ Police, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) at JCLEC. ICIW seeks to address knowledge and skills gaps in Cyber and Technology Enabled Crime (TEC) Investigations, with a focus on three thematic areas – cybercrime, child exploitation / online engagement and digital forensics.
- Victoria University of Wellington STIK (Indonesian National Police Higher Education) Masters Course – a collaborative initiative between Victoria University of Wellington and NZ Police, held annually with Indonesia National Police (INP) to build collaborative educational relationships. The most recent course took place in December 2025 with INP students travelling to New Zealand to attend. A further course will take place in late 2026.

- Transnational Serious Organised Crime (TSOC) International Cooperation Course – delivered in May 2025 at JCLEC by the New Zealand Police, the New Zealand Customs Service and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). The course aims to facilitate regional and strategic cooperation across ASEAN in combating TNOC, with 24 participants attending this course from a range of ASEAN Countries.

- Ad hoc in-regions contributions - Additionally, the New Zealand Police Senior Liaison Officer (SLO) based in Bangkok, and the two New Zealand Police Liaison Officers (PLOs) based in Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur, have continued to participate in localised training and presentations, maintain and strengthen partnerships, and facilitate cooperation on criminal matters.

34. New Zealand remains concerned about irregular migration and its regional impact. As part of our contribution to managing security and humanitarian challenges posed by irregular migration, New Zealand is an active member of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (the Bali Process). This includes our work alongside Viet Nam in co-chairing the Working Group on Disruption of Criminal Networks Involved in People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons. The working group facilitates collaboration on concrete, action-oriented activities for enhancing law enforcement and border security coordination. In addition, New Zealand provides support for regional capacity building, including targeted capacity building assistance to ASEAN members on people smuggling, and transnational organised crime.

35. An important tool in combatting transnational organised criminal and terrorist groups, is the targeting of their financial systems and processes. In this regard, New Zealand works closely with the Asia-Pacific Group (APG) on Money Laundering to support the coordination of technical assistance and training in the Pacific. Since 2017, New Zealand has funded APG's "Pacific Cell" to improve implementation of Anti-Money Laundering/Countering Financing of Terrorism ('AML/CFT') standards across 12 Pacific jurisdictions and Timor-Leste.

36. Additionally, New Zealand has funded and organised a number of regional capacity building workshops for ASEAN countries on key related issues, including anti-money laundering/counter-terrorist financing standards, cybersecurity, terrorist prosecutions, chemical and nuclear security, major event security, and maritime and aviation security. These efforts are complemented by significant bilateral work to build individual national capability, especially within law enforcement agencies.

37. New Zealand participates in multilateral initiatives which engage on counter-terrorism projects in the region. These include the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), through which we are pleased to continue our support on CVE initiatives in the Philippines.

38. In addition to our work in Southeast Asia, New Zealand also works with Pacific Islands Forum member countries to strengthen the region's capacity to respond to a range of shared security challenges. New Zealand is a Pacific country, and as such, has a strong commitment to our region's security as set out in the Biketawa and Boe Declarations and more recently through the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. As a region, we strive to work together to preserve our security and our sovereignty. The Boe Declaration on Regional Security affirms an expanded concept of security encompassing traditional and non-traditional

challenges encountered by the region, with climate change recognised as the preeminent security threat to the region. Other priorities include human security, environmental security, transnational, serious and organised crime (TSOC), and cybersecurity.

39. New Zealand strongly supports the implementation of the Boe Declaration, and channels this through programmes related to climate change, information sharing, leadership training, cybersecurity, TSOC, and national security policy development.

40. New Zealand supports Pacific-led initiatives to reduce social harm from drugs, as well as options to enhance maritime surveillance capabilities and coordination to mitigate the threat of TSOC. This includes support through New Zealand's International Development Cooperation. New Zealand's work in the Pacific on humanitarian and disaster response supports Pacific governments to implement disaster preparedness, response and early recovery activities. New Zealand's primary geographic focus is on delivering humanitarian support in the Pacific that saves lives, alleviates suffering, and helps maintain human dignity. New Zealand's response to a disaster offshore depends on identified needs at the time and requests from the affected country government.

41. These programmes are in addition to the number of initiatives New Zealand supports through the Pacific Islands Forum, including regional discussions and consensus building to our shared security priorities.

42. New Zealand supports Pacific regional organisations such as the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police Secretariat, Oceania Customs Organisation and the Pacific Immigration Development Community and contributes to their consideration of, and responses to, regional security issues. New Zealand also provides technical assistance, capacity building, and mentoring for law enforcement and border agencies in the region.

43. In 2023, Pacific Islands Forum Leaders adopted the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent implementation plan. The plan includes over 100 specific high-level actions designed to help Forum Members and Forum Dialogue Partners deliver against the region's aspirations, priorities, and values for the next 30 years. This is a critical document for any partner undertaking, or considering, cooperation with Pacific countries.

44. Another area of international and regional security in which New Zealand engages actively is disarmament and arms control. The New Zealand Disarmament and Arms Control Strategy 2024-2026 identifies our priority objectives in this area, the context in which we are pursuing them, and the means through which we aim to achieve them. The three broad priorities outlined in the Strategy are (1) promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation; (2) defending international humanitarian law and promoting the protection of civilians, and (3) helping to shape norms and rules on outer space and autonomous weapon systems respectively.

45. New Zealand strongly supports the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC). New Zealand's position stems from concern about the humanitarian effects of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, and our support for international humanitarian law. Until 2023, New Zealand was the coordinator for National Implementation Measures in the CCM, and we have produced model legislation for possible use by small states with no history of use or contamination.

46. New Zealand has a strong legacy of supporting unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance, risk education and victim assistance in

Southeast Asia. New Zealand currently provides support to the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre, and funds mine action work in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar.

47. New Zealand is a strong supporter of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). New Zealand ratified the TPNW in 2018 and continues to encourage non-signatory states to sign the Treaty, and signatories to ratify it. Currently New Zealand co-chairs the TPNW's work on universalisation. New Zealand has also continued to actively promote nuclear disarmament more generally, including through our membership of the New Agenda Coalition and our work in the NPT context to improve transparency and reporting under the review cycle's disarmament review pillar.

48. New Zealand is a strong proponent of nuclear weapon-free zones because of their helpful role in reinforcing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation commitments. New Zealand is party to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone (Treaty of Rarotonga) and we have had legislation in place since 1987 creating a New Zealand Nuclear-Free Zone. New Zealand strongly encourages all Nuclear Weapons States to ratify the Protocols to Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones, including the South East Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ) and the Treaty of Rarotonga, without any reservations or interpretative declarations.

49. New Zealand supports the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as an important contribution to regional and global security. We have welcomed ratification of the CTBT by Annex 1 and 2 states in the region and encourage ARF participants to ratify this important treaty.

50. New Zealand is a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which provides the global focal point for nuclear cooperation and safeguards. In the period 2020 to 2022, we served as a member of the IAEA Board of Governors, the Agency's primary policymaking organisation. New Zealand is in full compliance with its safeguard obligations and routinely urges all states to sign Additional Protocol agreements with the IAEA. We support international projects involving the peaceful use of nuclear energy, including through the IAEA's Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology for Asia and the Pacific.

51. New Zealand joined the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) in 2007, and, alongside over 80 GICNT partners, is committed to preventing nuclear or radiological material falling into the hands of terrorists. New Zealand has contributed to the GICNT in the Indo-Pacific region by: developing a table-top exercise kit for use by other GICNT partners in testing their own national response systems; supporting radioactive source security projects in Southeast Asia; providing funding support to GICNT workshops in the Indo-Pacific region; and helping its Pacific island neighbours address the risk of nuclear/radiological security.

52. New Zealand is a strong proponent of enhancing nuclear security. In 2016, New Zealand ratified two key nuclear security treaties: the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. In 2016, New Zealand also enacted a new Radiation Safety Act to ensure its legislative framework for the safety and security of nuclear and radioactive material meets current international best practice. Additionally, we make annual voluntary contributions to the IAEA's Nuclear Security Fund.

53. New Zealand is a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. We have provided financial assistance to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to support the Organisation's work in Syria. We routinely speak out strongly against the use of chemical weapons, including by Russia in Ukraine, and in Sudan. In March 2024 we sponsored a capacity-building workshop for Pacific Island countries, focused on implementing legislation for the Chemical Weapons Convention, and in 2024 participated in Biological Weapons Convention universalisation and implementation workshops in Southeast Asia and in the Pacific.

54. New Zealand has in place a comprehensive national export control regime. This is informed by our active membership of the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Australia Group, the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Zangger Committee. New Zealand chaired the Missile Technology Control Regime 2019-2020.

55. New Zealand is an active participant in and contributor to the Proliferation Security Initiative. Our involvement, which has included our membership of the Operational Experts Group and participation in both exercises and capacity building initiatives, has enhanced New Zealand's capabilities to prevent proliferation activity both nationally and in collaboration with partners. New Zealand has developed (and shared with PSI partners) a Model National Response Plan which provides easy-to-follow guidance on the range of issues that need to be considered in developing a framework for responding to proliferation situations. As part of the PSI Asia-Pacific exercise rotation, New Zealand hosted a PSI table-top exercise in Wellington in 2015 and we are currently scheduled to host an exercise in 2026. New Zealand would welcome further adherence to the PSI throughout the Indo-Pacific as part of a coordinated effort to reduce the threat of WMD proliferation.

56. Given the role played by the unregulated global arms trade in fuelling conflict, New Zealand is a strong supporter of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which we ratified in 2014. The ATT is an important contributor to international and regional peace, security and stability. We have been engaged in a breadth of initiatives that support universalisation and greater implementation, of the Treaty, including recently as Chair of the Treaty's Voluntary Trust Fund which has as its core objective the assistance of State Parties to implement the Treaty. In our national capacity, New Zealand has sponsored the development of ATT model legislation and a model control list, both of which can assist countries to implement their domestic obligations under the ATT. New Zealand looks forward to continuing to work closely with its ARF partners on universalisation and implementation of the ATT.

57. New Zealand's work on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief also contributes to regional security. The Indo-Pacific region is increasingly afflicted by disasters that underline the need to continue deepening practical and effective cooperation in relation to disaster reduction, readiness, response and recovery. New Zealand has been an active participant in ARF and EAS discussions about preparing for and responding to regional disasters. New Zealand supported a number of humanitarian responses in South and Southeast Asia in both 2024 and 2025, supporting the delivery of lifesaving assistance following the impact of typhoons and floods in the Philippines, in Viet Nam, in Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, and remains a longstanding supporter of the humanitarian response in Myanmar, and the Rohingya refugee response in Bangladesh.

58. New Zealand is continuing to play its part in deepening regional capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters. We do this drawing on

lessons learned from New Zealand's experience with the Christchurch earthquakes (2011) and Cyclone Gabrielle in early 2023. New Zealand is committed to further cooperation and implementation of work plans in ARF, ADMM-Plus and EAS contexts. Disaster risk management is a priority study area for our knowledge and skills investments in the Indo-Pacific region. We are pleased to be working with Singapore in co-chairing the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on HADR for the 2024-2027 cycle. Through our co-chairship we continue to demonstrate New Zealand's commitment to promoting practical military cooperation in HADR responses, as well as strengthening civil-military coordination in the HADR domain.

59. New Zealand has been a solid proponent of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance in disaster management (AHA Centre) since its inception in 2011, training ASEAN officials in disaster response leadership and contributing technical expertise to the Centre. Through the Strengthening Institutional Capacity of ASEAN in Disaster Management (SICAP) Phase II initiative (2026 – 2030), we are continuing to bolster the capacity of ASEAN member states in disaster management and emergency response through supporting the AHA Centre with design and implementation of e-learning solutions, establishment of a training network and study visits to New Zealand.

60. Maritime Security, including the preservation of secure and sustainable oceans, is fundamental to New Zealand's security. Accordingly, New Zealand released a refreshed Maritime Security Strategy in 2024, building on the 2019 version and reflecting the importance of maritime security as one of the 12 core issues in our National Security Strategy. The Maritime Security Strategy focuses on protecting New Zealand's maritime border, marine resources and regional maritime security interests, recognising the cultural and environmental significance of the oceans for New Zealand.

61. New Zealand is not alone in facing these complex challenges and we value our maritime cooperation with ARF partners. For New Zealand's part, we have been actively involved in the implementation of the ARF's maritime security work plan, and in sharing our experiences on various maritime security-related issues. In particular, we have been active sharing our experience upholding the rules-based system relating to the oceans, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, transnational crime, and marine environment issues.

62. Connectivity is a crucial driver of our region's growth. However, with increased connectivity comes increased exposure to cyber threats. New Zealand remains concerned by the growing number of cyber incidents globally, including activity undertaken by both state and non-state actors. These incidents underscore the importance of adherence to and implementation of the framework of responsible state behaviour online, comprised of international law, norms of responsible state behaviour, confidence-building measures, and capacity-building.

63. New Zealand sees the ARF as an important forum to support implementation of the framework of responsible state behaviour online, and to improve transparency, understanding and confidence among regional partners in cyber space. To this end, we were pleased to again participate in the Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of ICTs in April 2026, and the associated Study Group on Confidence-Building Measures, and we look forward to further cooperation in this area. We welcome constructive proposals made in this work stream, including Malaysia and Australia's ongoing work to maintain a point of contact directory, and the Singapore-EU initiative to hold a workshop on the Protection of ICT-Enabled Critical Infrastructure.

New Zealand's Contributions to Enhancing the ARF and Regional Security

64. For New Zealand, the ARF is a key mechanism for security engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and part of our broader relationship with ASEAN and its Member States. The ARF contributes to building an environment of dialogue and cooperation on a wide range of regional security issues. It is also contributing in an important way to the development of international norms and principles on security that are directly relevant to this region. The large number and sheer diversity of practical ARF projects under implementation during the current intersessional year reflects the ARF's value in helping Members to respond to contemporary security challenges facing this part of the world.

65. New Zealand also attaches considerable importance to working with its ARF partners to advance the ARF's preventive diplomacy agenda, in line with the ARF's three-stage evolution. In the 2023-2024 ARF intersessional year, New Zealand co-chaired the Intersessional Group Meeting on Confidence Building Measures and Preventative Diplomacy (ISG on CBMs and PD) and the Defence Officials' Dialogue alongside Lao PDR. For the 2025-2026 ARF intersessional year, New Zealand will co-chair these two meetings again alongside the Philippines. New Zealand is also co-chairing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament workstream with the Philippines and Australia in 2027. We value these opportunities to contribute to dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest, and to contribute to efforts towards confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific region.

66. New Zealand is committed to working with its ASEAN partners to ensure coherence between the ARF and other pieces of the regional architecture, in particular the EAS and ADMM-Plus. While the ARF and ADMM-Plus have their distinct mandates and different memberships, greater functional coordination on issues that straddle multiple fora would help to achieve streamlining of efforts and eliminate unnecessary duplication of activities. Such issues include disaster relief/management, cybersecurity and maritime security. New Zealand also actively supports efforts to strengthen the EAS, to ensure it can fulfil its role as the region's premier forum for leaders to address strategic issues and risks.

Future of the ARF

67. The ARF is a forum that was established with the aim of fostering habits of constructive dialogue on issues of concern. At the ARF's outset it was envisaged that the Forum would move as part of its evolution from a confidence building phase to preventive diplomacy, and finally to conflict resolution. The ARF has constructed a solid base of confidence building measures and made progress in the field of preventive diplomacy. It has the potential to do more, particularly given the current geostrategic environment and rapid deterioration of the rules-based order.

68. New Zealand supports the ARF in increasing its capacity and effectiveness in the preventive diplomacy space and encourages all participants to keep an eye to the future to ensure we are well-equipped when we move into the conflict resolution phase.

69. New Zealand remains committed to the principles of peace and security underpinning the ARF. We encourage dialogue and capacity building among members to achieve our collective aims in strengthening regional security. At a time of heightened geopolitical tensions, our ability to come together, engage in dialogue and share experiences to resolve tensions is more important than ever.



Pakistan

Overview of Regional Security Environment

The world has entered a new phase of transformation due to enormous shifts in the worldwide security landscape, regional realignments, and the rise of new challenges such as climate change, pandemics, poverty, starvation, xenophobia, terrorism, Islamophobia, natural disasters, insurgencies, WMD proliferation, disruptive technologies, migration from conflict and natural disastrous zones, civil strife, transnational organized crimes, security of trade routes, cybercrimes and abuse of social media.

Pakistan believes that regional and international peace, security and long-term prosperity depend on international conduct consistent with UN Charter as well as principles of peaceful coexistence with neighbors. However, strategic stability is increasingly under strain, particularly in South Asia. Unresolved disputes and competition for regional and global influence threaten long-term stability. Pakistan calls for renewed global commitment to dialogue, diplomacy, and cooperative security offers to ensure a safer, more just world for all.

Situation in South Asia

India-Pakistan Relations Post-Pahalgam Attack

Following the Pahalgam incident on 22 April 2025, India hastily attributed responsibility to Pakistan without a shred of evidence and undertook a series of unilateral and hostile measures. Pakistan categorically rejected these allegations and called for an independent and transparent investigation by neutral experts, which was not accepted by India.

The situation escalated significantly when India attacked Pakistan on the night of 6–7 May 2025, jeopardizing regional peace, and setting a dangerous precedent for arbitrary aggression. Pakistan was constrained to respond in line with Article 51 of the UN Charter to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Pakistan's response was mature, calibrated and restrained targeting only military installations. The escalation resulted in casualties; however, timely diplomatic engagement by key international partners facilitated a ceasefire on 10 May 2025, followed by further military-level contacts.

Pakistan's conduct throughout the crisis reflected restraint, responsibility, and commitment to regional stability. Its calibrated response reinforced credible deterrence while upholding the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity in accordance with international law. The international community largely viewed Pakistan's actions as measured and legitimate, contributing to de-escalation and crisis containment.

India, in parallel, sought to project a "new normal" in bilateral relations under the pretext of responding to alleged aggression. Pakistan, however, demonstrated through its measured and restrained response that the only sustainable "new normal" rests on respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Concurrently, India undertook a diplomatic campaign aimed at portraying Pakistan as a source of regional instability and cross-border terrorism. These efforts failed to gain significant international traction. In contrast, Pakistan engaged actively with global stakeholders, including major capitals and multilateral forums to present its position and promote peace, resulting in broader understanding and support for de-escalatory efforts.

A further destabilizing development was India's unilateral suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) on 23 April 2025. Pakistan has observed material breaches of IWT by India since May 2025. Such breaches directly threaten the lives and livelihoods, as well as food and economic security of the 250 million people of Pakistan. India is attempting to use water as a tool of coercion and manipulation. Such weaponization of water resources threatens regional peace and development. India also continues to build illegal dams in sheer disregard of the Treaty obligations and technical criteria, to impose 'fait accompli.' With building of dams, Indian capacity to store and manipulate water is also increasing, which is a matter of extreme concern for Pakistan. Pakistan raised the matter at multiple international platforms, highlighting its illegality and potential to undermine regional stability. The issue drew increasing international attention, with calls from various quarters, including human rights and parliamentary forums, for restoration of the treaty framework and adherence to established mechanisms.

Indian leadership continues to make belligerent statements against Pakistan. In October 2025, Indian Defence Minister publicly threatened to "erase the history and geography" of Pakistan. Several statements have also been made to the effect that the so-called Operation Sindoor continues to be operational. India continues to maintain an atmosphere of hostility and uncertainty, which poses threats to peace and security of South Asia.

Despite persistent tensions, Pakistan continued to demonstrate its commitment to humanitarian principles and people-to-people engagement. Measures such as facilitation of religious pilgrims, consular access, and cooperation on prisoner releases underscored Pakistan's constructive approach even in a strained bilateral environment.

Notwithstanding these efforts, the overall trajectory of India's policies characterized by an assertive posture, disinformation campaigns, and a narrowing domestic space for dialogue has complicated prospects for sustained engagement. Pakistan remains committed to a comprehensive, result-oriented dialogue on all outstanding issues between Pakistan and India, including the core Jammu and Kashmir dispute, emphasizing that durable peace and stability in South Asia require restraint, mutual respect, and adherence to international law and bilateral agreements. The international community should play its role in peaceful settlement of these disputes, in the interest of a lasting peace in South Asia.

Afghanistan

A peaceful, stable, and prosperous Afghanistan is crucial for regional peace, stability and economic integration.

With the Taliban takeover in August 2021, Afghanistan has entered another complex phase. The Afghan economy remains fragile due to continued sanctions, banking restrictions, unemployment, and widespread poverty. International expectations on terrorism remain unfulfilled, and regional and international terrorist organizations based in Afghanistan continue to pose a serious threat to regional and global security. The situation of human rights, particularly women's access to education and employment, has worsened. The humanitarian crisis is deepening due to a decline in international assistance amidst shifting donor priorities.

Pakistan has been an important development partner of Afghanistan, with assistance focusing in the areas of infrastructure, education, health, agriculture and human resource development.

Pakistan has supported Afghanistan in setting up multiple healthcare facilities across the country, including three hospitals in Kabul, Jalalabad, and Logar. Pakistan is also a significant partner of Afghanistan in the education and human resource development sectors. Pakistan has been offering fully funded scholarships to over 4,500 Afghan students to address their capacity-building needs.

At regional and international forums, Pakistan is proactively engaged with regional countries and the international community on addressing Afghanistan's multifaceted challenges. As part of these platforms, Pakistan has advocated for capacity-building initiatives and humanitarian assistance for the Afghan people.

Pakistan has also been supporting efforts to leverage Afghanistan's potential as a regional connectivity hub. Pakistan's active engagement in connectivity projects including TAPI, TAP, CASA-1000 and Trans-Afghan Railway Project is aimed towards this end.

The terrorist threat emanating from Afghan soil in the form of Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), and their affiliates remains a serious security challenge. Since the Afghan Taliban's takeover in Kabul, terrorist attacks against Pakistan emanating from Afghan soil have intensified. In the last year alone, Pakistan has suffered over 5,300 terrorist incidents and lost close to 1,200 lives in these incidents.

Today, Afghanistan is a safe haven for multiple terrorist groups with serious implications for regional and global security. The presence and activities of regional and international terrorist organizations in Afghanistan has also been documented by the UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team. The TTP, the largest terrorist group with around 6,000 fighters, benefits from logistical and operational support from the Afghan Taliban regime, as reported by the team.

The Afghan Taliban regime's continued patronage of terrorist organizations belies their commitments to the international community that they would not allow Afghan soil to be used for terrorism against any other country. While Pakistan has repeatedly urged the Afghan Taliban regime to undertake concrete actions against all terrorist groups operating from Afghan territory, the terrorist groups continue to threaten the security and stability of Pakistan and other regional countries.

The international community should play a constructive role by urging the Afghan Taliban regime to stand by its counterterrorism commitments under the Doha Agreement and fulfill its responsibilities towards regional and global peace and security. Pakistan believes that lasting peace, stability and development in the region can only be achieved with the eradication of the terrorist threat stemming from Afghan soil.

The Russia-Ukraine Conflict

Pakistan's policy on the Russia-Ukraine conflict has remained consistent, principled, and non-partisan. We stand for the universal and consistent application of fundamental principles of the UN Charter: self-determination of peoples, non-use or threat of use of force, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of states. Developments in Europe are also important for Pakistan as Europe is one of our biggest trading, economic, and diplomatic partners. Pakistan is neither a cheerleader nor an enabler of this conflict; rather we are an indirect victim of it in terms of the effect of the conflict on energy and food security. Hence, the issues of war and peace in Europe impact us gravely. We are a staunch advocate of dialogue, the use of peaceful means, and the exercise of diplomacy for resolving disputes. We welcome the recent talks among the US, Ukraine, and Russia in the UAE and hope that these diplomatic efforts bring a just and lasting peace to Ukraine.

Combating International Terrorism

Pakistan condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Despite bearing the brunt of terrorism for over two decades, Pakistan remains a steadfast bulwark against this global menace. These efforts underscore Pakistan's pivotal role as a guarantor of regional stability and a responsible actor in the global counter-terrorism architecture. Over 95,000 Pakistanis have lost their lives and the nation has endured direct economic losses exceeding US $150 billion in this struggle.

Our challenges remain diverse and include continued presence and operation of multiple terrorist organizations in Afghanistan, including Indian proxies; continued Indian attempts to destabilize Pakistan, including through targeted assassinations and use of terror proxies and use of internet by terrorists and extremists' groups for the purposes of radicalization and increase in Islamophobic attacks globally. Terrorist incidents increased exponentially post August 2021, reflecting the spillover from Afghanistan. In 2025 alone, Pakistan suffered more than 5,300 terrorist incidents and lost close to 1,200 lives due to terrorism, including from attacks by proxies from Afghanistan. Afghan based terrorists, including TTP and ISIL-K are repeatedly involved in cross-border attacks. TTP has become an umbrella organization and has increased its activities in Pakistan with the support of Indian agencies and rough elements within IAG. Many terrorist organizations, including TTP are using sophisticated weapons left by the ANDSF in Afghanistan to launch terrorist attacks in Pakistan. The use of these weapons has increased the lethality of attacks and loss of lives.

However, despite this, Pakistan achieved significant success in CT domain including against ISKP. Through coordinated intelligence, targeted operations, and strengthened border management, we have degraded ISKP's networks and prevented their consolidation on our soil, contributing to broader regional and global stability. Our efforts resulted in tangible successes with extra regional impact, including apprehension of the Abbey Gate master mind Sharifullah, ISKP media spokesperson Sultan Aziz Azam and foiling of the attacks against the Paris Olympics to name a few.

Any CT strategy can only be successfully implemented if the State has the necessary capacity and resolve to eradicate terrorism and enjoys public support. Accordingly, Pakistan has taken comprehensive steps to address challenges posed by terrorist groups at each stage to prevent, be it indoctrination, recruitment, threat mitigation, physical action, state cooperation to eliminate safe havens and end terror financing.

- Pakistan's Cybersecurity Strategy (2023-28) and Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act have enhanced cyber resilience and proactive monitoring of the terrorism threat, including by addressing cyber-related offenses, hate speech, unauthorized access to information systems and use of electronic platforms for terrorism. Since 2023, 12,913 requests have so far been forwarded to various Social Media Companies for removing objectionable content related to terrorism or extremism in 2024, and content in 6,368 cases was removed which is 41.3 %.
- National Peace Narrative: Paigham-e-Pakistan is a state-led national narrative and consensus religious decree issued in 2018 to counter terrorism, extremism, sectarian violence and to promote peace, tolerance and social cohesion in Pakistan. It represents a unanimous declaration by approximately 1,800 Ulema from all major schools of thought that terrorism, suicide attacks, takfir and armed rebellion against the state or its institutions are unjustifiable and forbidden in Islam. It has been translated into Arabic and English. It draws on Qur'anic principles, Hadith, and Pakistan's Constitution, declaring peace, coexistence and law-abiding conduct as central to Islamic and national norms. The narrative has also received international religious endorsements,

including from senior Islamic scholars in Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Egypt and Indonesia. Paigham-e-Pakistan serves as a cornerstone of Pakistan's CT architecture by offering a religiously authoritative, nationally credible non-kinetic strategy to delegitimize violent extremism and reinforce state legitimacy.

- Public awareness & outreach programs, especially for youth & national poster contests, aimed to detect early signs of extremism. Radio programs, podcasts, and video messages in regional languages have helped promote peacebuilding and community awareness.
- Specialized CFT Units assist in identifying financial dimensions and terrorism-related investigations.
- Proscribing individuals and entities domestically and in line with UNSC's sanctions regimes have helped monitor their activities and blocking their access to arms and finances.
- Conduct vigilance against external sponsorship and financing of terrorism and assassination campaigns by our adversaries and geo-politics is also a major factor in fueling terrorism, including through supply of weapons and finances to terrorist organizations.
- Inter-agency sharing of actionable intelligence on real time basis has enhanced ability to carry out CT operations in a swift manner in the kinetic domain and data analytics are utilized to monitor and analyze patterns of radicalization and terrorist activities. A comprehensive monitoring regime implements sanctions and e-Portals monitor the activities of sanctioned individuals and entities across the country.
- Pakistan's National Action Plans of 2014 & 2021 form the blueprint for our CT efforts. The National Prevention of Violent Extremism Policy (2024) is mitigating factors fostering terrorism, including by monitoring social trends & avenues promoting radicalization and intolerance. For structured implementation of this Policy, a 5C framework was introduced: advocating a culture of peace & inclusivity, empowering vulnerable communities, developing robust communication strategies, overhauling educational curricula for peace & tolerance, and providing comprehensive support systems (duty of care) for victims & those involved in extremism.
- Capacity building trainings for law enforcement officials, bomb disposal units, investigators, prosecution and provincial departments and eLearning centers have contributed significantly towards boosting operational capability. National Cybersecurity Academy (NCSA) and National Cybercrime and Forensics Lab have enhanced Pakistan's capacity to counter cyber-terrorism and online radicalization. The National AML/CFT Authority Act established a central authority for coordination and collaboration among government organizations.
- AML/CFT Regulations (2020) ensure compliance with international standards while preventing money laundering and terrorist financing and balancing security concerns with protection of civil liberties. E-Courts have been established to address witness protection and security risks. Research and policy efforts focus on de-radicalization and rehabilitation of convicted terrorists, ensuring a rights-based approach.

The global fight against terrorism is not over. Our world today is increasingly becoming interconnected in a globalized environment. With the advent of modern ICTs, dark web, crypto currencies and AI, the available platforms for organizing and recruiting online by terrorists have increased manifold. Given their transnational nature, terrorists are exploiting limitations of national jurisdictions to evade detection and prosecution under pretexts of data protection and privacy.

Failure to address new and emerging forms of terrorism including extreme right wing and far right, xenophobic and Islamophobic ideologies has worsened trends in terrorism. There is a need to address root causes of terrorism that include poverty, social and economic injustice and prolonged unresolved conflicts, aggression, foreign occupation and the state attempt to conflate terrorism with the right to self-determination. There is also a need to distinguish between terrorism and exercise of the legitimate right of people to resist foreign occupation.

We must take necessary steps to increase, intensify and integrate international CT cooperation efforts through collective endeavors and greater multilateral collaboration, the importance of which cannot be emphasized enough.

Pakistan has the will and capability to defeat terrorism and we remain committed in our resolve to support international efforts to jointly combat this menace.

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

As a responsible nuclear state, Pakistan subscribes to the mutually reinforcing objectives of ensuring equal and undiminished security for all and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. Pakistan has put into place robust legislative, regulatory administrative and enforcement mechanisms to regulate the transfer of sensitive goods and technologies.

The following measures have been undertaken by Pakistan in this context:

- In pursuance of its commitment to non-proliferation and to regulate the export of sensitive and dual-use goods, items, and technologies, Pakistan enacted the Export Control Act on Goods, Technologies, Materials, and Equipment related to Nuclear and Biological Weapons and their Delivery Systems, also known as the Strategic Export Control Act (SECA), in September 2004. This legislation underscores Pakistan's dedication to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ensuring stringent controls over the export of critical materials and technologies.
- Pursuant to SECA-2004, Strategic Export Control Division (SECDIV) was set up in 2007 in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. SECDIV is responsible to regulate and administer the exports of strategic goods and technologies. SECDIV also leads inter-agency consultation to take immediate effect to the decisions taken by the UN Security Council (UNSC), and the rules under the Export Control (Licensing and Enforcement) notified in 2009. These rules set out complete procedures for licensing. enforcement, investigation, prosecution and implementation of the Act. In August 2018, Pakistan established

Inter-Agency Committee for Coordination, Review and Monitoring Committee (CRM Committee) to effectively implement, supervise and monitor the enforcement of UNSC resolutions/decisions on countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

- Pakistan has notified the revised Control Lists of Goods, Technologies, Material and Equipment related to Nuclear and Biological Weapons and their Delivery Systems on 13 October 2025 which is consistent with practices, guidelines and control lists maintained by multilateral export control regimes including the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and Australia Group (AG).
- Pakistan has also declared adherence to the National Security Group (NSG) Guidelines and shown keen interest in joining the four export control regimes i.e., NSG, Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), AG and Wassenaar Arrangement.
- Pakistan has joined Nuclear Security Contact Group (NSCG) to contribute to advancing implementation of nuclear security commitments and building a more strengthened, sustainable and comprehensive global nuclear security architecture.
- As participant of Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) since 2007, Pakistan has been proactively participating in its various activities.
- Nuclear security regime of Pakistan includes not only technological systems, but the human resources needed to manage, operate, administer and maintain equipment.
- Pakistan Centre of Excellence for Nuclear Security (PCENS) and National Institute of Safety and Security (NISAS) have been established for human resource development and technical support for effective in the area of nuclear safety and security. These institutions collaborate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to impart trainings at the regional and global levels.
- Pakistan is also party to the international conventions and treaties on nuclear safety and security such as Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS), Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and its Amendment and IAEA code of conduct on the safety and security of radioactive sources.
- Pakistan has been submitting its reports on the implementation of the UNSC 1540 Resolution to the 1540 Committee. So far, Pakistan has submitted 6 reports to the Committee. In-line with the provisions of UNSCRs 1540 (2004), 1810 (2008), and 2325 (2016), Pakistan also offers technical assistance to several countries to help them in implementing the provisions of the UNSCR 1540 (2004).
- Pakistan is committed to its obligation under UNSCR 1540 (2004), with a view to strengthening the global framework to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, biological and radiological material to the non-state actors.

New and Emerging Technologies

- Pakistan recognizes the indispensable importance of new and emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Cyber for socio-economic progress of states and calls for fair, equitable and non-discriminatory access to new and emerging technologies for the developing countries.
- However, being fully aware of the risks associated with the unregulated military

applications of new and emerging technologies, and their impact on global peace and security, Pakistan calls for a legally-binding instrument to ensure the responsible uses of new and emerging technologies in military domain

- Pakistan has been playing an active role in the multilateral discourse on Military Applications of Al and Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). Pakistan believes that Al enabled military capabilities, in the absence of human control, increase the likelihood of miscalculations, accidents and evoke asymmetric responses, and can heighten nuclear risks, thereby lowering the threshold for use of force and armed conflict.
- In this regard, Pakistan has submitted a concrete proposal in Group on Governmental Experts (GGE) established under Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) on a legally binding instrument or a new Protocol under the CCW proposing prohibitions and regulations relating to LAWS. Similarly, in the Conference onDisarmament (CD), Pakistan submitted a working paper in July 2023 proposing the CD to examine and address the security and stability impacts of military uses of Al.

Artificial Intelligence in Military Domain

Pakistan is actively participating in REAIM (Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain). Pakistan cosponsored United Nations General Assembly's resolution 79/239 titled, "Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain and its Implications for International Peace and Security." Pakistan is also hosting the regional consultation on REAIM in Islamabad in 2025, to steer discussions in South Asia, West Asia and Middle East.

Outer Space

- Being concerned about the risks to safety and sustainability of Outer Space for the peaceful uses and the growing nature and extent of threats owing to the employment of space based objects and resources for military purposes, such as the development and deployment of Anti-Ballistic Missile systems and their integration into space assets as well as the testing of Anti-Satellite weapons, Pakistan calls for the formulation of a comprehensive treaty on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS).
- Pakistan regularly co-sponsors the resolution on PAROS under UN General Assembly each year, calling on the CD to establish a working group on PAROS as early as possible. Pakistan has also been co-sponsoring every year since 2013 the resolution titled "No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space."

Chemical Weapon Convention

- Pakistan established the National Authority on Chemical Weapons Convention (NA CWC), under CWC Implementation Ordinance-2000. It over sees implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention ensures chemical safety and security and conducts regular national and international trainings and awareness/outreach programmes. It also coordinates the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) inspections in Pakistan. Till the date, OPCW has conducted 25 inspections in Pakistan
- Pakistan continuously updates its regulatory framework and is currently in the process of updating CWC Implementation Rules (2010) to further broaden the scope of safety and security procedures and guidelines in procurement, production, storage, transfer, usage, import and export of scheduled chemicals.

Biological Weapon Convention

- Since ratification of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) in 1974. Pakistan has instituted a comprehensive legislative, regulatory and administrative framework to regulate life sciences in Pakistan and to strengthen export control systems on biological agents and toxins. The scope of the controls is consistent with those followed by the Australian Group.
- Pakistan has been submitting Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) under the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) as a useful tool for increasing transparency and building trust among State Parties in implementation of the convention.
- The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (Implementation) Act, was adopted into legislature in December 2025 making Pakistan one of first countries in the region to have a standalone national legislation to give effect to provisions of Biological Weapons Convention.

Transnational Organized Crimes

Pakistan has remained at the forefront of global policy formulation and norms setting on drug-related issues. Pakistan, like many fellow countries, has been affected by the drug problem. It has long been exposed to the negative and wide-ranging consequences of illicit poppy cultivation, production, manufacturing, trafficking, and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in one of our neighboring countries. Pakistan has enjoyed a Poppy-Free Status since 2001. However, Pakistan continues to grapple with transnational drug trafficking.

Pakistan is signatory to all three international drug control conventions, which constitute the cornerstone of the international drug control approach. It has been a leader in global counter-narcotics efforts and is playing a prominent role against the illegal trafficking, production, and use of drugs.

At multilateral fora, including the UN, Pakistan continues to advocate for a holistic and balanced approach in addressing the World Drug problem including addressing new and emerging challenges. Pakistan has also been elected as a member of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) for the term 2026-29 and is committed to working with other members of the Economic and Social Council and the wider United Nations membership to further strengthen the role of the CND as the primary global policy-making body, ensuring that international drug control regime remains comprehensive, effective and consistent with the requirements of the three United Nations Conventions on Drugs. Pakistan has previously served as a member of the Commission from 1969-99, 2002-2005, 2008-2019 and 2020-2023.

At the domestic level, Pakistan has devised a comprehensive national legal framework to combat drug trafficking, which includes the

Anti-Narcotics Policy 2019, and have taken additional measures like creation of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Counter-Narcotics, revision of the Precursors Control Regime, and the launch of "Project Amaan,' and devising an Al-driven database of criminals related to narcotics and money laundering. As a longstanding partner in international drug control efforts, Pakistan remains committed to further strengthening multilateral cooperation on the subject.

Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons

Being a country of origin, transit and destination for smuggled migrants and trafficked persons, migration and Trafficking in Persons (TIP) related issues hold special importance for Pakistan. Pakistan is actively working on the international and domestic level to make migration orderly and safe to deny any space to Traffickers and Smugglers to operate. Pakistan is a party to United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and acceded to the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) protocol in 2022.

Pakistan's National Action Plan 2021-2025 on Combating Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling focuses on, i) Legislative/ Policy formulation; ii) Capacity Building; iii) Public awareness; and, iv) Regional and International cooperation. Pakistan has enacted two Legislative Instruments namely Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2018 and Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act 2018 which are in line with International Protocols under United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC). Under these laws, rules have been approved by the cabinet for their effective implementation. To further strengthen our legal framework, we have also launched a National Action Plan on Countering Migrant Smuggling (2026–2031).

To complement our efforts for curbing this challenge, we continue to call on the international community to focus on addressing the root causes of irregular migration, particularly by bridging economic disparities among developing and developed countries and by enhancing legal pathways of migration. While States retain the sovereign right to strengthen their border security, this right should be consistent with international law and human rights of migrants, irrespective of their status. Restrictive visa and border control regimes would further aggravate the problem and force people to avail services of human smugglers.

The international community needs to take notice of the root causes of illegal migration, including bridging economic disparities among developing and developed countries and the addressing the absence of safe, affordable and legal pathways for migration.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

In the field of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, below are Pakistan's major recent contributions:

Evacuation and Relocation of Afghans under Pakistan's Humanitarian Safe Passage Program

After establishment of Taliban government in Kabul in August 2021, Pakistan facilitated the evacuation of members of the international community including diplomats and staff, representatives of international organizations, INGOs, media and other travelers from Afghanistan. Simultaneously one of the main objectives of the NATO and its allied countries was to evacuate at-risk Afghans from Afghanistan. In this regard, Pakistan in coordination with the concerned countries developed an evacuation plan namely Pakistan's Humanitarian Safe Passage Program. This is an ongoing process and under the plan, CMU had been designated as focal desk in the Ministry to coordinate evacuation related tasks. Evacuation/ relocation of Afghan nationals to 3rd countries remained continued in by the end of 2025 more than 89,000 Afghan nationals had been evacuated/relocated to 25 different countries.

Humanitarian Assistance for the People of Palestine

In the background of ongoing crisis in Gaza Strip, so far Ministry of Foreign Affairs (CMU) in coordination with other stakeholders mainly NDMA has managed to operate 26 special air crafts and 3 cargo ships of humanitarian assistance including blankets, medicines, food packs, gift bags for children, hygiene kits, tents and other relief items for the people of Gaza. In the last one year CMU coordinated 15 humanitarian consignments ant delivered 1344 tons of aid to our brothers and sisters in Palestine.

Evacuation Mission to bring back stranded Pakistanis after fierce fighting broke out in Syria

In accordance with directives of the honourable Prime Minister of 9 December 2024, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (CMU) immediately initiated the process of evacuation of Pakistanis from Syria through Lebanon. On 13 December 2024, 318 stranded Pakistanis in Syria were successfully repatriated to Pakistan through a special chartered flight operated from Beirut to Islamabad.

Humanitarian Assistance to Malaysia

In the wake of recent severe flooding in Malaysia, on the directives of the honourable Prime Minister, CMU in coordination with NDMA arranged and dispatched a humanitarian relief consignment carrying 40 tons of relief assistance on December 7, 2024 for the affected people of Malaysia through air cargo from Islamabad.

Incident of Boat Capsizing in South of Greece

On 14 December 2024, three small boats capsized in the southern waters near Crete, Greece. The vessels were overloaded with passengers and lacked essential safety equipment such as life jackets. The boats had originated from Libya, apparently transporting undocumented migrants. In the maritime incidents, a total of 131 individuals were rescued, including 47 Pakistani nationals while 7 dead bodies were also retrieved. Out of 7 dead bodies five individuals have been identified as Pakistanis.

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs activated its Crisis Management Unit (CMU) with a specific focus on establishing a dedicated

helpline and briefings for families of individuals involved in the incident.

- CMU has assisted in identification of deceased Pakistanis and arranged DNA tests of relevant families in Pakistan as per exact requirements provided by the Greek authorities.

Boats Incident in Zawiya city of Libya

In the aftermath of maritime incident occurred on 5 February 2025 at Zawiya city of Libya, dead bodies of 16 Pakistanis recovered by the coastal authorities were repatriated to Pakistan in 3 batches between 25 and 28 February 2025

Repatriation of Dead Bodies from Iran

On April 12, 2025, a terrorist attack in Mehrestan City, Sistan-Baluchestan province, Iran claimed the lives of eight Pakistani nationals. The victims, all auto mechanics from Punjab's Bahawalpur District, were working at a local car repair shop when armed assailants raided the facility. The attackers bound the workers before executing them at close range and subsequently fled the scene. The location of the attack was approximately 230 kilometers from the Pakistan-Iran border. The repatriation operation for the eight Pakistani nationals has been successfully completed with a special Pakistan Air Force C-130 aircraft on 17 April 2025

Repatriation of Pakistani Nationals from Iran and Iraq

In the aftermath of Israel attack on Iran in June 2025 and evolving security situation in Iran &Iraq, a total of 7,629 Pakistani nationals were evacuated from Iran while 1,236 people were evacuated from Iraq.

Role of ARF

Pakistan's engagement with the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) since 2004, along with its accession to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, reflects its commitment to promoting regional peace and stability through multilateral cooperation. This engagement is guided by principles that closely align with the ARF's objectives, particularly the promotion of dialogue, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and respect for international law.

Future challenges of ARF and Pakistan's Contributions

Multilateralism

Pakistan remains firmly committed to upholding international law and the principles of the United Nations. It consistently advocates the peaceful settlement of disputes, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, through dialogue and diplomatic engagement. This approach is fully consistent with the emphasis of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) on rules-based mechanisms for dispute resolution.

Pakistan also actively participates in ARF Ministerial and Inter-Sessional Meetings on key areas such as maritime security, disaster relief, non-proliferation, and preventive diplomacy, thereby demonstrating its continued commitment to constructive multilateral cooperation.

Counterterrorism and Transnational Crime Cooperation

Pakistan has actively contributed to the ASEAN Regional Forum's (ARF) efforts to address terrorism, violent extremism, and transnational crime. It supports relevant regional work plans and has endorsed ASEAN declarations on counterterrorism, reflecting its commitment to collective regional responses to these threats.

Pakistan continues to share its experience and best practices in countering extremist violence, thereby contributing to the ARF's preventive diplomacy and confidence-building objectives.

At the national level, Pakistan has strengthened its counterterrorism architecture through the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) and the continued institutional strengthening of the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA). The establishment of the National Intelligence Fusion and Threat Assessment Centre (NIFTAC) in 2025 has further enhanced inter-agency coordination and intelligence sharing to address evolving terrorist threats. In addition, the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act, 2023 has reinforced Pakistan's legal framework for prosecuting terrorism financing and cross-border militancy.

Cyber-Security and Digital Economy

Recognizing the growing strategic significance of cyber cooperation, Pakistan has placed cybersecurity at the forefront of its engagement with ASEAN and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). In this regard, Pakistan hosted the ASEAN–Pakistan TEXPO in Islamabad in April 2025, which brought together 18 delegates from ASEAN member states and provided a platform to explore avenues of collaboration in emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, robotics, and the cyber domain.

Pakistan has also established comprehensive national frameworks to strengthen cybersecurity and actively promotes cooperation in capacity-building and digital governance. The Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), 2016 of Pakistan provides the legal foundation for addressing cybercrime, data protection, and online safety in Pakistan.

In addition, Pakistan regularly participates in ARF inter-sessional meetings on ICT security and supports the development of regional norms promoting responsible state behavior in cyberspace. Similarly, Pakistan's National Cybersecurity Policy 2021 seeks to create a secure and resilient digital ecosystem by protecting critical information infrastructure and encouraging public–private partnerships.

Climate and Environmental Security

Recognizing that environmental degradation and climate change constitute major non-traditional security challenges, Pakistan is aligning its national priorities with the ASEAN Regional Forum's (ARF) focus on environmental cooperation and resilience-building. As one of the countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, Pakistan is acutely aware of the global nature of this threat and the need for collective action. In this context, Pakistan stands ready to work closely with ARF member states and contribute meaningfully to regional initiatives related to climate change and environmental security.

At the national level, Pakistan has taken a number of legislative and policy measures to address climate challenges. The Climate Change Act 2017 provides the institutional and legal framework for meeting international climate commitments and responding to the impacts of climate change. Together with the National Climate Change Policy, it outlines a comprehensive strategy focusing on adaptation, mitigation, and capacity-building. Pakistan has also launched several large-scale initiatives to combat environmental degradation, including nationwide a forestation programs such as the Billion Tree plantation initiative.

These legislative frameworks and practical initiatives provide valuable experience that can contribute to strengthening ARF's capacity in addressing climate change and environmental risks. Pakistan also actively participates in ARF meetings on environment and disaster relief and supports collaborative regional approaches to climate adaptation, disaster preparedness, and risk reduction.

Food Security

Food insecurity is another emerging challenge across the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) region, where rapid population growth, climate change, supply chain disruptions, and rising food prices continue to affect access to affordable and nutritious food.

In Southeast Asia alone, around 118 million people experienced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2023, highlighting persistent vulnerabilities in regional food systems.

Pakistan recognizes that food insecurity is closely linked with climate stress, agricultural productivity, and rural livelihoods, and has taken several policy and institutional measures to address the issue. The National Food Security Policy (2018) guide Pakistan's efforts to enhance agricultural productivity, strengthen food supply chains, and promote sustainable farming practices, while programs such as wheat support mechanisms, climate-resilient agriculture initiatives, and food assistance schemes aim to safeguard vulnerable populations.

Drawing on its experience as a major agricultural producer, particularly in crops such as wheat and rice, Pakistan can contribute to ARF cooperation through sharing best practices in food production, climate-resilient agriculture, agricultural research, and capacity-building. Strengthened collaboration in these areas could support ARF member states in improving regional food resilience, ensuring stable supply chains, and advancing the shared objective of sustainable food security.



Papua New Guinea

I. Assessment of the Regional Security Environment

Papua New Guinea assesses the regional security environment in 2026 as increasingly complex, shaped by a convergence of geopolitical, environmental, and transnational challenges. The transition of the international system from unipolarity to contested multipolarity has intensified strategic competition in the Indo Pacific, placing heightened security significance on the Pacific Islands region. Papua New Guinea's geostrategic location situates it at the intersection of these evolving dynamics.

The Foreign Policy White Paper 2025 recognises the Pacific as an active theatre of geostrategic competition. Engagement by major powers—including the United States, China, Japan, and European partners—has expanded economic opportunity and diplomatic engagement, while also generating pressures on national sovereignty, regional cohesion, and strategic autonomy. Papua New Guinea continues to uphold the principle of "*Friend to All, Enemy to None,*" recalibrated through the guiding framework of **Strategic Partnerships for Security and Economic Prosperity**.

Climate change remains the most significant non traditional security threat to the region, as recognised by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in the 2018 BOE Declaration. Papua New Guinea assesses climate induced displacement, increasing disaster frequency, and competition over natural resources as direct threats to human security and political stability. These challenges reinforce a comprehensive security approach integrating development, resilience, and governance.

Key trends influencing Papua New Guinea's security outlook include:

- Intensifying geopolitical competition with attendant risks of coercive influence and strategic dependency.
- Potential global flashpoints, particularly in the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea, threatening critical sea lines of communication.
- Expansion of transnational crime networks exploiting porous borders and maritime spaces.
- Broadening security concepts encompassing human, environmental, health, cyber, and economic dimensions.

Papua New Guinea remains committed to the ASEAN Regional Forum as a central platform for preventive diplomacy, confidence building, and practical cooperation, particularly for small and middle powers within the Indo Pacific.

II. National Security and Defence Policy

Papua New Guinea's national security objective is to maintain a safe, secure, and stable environment that enables sustainable economic growth and human development. National efforts are guided by the **National Security Policy 2024–2029** and the **Foreign Policy White Paper 2025**, operationalised through a whole of government framework.

The recently established Papua New Guinea National Security Agency (NSA) coordinates six security communities—Strategic, Intelligence, Law Enforcement, Cyber, Scientific, and National Emergency—integrating policy development, intelligence sharing, and operational coordination.

Vision: *"Politically stable and economically independent in a secured system that is resilient in a changing environment."*

Mission: *"To develop an integrated security system capable of anticipating, adapting to, and responding proactively to threats."*

Priority National Security Challenges

Democratic Integrity and Political Stability

Securing the **2027 National Elections** remains a whole of government priority. Coordinated planning between the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) and the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC) focuses on violence prevention, electoral integrity, and public confidence. The **Bougainville post-referendum** process continues to be managed through constitutional dialogue and development oriented engagement.

Economic Sovereignty and Financial Integrity

Papua New Guinea is strengthening energy and economic security through renewable energy development and reduced reliance on imported refined fuels. Following Financial Action Task Force grey listing in February 2026, implementation of the National Anti Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing Action Plan has been accelerated, supported by a National Risk Assessment scheduled for September 2026.

Law and Order and Internal Security

Domestic security challenges include tribal conflict, small arms proliferation, gender based violence, youth unemployment, and corruption. The **Counter Terrorism Act 2024** enhances coordination between law enforcement and defence institutions to address organised violence and emerging extremist threats.

Defence Reform and Growth

Papua New Guinea is implementing a **20-year Defence Reform and Growth Strategy** to rebuild the PNGDF following prolonged capability decline. The initial reform phase focuses on personnel, training, logistics, and operations, followed by gradual capability development aligned with fiscal sustainability.

PNG's core defence objectives are to:

- Defend national sovereignty and protect territorial integrity and the Exclusive Economic Zone;
- Support domestic security, nation building, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief; and
- Engage constructively with international partners to promote regional and global peace and security.

III. Data Contribution to the ARF Arms Register

The Papua New Guinea Defence Force is undergoing phased reconstruction. The authorised force establishment exceeds 5,000 personnel, with current strength at approximately 3,057 personnel.

Financial Commitment: Government investment in national security totals approximately K1,142.5 million for the period 2023–2027, including sustained annual allocations averaging K250 million from 2024 onward.

Force Composition: The Land Force remains the principal component, supported by a Maritime Element operating Guardian class patrol boats and an Air Element focused on surveillance and logistical support.

Capability Development: Papua New Guinea is exploring a Memorandum of Understanding with Singapore concerning the establishment of a reservist program, subject to a Status of Forces Agreement.

IV. Contributions to Regional Security

Papua New Guinea contributes actively to ASEAN Regional Forum priorities, including counter terrorism, transnational crime, non proliferation and disarmament, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime security, ferry safety, and cybersecurity. National initiatives remain aligned with ARF statements, work plans, and confidence building measures, while recognising domestic capacity constraints.

V. Role of the ARF and Future Outlook

Papua New Guinea views the ASEAN Regional Forum as an indispensable mechanism for bridging Pacific and Southeast Asian security perspectives. Continued technical assistance, capacity building, and information sharing are essential to address emerging challenges, particularly in cyber, maritime, climate, and financial security domains.

The 2026 security outlook reflects strategic realism: acknowledging intensifying great power competition, the centrality of climate security, and the need for sustained domestic reform. Through the National Security Policy 2024–2029 and Foreign Policy White Paper 2025, Papua New Guinea has established an integrated national security architecture supported by long term defence reform and strengthened partnerships.

Papua New Guinea remains a committed and constructive participant in the ASEAN Regional Forum, dedicated to preventive diplomacy, confidence building, and practical cooperation in support of a safe, secure, and resilient Asia Pacific region.

God bless Papua New Guinea and the Asia-Pacific region.



Philippines

I. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

The Indo-Pacific region is an epitome of dynamism, accounting for one third of all global economic activity, 65 percent of the world's population, and three of the world's largest economies—China, India, and Japan.[1] Apart from its economic significance, the region contains critical maritime chokepoints such as the Strait of Malacca, Sunda Strait, Lombok Strait, and Luzon Strait, that are vital to global trade, energy security, and international economic activity.

Despite its myriad economic opportunities, the region is plagued with uncertainties due to the presence of regional flashpoints and tensions, amplified by the pressures emanating from the intensifying US-China rivalry. These include North Korea's missile development and threats which have worsened the situation in the Korean Peninsula, the rising violence in Myanmar following its protracted civil war in 2021, the border clashes between Thailand and Cambodia, as well as China's continued illegal, coercive, aggressive and deceptive (ICAD) activities in the South China Sea.

The geopolitical situation is rendered even more tenuous with the erosion of the international rules-based order and states' withdrawal from multilateralism. According to the Munich Security Report 2026, the world has now entered a period of "wrecking-ball politics" where states, including the US, increasingly withdraw from multilateral frameworks, and renounce international rules and institutions.[2] Conversely, some states' use of lawfare[3] in the form of wide-reaching domestic legislation, legal pronouncements on international law, strategic litigation, law enforcement and legal education to assert their illegal claims. China, for example, continues to employ lawfare to legitimize and enforce its maritime and territorial claims, including through the further expansion of its Coast Guard Law of 2021. This expansion was implemented through the "Provisions on Administrative Enforcement Procedures for Coast Guard Agencies 2024," a sweeping maritime regulation that authorizes Chinese Coast Guard commanders to detain foreign vessels and personnel for up to 30 days (or 60 for "complicated" cases) without trial[4] and selective interpretation of international law.[5]

The increasing volatility of the regional security landscape has contributed to the increase and expansion of defense and security partnerships, including through the emergence of minilateral arrangements such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS), US-Japan-Australia[6], US-Japan-Philippines[7], and US-Japan-South Korea (JAROKUS or Camp David Principles)[8] trilateral partnerships. Beyond security and defense, these arrangements tackle issues such as supply chain resiliency, technological cooperation, and the provision of public goods through health and humanitarian assistance.[9]

The Indo-Pacific also faces significant geoeconomic pressures from US tariff escalations, Chinese economic coercion, supply chain vulnerabilities, and the outbreak of the Middle East conflict. The steep tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump on Southeast Asian countries have significantly affected export-driven economies such as Malaysia, and Viet Nam. Given their deep integration into the US and China-linked supply chains, these countries experienced supply chain disruption and investment uncertainty.[10] These tariffs have undermined confidence in the US as a reliable economic partner driving many Southeast Asian states to seek bilateral exemptions, and diversify trade relationships.[11] These tariffs have since been struck down by the US Supreme Court on 20 February 2026 ruling that it overstepped the president's authority under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). It is unclear, however, if countries such as Cambodia, Malaysia, and Indonesia, which have already agreed to a 19 percent US reciprocal tariff, will be affected by the Supreme Court ruling.[12]

Furthermore, President Trump's unilateral approach to trade undermined multilateral systems like the World Trade Organization and alienated key allies such as Mexico and Canada.[13] China, on the other hand, has accelerated strengthening import substitution and technological self-reliance through the expanded Made in China 2025 strategy and its 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030) for national economic and social development.[14]

Meanwhile, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and the attacks on critical energy facilities in the Middle East have triggered an unprecedented energy crisis. This situation led to a surge in commodity prices, rising global inflation, and significant disruptions to commerce and trade. The situation in the Middle East disproportionately affected the Indo-Pacific region due to its dependence on energy from the Middle East. Furthermore, the instability has undermined the safety of overseas Filipinos and added substantial volatility to the global economic outlook.

Recent developments in technology are driving economic development and influencing the geopolitical balance. New technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) video and image generation are not only transforming media disinformation, but are also negatively impacting society through deepfakes and other forms of disinformation, contributing to political polarization and social instability. AI has also increasingly been incorporated into military operations with consequences for the region. There is a constant race in the region to adopt these new technologies such as AI, drones, and quantum computing.

These uncertainties pose challenges for an ASEAN that aspires to be the geographic and strategic center of the Indo-Pacific. Decisive action is essential if the organization is to contribute to upholding international law, restoring mutual trust and confidence, and promoting inclusive dialogue and cooperation. In this vein, the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) can be leveraged to promote dialogue, rules-based order, peaceful dispute resolution, while avoiding alignment with any single power.

II. National Defense and Security Policy

A. Overview of National Security and Defense Policy

The National Security Policy (NSP) 2023-2028, adopted on 10 August 2023, contains the guiding principles and defines the strategic direction of the Marcos, Jr. administration. The NSP complements the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028, as well as contributes to the realization of the long-term national dream of a "*Matatag, Maginhawa at Panatag na Buhay*" by 2040.

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).[15] Furthermore, the National Defense Strategy (NDS) 2025 codifies the AFP's strategic reorientation from internal security operations to external defense and deterrence.

The enactment of Republic Act No. 12024, or the Self-Reliant Defense Program (SRDP) Revitalization Act, in October 2024, strengthens the country's self-reliance by promoting the local production of defense material and incentivizing research and industrial development. [16]

The Philippines continues to diversify defense relations with like-minded states, as manifested by the signing of status of forces agreements with Japan[17], France[18], Canada[19] and New Zealand.[20]

B. Data Contribution to the ARF Arms Register

i. Total defense expenditure on an annual basis

For fiscal year 2026, the total new appropriations available for the DND amount to PhP 305.87 billion.[21] 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 will be used for capital outlay.

The approved defense budget is 12.48 percent increase from the PhP 271.92 billion in the previous year.[22] The defense budget also makes up for 4.5 percent of the total government budget of PhP 6.793 trillion for 2026.[23]

ii. Total number of personnel in the national armed forces and its percentage in population

Active military personnel[24]

Philippine Army	112,682 (0.10%)
Philippine Navy	27,890 (0.025%)
Philippine Air Force	21,393 (0.019%)

III. National Contributions to Regional Security

i. Counterterrorism

Promoting a People-Centered Approach to Counter-Terrorism

The Philippines has made measurable progress in containing internal security threats, climbing two spots to rank 23rd out of 163 countries in the 2026 Global Terrorism Index (GTI).[25] The improvement reflects a sustained downward trend in the frequency and impact of terrorist activity within the country's borders, though significant threats remain.

Two broad categories of armed groups continue to challenge national stability. The first consists of Local Terrorist Groups (LTGs), which include Daesh-linked factions such as the Dawlah Islamiyah and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF). The second is the Communist Terrorist Groups (CTGs), a classification that covers the interlocking elements of the Communist Party of the Philippines, its armed wing the New People's Army, and the National Democratic Front, collectively referred to as the CPP-NPA-NDF.[26] Both categories have demonstrated the capacity to mount attacks against civilian and military targets, making them the most persistent sources of domestic insecurity.

The government's primary legal instrument for confronting these groups is Republic Act No. 11479, or the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020, which replaced the earlier Human Security Act of 2007 with a more expansive framework for counter-terrorism operations.[27] Among the law's key provisions was the creation of the Anti-Terrorism Council (ATC), the body empowered to formally designate organizations as terrorist groups. The CPP-NPA and the Islamic State East Asia (ISEA) currently carry that designation, alongside several other IS-affiliated factions operating in the country.

Formal designation carries immediate financial consequences. Under Republic Act No. 10168, or the Terrorism Financing Prevention and Suppression Act of 2012, the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) holds the authority to freeze the assets of all listed organizations, a measure that cuts directly into their capacity to fund violent operations, sustain logistics, and recruit new members. The registry is not treated as a permanent record, however, and periodic evaluations keep it current and legally defensible. A review conducted in April 2024 reaffirmed the terrorist designation of the CPP-NPA, the ISEA, the Abu Sayyaf Group, and the Maute and BIFF factions.[28]

The NAP P/CVE and the NAP-UPD as Whole-of-Nation Frameworks

The National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, known as the NAP P/CVE, was adopted through ATC Resolution No. 38 in May 2019, partly in direct response to the devastation of the 2017 Marawi siege. Updated in 2023 to cover the period through 2028, the plan functions as a whole-of-nation roadmap that goes beyond purely military or law enforcement responses. It targets the political, economic, cultural, psychosocial, and religious conditions that make individuals vulnerable to radicalization, with six priority sectors identified for focused intervention: communities, persons deprived of liberty with terrorism-related cases, religious leaders, learning institutions, social media users, and overseas Filipino workers.[29]

The Philippines' NAP P/CVE is a direct response to the ASEAN Manila Declaration to Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2017). At the regional level, it operates within the broader framework of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent

Extremism (PoA PCRVE) 2018-2025, adopted at the 12th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) in 2018, and its corresponding Bali Work Plan 2019-2025. The Bali Work Plan involves 19 ASEAN sectoral bodies across four priority areas: prevention of radicalization, counter-radicalization and deradicalization, law enforcement, and regional partnership.[30]

A separate but complementary framework governs the Philippine government's approach to the communist insurgency. The National Action Plan for Unity, Peace, and Development (NAP-UPD) 2025-2028, formally adopted through Memorandum Circular No. 83 in May 2025, is the government's strategic blueprint for resolving the decades-long communist armed conflict through a combination of security operations, development programs, and reconciliation measures. Both the NAP P/CVE and NAP-UPD operate under the broader architecture of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), the inter-agency body established through Executive Order No. 70 in December 2018 to coordinate the whole-of-government effort against the CPP-NPA-NDF.[31]

Youth Radicalization into Communist Groups and the Residual CTG Threat

On 5 August 2025, the NTF-ELCAC and the Philippine Army affirmed President Marcos's declaration during the 2025 State of the Nation Address that no guerrilla fronts remained in the country, specifying that 89 NPA guerrilla fronts had been dismantled, with approximately 785 armed remnants remaining scattered nationwide.[32] Remnant CTG elements nonetheless continue to attack civilians and exploit digital platforms including social media, online games, and messaging applications to recruit youth. Philippine National Police (PNP) data from a Senate hearing in August 2024 reported that 168 students were recruited into communist terrorist groups between 2014 and 2024 across 102 educational institutions.[33] In March 2026, the NTF-ELCAC called on universities to elevate discourse on insurgency and youth recruitment, stressing that student protection and academic freedom are compatible goals.[34]

At the regional level, the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on the Use of Sports for Preventing Violent Extremism, adopted at the 47th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur on 26 October 2025, reflects the broader ASEAN recognition that community-based, non-militaristic prevention strategies are an essential component of regional counterterrorism architecture,[35] an approach the Philippines operationalizes through the NAP P/CVE and NAP-UPD 2025-2028.

Community-Level Reintegration

Counterterrorism efforts in the Philippines extend well beyond arrests and designations, reaching into the communities where radicalization takes root. The Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP), institutionalized under Administrative Order No. 25 of 2020, provides former rebels and violent extremist offenders with reintegration assistance, deradicalization support, social healing, and livelihood opportunities.[36] The program reflects a recognition that sustainable peace requires more than the suppression of armed groups, and it affirms that former combatants must have a viable path back into civilian life to prevent the recurrence of violence.

At the institutional level, the ATC remains an active coordinating body. On 12 February 2026, Executive Secretary Ralph Recto, serving as ATC Chairperson, convened the 37th ATC Meeting and directed all concerned agencies—spanning defense, justice, foreign affairs, finance, education, immigration, and intelligence—to deliver concrete, coordinated counterterrorism actions. The meeting reaffirmed the government's commitment to grounding its counter-terrorism efforts in the rule

of law and sound intelligence, in direct fulfillment of President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr.'s directive to reinforce peace and order across the country.[37]

Promotion of Inter-Faith and Inter-Ethnic Dialogue for Societal Resilience Against Extremism

Longstanding Institutional Roots of Interfaith Engagement in Mindanao

The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao has long been the primary arena for structured inter-civilization dialogue in the Philippines. The ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism (ACCT) explicitly calls on parties to address the conditions conducive to terrorism, including through the promotion of dialogue among different religious and ethnic groups, a commitment that the Philippines has institutionalized through decades of structured interfaith engagement in Mindanao.[38] The region's tri-people composition—Muslims, Christian settler communities, and Indigenous Peoples—makes it both uniquely vulnerable to the communal tensions that extremist groups exploit and uniquely positioned to model the kind of sustained dialogue that counters them. The Philippines' institutional commitment to interfaith engagement in Mindanao stretches back nearly three decades, when the Bishops-Ulama Conference (BUC) was founded in 1996 to bring Christian and Muslim religious leaders into structured conversation on peace and security. That body served as the direct institutional forerunner of the Mindanao Religious Leaders Conference (MiRLeC), formally launched in October 2024 in Davao City.[39]

Recent Interfaith Dialogues in the BARMM Context

On 29 May 2024, the Bangsamoro Darul-Ifta' (BDI) hosted an interfaith dialogue in Cotabato City, gathering religious leaders and scholars from across Bangsamoro communities to exchange perspectives on lasting peace and to dismantle the misconceptions that tend to harden divisions between faith traditions.[40] MiRLeC has since expanded that effort further. Convening Catholic, Episcopal, and Evangelical leaders alongside Muslim ulama and Indigenous peoples' representatives, the conference partnered with the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity (OPAPRU) on 5 August 2025 for a multi-sectoral dialogue at Notre Dame University in Cotabato City. The gathering brought together regional stakeholders to affirm that shared moral values and interfaith solidarity are indispensable to countering electoral violence and extremist-driven political division, particularly during the BARMM's pivotal transition period.[41]

Civilian-Led Peacebuilding as a Long-Term Counterterrorism Measure

Alongside these government-linked initiatives, civilian-led movements have sustained their own parallel work across Mindanao. The Silsilah Dialogue Movement marked its 40th anniversary in 2024 and celebrated 25 years of its Chain of Harmony initiative, connecting communities historically affected by violent extremism through sustained inter-religious exchange.[42] The Philippine government views these engagements as a necessary long-term component of its counterterrorism approach, grounded in the understanding that inter-civilization dialogue builds the kind of societal resilience that stops radicalization before it can take hold.

The regional policy framework supports this view. The ASEAN PoA PCRVE 2018-2025 explicitly directs member states to "work with religious leaders and religious organisations to promote moderation and tolerance," to "engage communities, particularly those communities vulnerable to the rise of radicalisation and violent extremism," and to strengthen "engagement and partnership with civil society, non-governmental organizations, academics, think-tanks, religious leaders, and the media."[43] The Manila Declaration to Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2017), which mandated the PoA PCRVE, similarly commits ASEAN member states to an integrated, evidence-based approach that includes "promoting dialogue and conflict prevention" and "engaging communities" as foundational pillars.[44] The 2019 ARF Statement on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism likewise recalls UNSC Resolution 2178 (2014), which encourages the engagement of local communities and non-governmental actors in developing strategies to counter terrorist narratives and promote social inclusion.[45]

Bilateral and Multilateral Information Sharing and Intelligence Exchange

The Philippines as the First ASEAN Country to Deploy UN goTravel

Since June 2021, the Philippines has partnered with the United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel (CT Travel) Programme, a flagship initiative of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) established to help member states detect and prevent terrorist travel through Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record data, in compliance with Security Council Resolutions 2178 (2014), 2396 (2017), and 2482 (2019). The initiative, funded by the Australian Government's Department of Home Affairs, supported the establishment of a national Advance Passenger Information System (APIS).[46]

In March 2025, the Philippines went live with the UN's goTravel software solution through the Bureau of Immigration's Advance Passenger Information System Operations Center (BI-APOC), becoming the seventh UN Member State globally and the first country in ASEAN to operationalize the system—a milestone that positions the country as the regional model for implementing UNSC Resolution 2396 (2017) obligations on passenger data systems, at a time when the return of foreign terrorist fighters remains among the most pressing security concerns for ASEAN as a whole.[47] The platform has since connected 26 air carriers, covering approximately 80 percent of commercial passenger volume.[48]

Addressing the Foreign Terrorist Fighter (FTF) Threat Through Border Controls, Intelligence, and Regional Operations

The southern Philippines has long been a destination for FTFs from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Middle East, and Europe, most acutely during the 2017 Marawi siege; AFP Chief of Staff General Romeo Brawner Jr. declared in July 2024 that zero foreign terrorists were being actively monitored on Philippine soil.[49] There is cause for concern, however: the fall of Assad's regime in December 2024, disorderly handovers of IS detention facilities (including Al-Hol camp, which holds FTF-affiliated nationals from over 50 countries), and the US-Israeli military operation against Iran in late February 2026 collectively raise the prospect of renewed FTF mobilization toward Southeast Asia, with potentially destabilizing consequences for the region's residual IS-linked networks.[50]

At the regional level, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia address FTF movement through INTERPOL Project Riptide, which in its first phase yielded 6.1 million database queries, 61 arrests, and 105 FTFs added to INTERPOL databases.[51] Broader ASEAN counterterrorism

architecture reinforces these efforts. The ASEAN Regional Forum Statement on Aviation Partnership reaffirms all ARF participants' commitment to fully implementing UNSC Resolution 2396 (2017), including obligations to collect, process, and share API and PNR data, on the recognition that real-time passenger intelligence is indispensable for detecting and interdicting terrorist travel before it materializes into an attack.[52]

Bilateral Cooperation in the Bondi Beach Attack Investigation

The long-standing Philippines-Australia counterterrorism partnership was put to the test following the 14 December 2025 attack at Bondi Beach in Sydney, which the GTI 2026 identified as Australia's worst-ever terrorist incident and deadliest mass shooting since the 1996 Port Arthur massacre.[53] Two IS-inspired assailants, Sajid Akram and his son Naveed Akram, killed 15 people and wounded 40 others during a Jewish Hanukkah celebration, with investigations establishing that both had stayed in Davao City, Mindanao, from 1-29 November 2025.[54] Philippine authorities moved quickly, with the Philippine National Police securing and transmitting CCTV footage and hotel records to Australian investigators.[55] The initial PNP assessment found no evidence that the suspects received training or logistical support while in the Philippines, and no connection to a broader terrorist cell was established.[56]

Despite this, segments of the international media labeled the Philippines a terrorism hotspot and an IS training ground. CNN quoted a local security analyst characterizing the country as "the terrorism academy in Asia."[57] President Marcos, Jr. strongly rejected these portrayals and called them "misleading."[58] The National Security Council affirmed that no validated report supported claims of terrorist preparation on Philippine soil and pointed to assessments by both the United Nations and the US government indicating that IS-affiliated groups in the country operate in a fragmented and diminished capacity, consistent with the Philippines' two-position improvement in the GTI 2026 rankings.[59] Foreign Affairs Secretary Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro, for her part, reaffirmed the Philippines' firm commitment to counter terrorism, prevent violent extremism, and nurture closer intelligence and law-enforcement cooperation with Australia and other foreign partners.[60]

Multilateral Intelligence Sharing Mechanisms

At the multilateral level, the Philippines participates in the ASEAN "Our Eyes" Initiative, a counterterrorism intelligence-sharing mechanism established in 2018 to address threats from the Islamic State and foreign terrorist fighters across the region. The Philippines also engages with the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT), most recently at its June 2025 International Conference. The conference, held under the theme "Emerging Trends in Terrorism and Violent Extremism," aligned with Malaysia's ASEAN Chairmanship and the bloc's broader collective security agenda.[61]

Beyond participation, the Philippines holds an active leadership role within the ARF's counterterrorism architecture. Together with Bangladesh and the United States, the Philippines co-chairs the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ARF ISM on CTTC) for the 2023-2026 intersessional cycle, a mandate formally welcomed by the 30th ARF in Jakarta in July 2023.[62] The ISM on CTTC serves as the ARF's primary platform for proposing common counterterrorism policies for regional implementation, assessing the state of counterterrorism cooperation across ARF participants, and advancing discussions on border security management, the nexus between terrorism and transnational crime, and intelligence-sharing best practices.

The 2019 ARF Statement on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism underpins this work, calling upon all ARF participants to cooperate fully in criminal investigations involving terrorism and to share evidence usable in legal proceedings—a commitment the Philippines-Australia cooperation in the Bondi Beach investigation directly exemplifies.[63]

Inter-Agency Counterterrorism Mechanisms

On 17 January 2025, the Philippines concluded a whole-of-government Memorandum of Understanding among the Department of Justice, the Anti-Money Laundering Council, the Philippine National Police, the AFP Intelligence Service, the National Bureau of Investigation, and the Philippine Coast Guard. The agreement operationalizes standard procedures for the investigation and prosecution of terrorism and terrorism financing cases, with technical support from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and funding from Australia.[64] The MOU represents a national-level concretization of commitments under the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism, which calls on all ASEAN member states to strengthen inter-agency cooperation and standardize investigative procedures so that terrorism cases are effectively prosecuted in accordance with the rule of law.[65]

Cooperative Border Security Against Terrorism Through the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement

The Philippines has long recognized that terrorism does not respect national borders. Extremist networks operating across the region move personnel, funds, and weapons through shared maritime spaces, making unilateral responses inherently insufficient.[66] Nowhere is this reality more apparent than in the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas, a one-million-square-kilometer tri-border area shared by the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia that has historically served as a corridor for militant groups engaged in kidnapping, piracy, and cross-border recruitment.

It was this shared vulnerability that drove the three states to establish the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA) in 2017, following the terrorist attacks in Marawi City and a surge of kidnappings by militant groups in the area. The arrangement, also known as INDOMALPHI, designates the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas as "maritime areas of common concern" and provides a framework for coordinated sea and air patrols, intelligence sharing, and interoperability among the three navies and coast guards.[67]

The TCA's focus on the Sulu-Sulawesi tri-border area directly operationalizes commitments under the ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counter Terrorism (ACPoA on CT), which calls on member states to promote joint operational activities and information sharing to address the movement of terrorists and foreign fighter networks—threats the ACPoA identifies as particularly acute in ASEAN's archipelagic maritime environments.[68]

Maritime Command Centers were established in Tawi-Tawi in the Philippines, Tawau in Malaysia, and Tarakan in Indonesia to facilitate near-real-time information exchange and intelligence-driven surveillance against transnational criminal networks with links to violent extremism.[69] By 2018, the arrangement's coordinated patrols were already assessed to have contributed to a measurable reduction in recorded incidents in the Sulu Sea.[70]

The 24th INDOMALPHI Joint Working Group Meeting, held in May 2024 in Bandung, Indonesia, offered a clear measure of the arrangement's impact. Joint patrols reported no incidents in the area during the review period, a stark contrast to the 99 incidents recorded before the arrangement

became operational.[71] The meeting also agreed to resume the Joint Mission Patrol Team, which had been suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside renewed commitments to trilateral port visits and maritime training activities.[72] Across the Sulu and Sulawesi Seas, the sustained operation of TCA patrols has produced documented reductions in piracy, kidnapping-for-ransom, and the cross-border movement of violent extremists, affirming that subregional security cooperation among states with overlapping maritime boundaries can deliver concrete and lasting results.

Measures Against Terrorist Financing and the National AML/CTF/CPF Strategy 2026-2030

Terrorist organizations do not operate on ideology alone. They require money to recruit members, procure weapons, move operatives across borders, and sustain operations over time. Disrupting these financial flows is therefore as consequential as any military or law enforcement action, and it is precisely in this domain that the Philippines has undertaken some of its most sweeping institutional reforms in recent years.

The Philippines' Exit from the FATF Grey List

In June 2021, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) placed the Philippines on its grey list of Jurisdictions Under Increased Monitoring, identifying 18 strategic deficiencies in the country's anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing regime. The gaps were specific and serious: lax supervision of casino junkets, insufficient prosecutions of terrorism financing cases, and weaknesses in the targeted financial sanctions framework that allowed suspect funds to move with insufficient scrutiny.[73] The designation carried real consequences, as grey-listed countries face heightened due diligence requirements from foreign banks and correspondent institutions, with effects that ripple through trade finance, remittances, and investment flows.

What followed was four years of sustained reform through a comprehensive 18-point action plan. AMLC led intensified enforcement efforts, regulators tightened oversight of Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions, unregistered money transfer operators faced crackdowns, and terrorism financing prosecutions increased markedly.[74] On 21 February 2025, the FATF officially removed the Philippines from the grey list. President Marcos, Jr. described the outcome as the result of a whole-of-government approach and characterized the removal as a direct victory in the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing.[75]

Active Enforcement of Targeted Financial Sanctions in 2026

The exit from the grey list did not signal a relaxation of enforcement. In early 2026, the AMLC issued three resolutions—TF-112, TF-113, and TF-114, Series of 2026—imposing Sanctions Freeze Orders on designated terrorist individuals and groups. The orders were issued in compliance with ATC Resolution Nos. 80, 81, and 82 of 2025 and consistent with UN Security Council Resolution No. 1373, which obligates member states to freeze the financial assets of persons and entities linked to terrorism.[76] The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) then disseminated these sanctions to all BSP-supervised financial institutions through Circular Letter CL-2026-006 in January 2026, requiring them to file suspicious transaction reports within five days of each freeze order taking effect.[77] The speed and specificity of that process reflect an enforcement machinery that has matured considerably since the grey-listing period.

The Philippines is now preparing for its Fourth Mutual Evaluation by the Asia/Pacific Group (APG)

on Money Laundering, scheduled for 2027. The evaluation will assess the country's compliance with all 40 FATF Recommendations across 11 Immediate Outcomes, which, in effect, is a comprehensive audit of the entire financial integrity framework. To prepare, Acting Executive Secretary Ralph Recto signed Memorandum Circular No. 113 on 12 February 2026, directing all government agencies to support and participate in drafting the National Anti-Money Laundering, Counter-Terrorism Financing, and Counter-Proliferation Financing Strategy (NACS) for 2026 to 2030.[78] The strategy will draw from the Third National Risk Assessment covering 2021 to 2024, as well as a gap analysis measuring current standards against FATF requirements.[79] The legal foundation for all of this remains Republic Act No. 10168, the Terrorism Financing Prevention and Suppression Act of 2012, and Republic Act No. 11479, the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020. Taken together, these measures reflect a hard-won understanding that defeating terrorism is inseparable from defeating the financial systems that sustain it.

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

The Philippines' staunch commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is anchored on its constitution. Article II, Section 8 of the 1987 Constitution declares that "the Philippines, consistent with the national interest, adopts and pursues a policy of freedom from nuclear weapons in its territory." Regionally, the Philippines commits to preserve Southeast Asia as a region free from nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty on the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). The Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the Treaty of the SEANWFZ (2023-2027) identifies the actionable measures that can be adopted by the state parties to ensure compliance with the undertaking of the Treaty.[80]

Deeply concerned with the humanitarian, economic and strategic consequences of a nuclear conflict, the Philippines was among the first countries to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)[81], which entered into force on 22 January 2021.

The Philippines affirms the complementarity between the TPNW, Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The TPNW provides the legal framework for the implementation of Article 6 of the NPT and further operationalizes the disarmament measures identified in the 13 practical steps in the 2000 NPT Review Conference, and the 64-point action plan in 2010 NPT Review Conference.

During the ongoing discussions at the 11th Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, the Philippines highlighted the importance of nuclear risk reduction measures as an essential interim measure toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons.[82] Furthermore, the Philippines underscored the necessity of engaging the public in dialogues concerning the long-term dangers associated with the normalization of nuclear weapons and their potential use.

On 13-14 April 2026, the Philippines, New Zealand, and Australia co-chaired the 17th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ISM on NPD) in Manila, the Philippines. The meeting focused on recent developments in nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament, the role of nuclear-weapon-free zones, and the regulation of lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS).

The Philippines continues to promote regional and multi-agency cooperation through the hosting of the Regional Secretariat of the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear

Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative (CBRN CoE) for Southeast Asia, since 2013. The country also plays an active role in strengthening regional cooperation and preparedness, response, and assistance in addressing CBRN threats.[83]

The Philippines implements a unified and whole-of-government approach to counter the threat of weapons of mass destruction under the CBRN National Action Plan. The country's diplomatic, security, health, science and technology sectors closely coordinate to improve standards, processes and regulations for threat reduction, risk management, preparedness and response.

The Philippines continues to strengthen its national implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540. The Strategic Trade Management Office (STMO), which is the dedicated agency on all matters relating to strategic trade management, launched the Philippines' e-Licensing Platform in February 2023. The e-Licensing Platform is envisioned to serve as the one-stop shop for all strategic trade-related services including registration and application for authorization to export strategic goods and technologies. The STMO adopts a phased implementation approach, with registration already operational since 2019; exports authorization since 2020; transit or transshipment in 2024; and re-export or re-assignment to be available in 2025; and related services and import in 2028.[84]

iii. Transnational Crime

The Philippine Center on Transnational Crime (PCTC), created under Executive Order No. 62, is at the forefront of government efforts against transnational crime, which includes illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, money laundering, arms smuggling, trafficking in persons, piracy, and other crimes that have an impact on the stability and security of the country.

The PCTC is mandated to explore and coordinate information exchanges and training with other government agencies, foreign countries, and international organizations. Further, the PCTC-INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB) Manila actively participates locally and internationally in various activities, programs, and projects concerning counterterrorism and other transnational crimes.

Illegal Drugs

Illicit drug production, trafficking, and use threatens human security across the globe. For the Philippines, the spread of illicit drugs is a major threat to public health, social cohesion, and economic stability.

The Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) is the lead agency for policy formulation against dangerous drugs. To this end, it formulates national strategies and conducts public information efforts on drug abuse prevention and control. DDB leads the implementation of the Philippine Anti-Illegal Drug Strategy (PADS). PADS is the government's blueprint against illegal drugs, while upholding the rule of law. It is anchored on three pillars: drug supply reduction, drug demand reduction, and the provision of rehabilitative services to individuals and communities affected by drug use. These pillars integrate prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, reintegration, and sustained community-based interventions.[85]

The Philippines supports ASEAN initiatives to strengthen regional data sharing on illicit drug trends, having hosted the 18th ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network (ADMN) Meeting in 2025.[86] The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) commits to strengthen cooperation with regional states to ensure compliance and active participation in the Mutual Evaluation processes by the FATF.

Further, the Philippines adheres to the anti-drug policies enshrined in various international

protocols, laws, and standards, such as the United Nations (UN) General Assembly 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation toward an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. The country also supports the UN Office on Drugs and Crime's policy of establishing an Early Warning System (EWS) within states, believing that EWS will bolster its national capacity to detect and address the growth in the synthetic drug market.

Money Laundering

In 2023, the Philippines strengthened its commitment to the fight against money laundering and terrorism financing with the adoption of the National Anti-Money Laundering, Counter-Terrorism Financing, and Counter-Proliferation Financing Strategy (NACS) 2023–2027.[87]

In October 2023, all concerned agencies were directed by the President to immediately and comprehensively address the country's remaining Financial Action Task Force (FATF)'s International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG) Action Plan items.[88]

In February 2025, the country marked its exit from the FATF's "Grey List" indicating significant progress in enhancing its anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing regime. The improvement was marked by an increase in the country's money laundering investigations and prosecution, enforcement of beneficial ownership transparency obligations and law enforcement access to it, and risk-based supervision of Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions (DNFBPs).[89]

As a member of the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), the Philippines undergoes regular "Mutual Evaluations" which will assess the Philippines' technical compliance with the 40 FATF Recommendations[90] and its effectiveness across 11 Immediate Outcomes. The country is currently drafting its NACS for 2026-2030 as it prepares for its Fourth Mutual Evaluation by APG.[91]

Trafficking in Persons

The proliferation of scam hubs in the region undermines ASEAN's image as a safe and secure environment. The continued operation of these hubs threatens regional law and order, as they increasingly serve as nexuses for human trafficking, exploitation of vulnerable individuals such as women and minors, and other heinous crimes.

The Philippines employs a comprehensive approach targeting each stage of Trafficking in Persons (TiP). With its whole-of–government approach to TiP, the Philippines retained its Tier 1 status in the 2025 US State Department Report on Trafficking in Persons for the tenth consecutive year.[92]

In addition, the Philippines engages in bilateral and multilateral cooperation initiatives to combat trafficking. Specifically, the Philippines serves as the Voluntary Lead Shepherd for the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) priority area on Trafficking in Persons (TIP).[93] The Philippines also led efforts to launch the ASEAN Guidelines on the Implementation of the Non-Punishment Principle for Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Persons (NPP) for trafficked persons who commit unlawful acts as a result of their exploitation.

On 10 September 2025, the Philippines together with the rest of ASEAN adopted the Melaka Declaration on Combatting Transnational Crime, which paved the way for intelligence sharing and coordinated efforts against emerging threats like AI-driven scams and forced labor.[94]

The Philippines is a key driver in implementing the ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Work Plan Against Trafficking in Persons 2023–2028. It organized the first ASEAN Workshop on Monitoring

and Reporting of the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting, and Learning (MERL) Framework which trained officials from ASEAN member states and sectoral bodies on data harmonization, reporting tools, and coordinated implementation.[95]

The Philippines also coordinates with other ASEAN member countries (AMS) in eliminating these illegal scam operations and rescuing trafficked victims. Further, the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP), now in its 11th year, opened wider opportunities for ASEAN to recalibrate its anti-trafficking efforts, fortify its justice systems, and promote victim-centered approaches in addressing ATIP cases. With support from its dialogue partners like Australia, ASEAN was able to look beyond anti-trafficking responses and identify underlying factors that lead to exploitation and trafficking such as poverty, disability, gender inequality, displacement, and migration status.[96]

iv. 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.[97] Factors including dense coastal and urban populations, rapid urbanization, and climate change exacerbate the impacts of these storms, 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 country's GDP. [98]

In 2025, 23 tropical cyclones entered or formed within the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR), 11 of which made landfall, with two that were categorized as super typhoons,[99] 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–integrating climate risk management into national, sectoral, and local development plans.[100]

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.[101] 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.

The Philippine government institution mainly carrying out efforts on these frameworks is the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), with the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) as its executive arm. However, as humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR) is an all-encompassing concern, it is acted upon with inter-agency collaboration and coordination —at times with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) or with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), among others. In April 2025, the AFP, with the US, formally launched the HADR Table Exercise (TTX) as part of the Exercise Balikatan 40-2025 with other state institutions to improve the state's overall response to large-scale humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters.

The Philippines also establishes partnerships with other ARF dialogue partners for capacity-building. These activities are significant to developing efficient response units trained for any eventuality. In 2022, the Philippines and Australia held HADR exercises in Manila as part of the latter's regional maritime initiative, the Indo-Pacific Endeavor 2022.[102] In 2023, the Philippines and Japan laid the legal groundwork for HADR activities where the process for the Japan Self-Defense Force to enter Philippine territory in times of natural disasters and for capacity-building measures was simplified.[103] In 2024, the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) and the Philippine Air Force (PAF) conducted the "Doshin-Bayanihan 4-24" which aims to coordinate airdrop operations and aeromedical evacuation training.[104] In 2025, the two countries reaffirmed greater cooperation on HADR activities.[105]

Moreover, the Philippines and the US have held joint military exercises and engaged in HADR military operations as part of the Balikatan joint military exercises. In August 2024, the US military and the AFP conducted HADR training exercise as part of the Pacific Partnership 2024, the largest annual multinational HADR preparedness mission in the Indo-Pacific region.[106] Since then, as several typhoons ravaged the country, this partnership proved to be a critical source of swift aid, food, medical supplies and aerial transport as supported by the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) sites around the country.

The Philippines also sends HADR contingents and support to other disaster-stricken countries. In 2023, the Philippines sent a team of 85 personnel from different government institutions, as well as various relief items, to Turkiye in response to the 7.8 magnitude earthquake.[107] In 2025, the Philippines provided humanitarian support for victims of the 7.7 magnitude earthquake that struck Myanmar.[108]

In terms of addressing the root cause of extreme weather, climate change, the Philippines is dedicated to mitigating its effects through a combination of unilateral, regional, and multilateral cooperation.[109] In 2017, the Philippines ratified the Paris Agreement and has remained committed to a 75 percent reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030, for its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). The NDC set goals that cover measures across, but not limited to, agriculture, forestry, coastal, and marine ecosystems and biodiversity, health, and human security.[110] The Climate Change Commission (CCC)[111], leads the development of the NDC, ensuring a "bottom-up" approach to identify crucial sectoral targets. The PDP 2023-2028 also involves the general public and respective stakeholders as responsible actors in combatting the climate crisis.

This is further supported by the Philippine National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) 2011-2028, which is focused on the adaptation and mitigation of climate change effects by reducing emissions and building resilience across seven key areas (food security, water sufficiency, etc.).[112],[113] The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2023-2050 is another national framework, broader in scope and led by the CCC and the Department of Environmental and National Resources (DENR), which aims to reduce climate vulnerability and integrate adaptation into national policies by 2050.[114] It identifies and targets key climate drivers, such as rising temperatures, sea-level rise, extreme precipitation, and wind.

On a multilateral level, the Philippines is likewise active in the development of international legal frameworks to manage climate change. In July 2025, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued a landmark advisory opinion affirming that states have a legal responsibility to the environment and may be held accountable for failing to curb their anthropogenic GHG emissions. This aligns with obligations under the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The advisory opinion further declared that a violating state could face penalties and be required to provide reparations and guarantees for non-repetition.[115] As one of the most vulnerable countries in the world, the Philippines advocated for climate

justice by submitting written and oral statements to the 2024 proceedings, giving a voice not just to itself, but also to other countries at extreme risk.

The Philippines also participated in the 30th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP-30) held in Belém, Brazil in November 2025. During this summit, ASEAN inaugurated its first-ever regional pavilion, showcasing the "One Voice" of ASEAN member states and their coordinated commitment to multilateral climate action.[116] The Philippines remains dedicated to supporting ASEAN's initiatives, specifically the ASEAN Climate Change Strategic Action Plan (ACCSAP) 2025-2030. Through the DENR, the country continues to lead regional dialogues on promoting nature-based solutions and strengthening climate finance.

In all of these initiatives, the Philippines proactively addresses its vulnerabilities to extreme weather by developing humanitarian assistance and crisis response mechanisms. The Philippines' approach integrates policy frameworks, inter-agency collaboration, and the adoption of international roadmaps into national policies. The country also engages with bilateral partners for joint capacity-building. Lastly, it participates in multilateral initiatives, recognizing that climate change is a global concern requiring every state's full cooperation.

v. Maritime Security

The Philippines reaffirms its commitment to regional peace, stability, and security, recognizing Southeast Asia's role as an emerging major player in the global economy.117 As an archipelagic state, the Philippines underscores that a stable and secure South China Sea is indispensable to regional prosperity, lawful commerce, and uninterrupted flow of global trade.

The Philippines underscores that no single state or agency possesses the capacity to address the full spectrum of maritime security challenges. In this regard, mechanisms such as the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) Information Sharing Centre (ISC) are essential in enhancing regional situational awareness and cooperative response mechanisms.

The Philippines reiterates the importance of a broad-based and inclusive regional cooperation in addressing maritime security challenges, as affirmed in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Statement on Cooperation Against Piracy and Other Threats to Security.

The South China Sea Disputes

The Philippines remains committed to a peaceful, stable, secure, and prosperous South China Sea. The country's activities will be grounded in international law, specifically the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the 2016 *South China Sea* Arbitral Award. Actions by other states that disregard international law—such as the use of force or the threat of use of force and intimidation—only serve to aggravate tensions in the South China Sea and undermine regional stability.

The unilateral declaration of a "national nature reserve" in Bajo de Masinloc (Scarborough Shoal) by the People's Republic of China (PRC) disregards international law, particularly the 1982 UNCLOS, the 2016 Arbitral Award, and the principles of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of the Parties in the South China Sea (DOC).[118] The Philippines maintains the exclusive authority to designate and establish environmental protection mechanisms in its territory and maritime zones.[119]

Despite ongoing challenges, diplomatic engagement between the Philippines and China continues. During the 11th Bilateral Consultation

Mechanism (BCM) and the 24th Foreign Ministry Consultations (FMC), both countries exchanged views on promoting cooperation, including through coast guard to coast guard communication, ocean meteorology, oil and gas collaboration.[120] The Philippines underscored the importance of managing differences at sea through diplomacy and communication, as well as upholding international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS and the 2016 Arbitral Award.[121]

The Provisional Understanding on the Rotation and Resupply Mission to the BRP *Sierra Madre* facilitated 13 unhampered rotation and resupply missions to the anchored ship at Ayungin (Second Thomas) Shoal.[122] This arrangement between the Philippines and China helped de-escalate tensions as regards the Philippines' lawful conduct of a rotational and resupply mission to the BRP *Sierra Madre* at Ayungin Shoal.

Promoting Maritime Security and Governance

At the Ocean Action Panel 10 of the Third United Nations Oceans Conference (UNOC3) in France, the Philippines reaffirmed its staunch commitment to the rules-based international order anchored in the 1982 UNCLOS. The Philippines emphasized the importance of complying with decisions and rulings rendered by UNCLOS' compulsory dispute settlement mechanisms, and respecting advisory opinions, such as the 2024 ITLOS Advisory Opinion on Climate Change.[123]

The Foreign Service Institute (FSI), the Department of Foreign Affairs' institutional consultant, conducted four (4) iterations of the Law of the Sea Academy (LSA) in 2025, including one tailored for diplomats from the ASEAN region, Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea. The program promoted a collaborative approach to ocean governance issues, covering legal, economic, environmental, and technical dimensions of the law of the sea and the blue economy.[124]

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), in partnership with the Max Planck Foundation, organized the Workshop on Regional Cooperation and Ocean Governance on 29 September to 1 October 2025 at Manila. The workshop focused on developing strategic thinking and collaboration to address complex maritime issues, and strengthen regional partnerships.[125]

The Philippines, together with Australia, Estonia, Greece, Japan, the Netherlands, Romania, the United Kingdom, and the United States, co-hosted a ministerial meeting titled, "Reinforcing Cooperation to Achieve a Secure and Stable Maritime Domain" on the sidelines of the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly. The participating states reaffirmed their commitment to multilateralism, shared stewardship of the world's oceans, and international law.[126] They also underscored the need to cooperate in areas such as marine environmental protection, freedom of navigation and commerce, global connectivity, and the protection of critical infrastructure.

The Department of Foreign Affairs convened ambassadors and representatives from 37 countries in Manila on 13 November 2025 to discuss cooperative approaches to enhancing maritime domain awareness, combating transnational crimes at sea, and keeping maritime spaces open, secure, and sustainable.[127]

Recognizing the role of research institutions in building trust among experts working on the South China Sea issue, the FSI convened a roundtable discussion entitled, "Evaluating Current International Research Networks on the South China Sea" on 28 November 2025.[128] The roundtable discussion confirmed that while informal exchanges through Track 1.5 and Track 2 dialogues exist and facilitate knowledge sharing, differing government positions limit deeper collaboration. However, the event also

highlighted how shared concerns, such as illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, could create opportunities for cooperation in legal and policy research among like-minded states.

The Philippines, through the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA), was nominated to the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) Council to represent the East Asia Hydrographic Commission (EAHC) for the 2026–2029 term, alongside Malaysia. This marks a historic first for the Philippines and reflects its growing influence in global hydrographic governance.[129] The Philippines views the seat as an opportunity to advance navigation and safety concerns of island nations within the organization's executive body.

Participation in ASEAN-led Maritime Initiatives

The Philippines will host key ASEAN maritime platforms in 2026, including the 16th AMF, the 14th EAMF, and the inaugural ASEAN Coast Guard Forum (ACF).[130]

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), together with counterpart agencies, continues to finalize the Concept Note and Terms of Reference of the ACF to enable its formal recognition as an ASEAN sectoral body.[131]

The Philippines also remains actively engaged in ARF-related processes, including the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ISM on MS) and the ARF Workshop on Best Practices for Port State Measures to Combat IUU Fishing, as well as in broader regional mechanisms such as the Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting (HACGAM). These platforms play a vital role in facilitating information exchange, strengthening operational coordination, and promoting best practices in addressing maritime security threats.

The Philippines continues to advance maritime security through strengthened regional cooperation, enhanced maritime domain awareness, and improved law enforcement capabilities. As an active participant in ReCAAP, the Philippines plays a key role in promoting coordination and information sharing among member states. PCG Commandant Admiral Ronnie Gil L. Gavan, PCG, was re-elected as ReCAAP Chairperson from March 2025 to March 2028,[132] underscoring the Philippines' sustained leadership and commitment to regional maritime security. The Philippines also engages in the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA) with Malaysia and Indonesia in the Sulu-Celebes Seas, enabling coordinated patrols and real-time information exchange.

The Philippines' participation in the ReCAAP and TCA significantly improved the security situation of the Sulu-Celebes Seas, reducing piracy incidents and crew abduction threats from high to low since January 2025.[133] This progress is attributed to sustained military operations, strengthened law enforcement, and close regional coordination, which have led to the dismantling of threat groups and the absence of abduction incidents since 2020. Continued monitoring and cooperation further reinforce a safe and secure maritime environment.

Complementing these initiatives, the PCG continues to enhance maritime domain awareness through satellite technology, unmanned aerial systems, expanded coastal radar networks, and vessel identification initiatives such as the Safety, Security, and Environmental Numbering System (SSEN).

International Partnerships

Beyond ASEAN, the Philippines recognizes the value of engaging with like-minded partners to bolster maritime cooperation. These engagements underscore the importance of international

law and multilateral cooperation in addressing current and emerging maritime challenges.

- The Philippines convened several maritime-oriented bilateral dialogue mechanisms with Australia,[134] India,[135] Japan,[136] the Republic of Korea,[137] Norway,[138] the United Kingdom,[139] the United States,[140] and Viet Nam.[141] Discussions centered on maritime security cooperation, maritime domain awareness, crisis response mechanisms, legal and policy frameworks under UNCLOS, and opportunities for technical and capacity-building collaboration. Several meetings informed follow-on activities, such as tabletop exercise development, technical exchanges, and alignment of donor-supported maritime initiatives with Philippine priorities.
- The Philippines and the European Union held the third Sub-Committee on Maritime Cooperation (SCM) on 7 October 2025 in Brussels.[142] They agreed to strengthen cooperation across a range of areas, including maritime security, domain awareness, regional security, non-traditional threats, coast guard cooperation, maritime education and training, safety at sea, and marine environmental protection.
- The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), together with counterparts from Australia, Canada, France, India, Japan, New Zealand, and the United States, conducted various iterations of bilateral and multilateral Maritime Cooperative Activities (MCAs) within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone.[143] These activities laid the groundwork for increased training in tactical coordination and humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR), while strengthening trust and interoperability among partners amid evolving maritime security challenges in the region. They also reaffirm the Philippines' commitment to upholding freedom of navigation, enhancing maritime domain awareness, and supporting a peaceful, stable, and secure region.

Strengthening the Philippine Blue Economy

As a maritime and archipelagic state, the Philippines remains committed to strengthening its blue economy by embedding the concept into national policies and development strategies. These efforts aim to ensure the sustainable development and conservation of the Philippines' marine resources and to improve maritime governance nationwide.

The Philippines continues to enhance the sustainable utilization of its marine resources through key legislations. The Legislative Executive Development Advisory Council (LEDAC) prioritized maritime-related bills for the 20th Congress such as the Blue Economy Act, Department of Water Resources Act, and amendments to the Fisheries Code.[144]

- The Blue Economy Act seeks to establish a comprehensive national framework for the sustainable use of marine resources and the development of ocean-based industries, including through the creation of a Blue Economy Council to improve inter-agency coordination.[145]
- The Department of Water Resources Act aims to create a Department of Water Resources, an agency responsible for the comprehensive, sustainable, climate-resilient, and integrated development of the water resources of the Philippines, including those related to water supply, sanitation, irrigation, hydropower, industry, navigation, recreation, and water utilization of fisheries and aquaculture.[146]

On accelerating blue economy growth, the Philippines, through its relevant government agencies, is advancing coordinated efforts and partnerships to address key challenges such as biodiversity loss, climate change, and marine plastic pollution, while promoting the sustainable development of marine and coastal resources.

- Pursuant to DENR Administrative Order 2016-26, DENR initiated the Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management Program (CMEMP) which aims to strengthen the management of the country's coastal and marine ecosystems, enhancing the capacity to deliver ecological goods and services and improving the quality of life of coastal communities, particularly in terms of food security, climate resilience, and disaster risk reduction.[147]
- On 11 December 2025, the Philippine Marine Ecosystems for Blue Economy Development Program was launched. Supported by a USD 500 million policy-based loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), this initiative promotes the sustainable management of marine ecosystems and supports the transition toward a resilient, low-carbon blue economy.[148]
- In February 2026, the Philippine Rise Integrated Conservation for Enduring Legacies through Ecosystem Support Services (PRICELESS) Project was launched. It is a five-year initiative that aims to strengthen the conservation and sustainable management of the Philippine Rise Marine Resource Reserve (PRMRR). This project is funded under the GEF 7th Replenishment Fund, through the DENR and the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), in partnership with Conservation International (CI).[149]

Regional Engagements

Beyond domestic development and implementation, the Philippines also continues to participate in regional initiatives, through programs with ASEAN and its member states, to promote and strengthen the regional blue economy.

On 21 May 2025, ASEAN, the Government of Japan, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), launched the ASEAN Blue Carbon and Finance Profiling (ABCF) Project. With the goal of strengthening sustainable management of blue carbon ecosystems, the ABCF Project aims to (i) identify, map, and value the carbon stored in marine and freshwater ecosystems in ASEAN member states (AMS); and (ii) unlock opportunities to utilize innovative financial solutions in driving climate resilience vis-a-vis inclusive economic growth across Southeast Asia.[150]

On 29 September 2025, Malaysia, as chair of ASEAN, hosted the third ASEAN Blue Economy Forum with a focus on financing, innovation, and cooperation for the blue economy. Filipino scientist and Professor Emeritus of the University of the Philippines - Marine Science Institute, Dr. Rhodora V. Azanza, served as one of the panelists during the said forum. She discussed frameworks to build and strengthen ocean-based industries, and identifying blue wealth.[151]

On 14 October 2025, representatives and stakeholders from the ASEAN member states (AMS) convened for the ASEAN Conference on Combatting Plastic Pollution 2025 with the theme, "All Hands on Deck: Uniting Forces for a Sustainable Plastics Future." The Philippines was cited twice for its (i) engagements in combatting plastic waste with its National Plastic Action Partnership (NPAP) and the use of multistakeholder engagement strategies in implementing a circular economy; and (ii) involvement in the behavioral lab partnership in ASEAN. It was also one of the pilot sites for case studies to develop a toolkit for designing and implementing plastic waste reduction interventions. Currently, a framework is being made to monitor and evaluate the impact of behavioral change interventions for plastic waste reduction.

On 27 October 2025, Philippine President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. highlighted the efforts of the Republic of Korea (ROK) in advancing maritime priorities between ASEAN and Korea during the 26th ASEAN-Korea Summit. Anchored on a rules-based order and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS),

President Marcos, Jr. advocated for joint initiatives on combatting illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing, and reducing disaster risks for maritime and marine sectors.[152] In a later event dated 20 November 2025, various stakeholders convened for the ROK-ASEAN Connectivity Forum 2025, organized by the University of the Philippines–Asian Center. Maritime connectivity was one of the main areas discussed during the forum, highlighting the need to address both environmental and geopolitical tensions in the region.[153]

On 28 October 2025, Philippine President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. made a statement towards mutually beneficial cooperation and constructive engagement in the South China Sea during the 28th ASEAN-China Summit.[154] President Marcos, Jr. emphasized the Philippines' commitment towards ASEAN-China cooperation that is grounded in mutual respect for sovereign equality and adherence to international law. In addition, the President advocated to advance scientific cooperation to strengthen maritime security, mitigate risks to marine biodiversity in the high seas, and effectively implement the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ). The welfare of fishing communities was also considered, with a call to prevent risks towards artisanal fishers accessing traditional fishing grounds in uninhabited features.

The Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) launched its 10-year plan for Mindanao with a focus on micro-, small-, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and the blue economy. Highlighting the important role of local government units (LGUs), the 10-year plan emphasizes the blue economy as a driver of growth for Mindanao and the BIMP-EAGA. Food security, renewable energy, and sustainable fisheries were some of the areas considered for cooperation. Further, Hon. Romeo Montenegro, Deputy Executive Director of the Mindanao Development Authority, stressed not only the economic value of marine resources but also the sustainability and ecological impacts of harnessing such resources.[155]

Global Engagements

The Philippines actively participates in global blue economy initiatives by promoting the rule of law in maritime governance, strengthening collective action through partnerships, enhancing maritime connectivity, and contributing to coordinated global responses to pressing ocean-related issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and sustainable resource management.

Reaffirming its commitment towards a rules-based ocean governance, the Philippines was elected Vice President of the Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) held from 9 to 13 June 2025 in Nice, France.[156] Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Assistant Secretary Marshall Louis Alferez represented the Philippines as Vice President of the UNOC3 Plenary. The delegation, led by Department of Agriculture (DA) Undersecretary Drusila Ester Bayate, highlighted Philippine interests in the oceans.

The Philippines through Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary Ernesto D. Adobo, Jr. expressed the country's strong commitment to the early operationalization of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement).[157] In this regard, the Philippines participated in the first, second, and third sessions of the Preparatory Commission of the BBNJ Agreement held from 14 to 25 April 2025, 18 to 29 August 2025, and 23 March to 2 April 2026 respectively.[158] The Philippines also hosted talks on the early operationalization of the BBNJ Agreement on 16 April 2025.[159]

On 23 September 2025, the Philippines formally deposited its instrument of ratification to the Agreement under the United Nations Convention

on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) during the Treaty Event held during the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) High Level Week in New York City.[160] The BBNJ Agreement entered into force on 17 January 2026.

Reflecting the Philippines' strong commitment to sustainable fisheries management, the Philippines welcomes the entry into force of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies on 15 September 2025.[161] In this regard, the Philippines deposited its instrument of acceptance of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies on 27 February 2024 at the 13th Ministerial Conference.[162]

In addressing plastic pollution, the Philippines hosted the world's first International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) International High-Level Forum on Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution (NUTEC Plastics) from 25-26 November 2025.[163] The forum discussed nuclear and radiation technologies as tools for addressing plastic pollution, protecting marine ecosystems, and advancing new technologies. The event was attended by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., bringing together 300 participants from government, international organizations, academia, industry, and youth sectors.

In November 2025, the Philippines was elected to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Council for the term 2026 to 2027, serving under IMO Council Category C.[164] With the election, the Philippines renewed its unwavering commitment to maritime safety and security, advancing seafarer welfare, environmental protection, and upholding international law including the 1982 UNCLOS.

vi. Security of Information and Communications Technology

As the Fourth Industrial Revolution accelerates technological innovation, it is also fundamentally reshaping human experience across social, economic, and political dimensions. It is further amplified by the expansion of internet connectivity and the widespread use of sophisticated commercial technologies, which now underpin social communication, facilitate economic interactions, and influence the conduct of international relations.

This ongoing digital transformation presents significant opportunities for economic growth and societal progress, and also generates a range of non-traditional security threats that are reshaping the national, regional, and international security landscape. Cyber threats such as hacking, Advanced Persistent Threats (APT), artificial intelligence (AI)-driven cyberattacks, Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS), and technology-enabled Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI), as well as espionage conducted by state and non-state actors for economic and political gain, expose vulnerabilities in critical information infrastructure, social cohesion, and democratic resilience. As a result, states, regardless of their level of digital advancement, are increasingly experiencing frequent and highly disruptive cyberattacks. This evolving threat environment has elevated cybersecurity from a primarily technical concern to a matter of national and regional security, making it a critical and continually evolving area of public policy.

The Philippines, despite securing a ''Tier 2 - Advancing" position in the 2024 United Nations Global Cybersecurity Index,[165] continues to face persistent cyberattacks that undermine its cybersecurity posture, cognitive domain, democratic cohesion, and national interests. While this reflects meaningful progress in international benchmarking, it coexists with a complex and evolving threat environment

that requires sustained vigilance and adaptive capacity. Moreover, heightened geopolitical tension in the West Philippine Sea contributes to an environment in which the country is increasingly exposed to politically-motivated cyber activities and technology-enabled surveillance risks. Recently, authorities apprehended two foreign nationals on allegations of espionage, following reports that they used an international mobile subscriber identity (IMSI) catcher to intercept communications and access data near government and military installations, as well as a foreign embassy.[166] This incident, alongside similar cases, has intensified the country's focus on strengthening cybersecurity measures.

To enhance the country's preventive and mitigation capabilities, the Philippines has taken concrete steps to strengthen its cyber domain and democratic resilience through adaptive policy frameworks designed to keep pace with rapid technological development and an evolving digital landscape. Among these measures is Executive Order No. 58, issued on 4 April 2024, which mandates all government agencies to adopt the National Cybersecurity Plan (NSCP) 2023-2028. The NSCP complements the Cybercrime Prevention Act and the Data Privacy Act,[167] and features an extensive Results Framework aligned with the vision and goals of the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028, anchored on three (3) key outcomes: 1) the State, and its people in cyberspace, is proactively protected and secured; 2) increased cybersecurity workforce capabilities; and 3) strengthened cybersecurity framework.

Executive Order No. 54, s. 2024[168] established the Office of the Deputy Director General for Cyber and Emerging Threats within the National Intelligence Coordinating Council. The office is tasked with providing overall planning, supervision, and coordination of counterintelligence efforts among government agencies related to cybersecurity and emerging threats, and risks from weapons of mass destruction.[169]

This executive issuance, along with the signing of Republic Act No. 12312 or the Anti-Philippine Offshore Gaming Operations Act of 2025,[170] and the establishment of the Cyber Command within the Armed Forces of the Philippines,[171] forms part of a broader set of security and defense measures. These initiatives collectively reinforce and complement Republic Act No. 12254, or the E-Governance Act, which aims not only to improve the efficiency of government services but also promote transparency and accountability, while advancing a robust whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to the ICT landscape.[172]

The Philippine Senate is currently deliberating a bill that proposes the establishment of a Cybersecurity Council, aimed at strengthening the national cybersecurity framework and further institutionalizing rapid response mechanisms and coordinated action among government agencies.[173]

Recognizing the transboundary and transnational nature of cybersecurity threats and the need for interstate and multisectoral cooperation, the Philippines is leveraging diplomacy to promote appropriate norms and behavior in cyberspace. To this end, the Philippines has been actively participating in various bilateral, multilateral, and intergovernmental diplomatic platforms to institutionalize a cybersecurity governance framework.

On 25 October 2025, the Philippines signed the UN Convention against Cybercrime; Strengthening International Cooperation for Combating Certain Crimes Committed by Means of Information and Communications Technology Systems and for the Sharing of Evidence in Electronic Form of Serious Crime,[174] the first global treaty to list and penalize cybercrimes and set rights and obligations among state parties.

At the regional level, the Philippines has been a staunch participant in the ASEAN-led cybersecurity agenda and mechanisms to support regional security and sustain the progress made in the

digital economy. In 2024, the Philippines supported the operationalization of the ASEAN Regional Computer Response Team (CERT), established in Singapore,[175] that enhances the information-sharing mechanism and intraregional coordination in preventing and responding to cybersecurity attacks. The Philippines, as the 2026 ASEAN Chair, commits to making substantive progress in regional cooperation in cybersecurity to mitigate crimes and online scams committed in cyberspace.[176]

Domestically, there are continuous efforts to enhance cybersecurity capabilities through training programs and partnerships with the private sector and civil society. The Department of Information and Communications Technology, in collaboration with Japan International Cooperation Agency, implements the Capacity Development for Cybersecurity project, aimed at strengthening the DICT's Cybersecurity Bureau's personnel cybersecurity competencies.[177] Yet, the limited preventive capacity of cybersecurity information infrastructures across institutions in the Philippines remains a major concern in advancing national development and economic growth.

In 2024, the Central Bank of the Philippines reported that domestic financial institutions in the country lost PhP5.82 billion from cyberattacks.[178] Attacks targeting even the most secure financial institutions indicate that adversarial cyber actors, along with their tools and tradecrafts, are growing in sophistication, scale, and operational complexity. In addition, high attrition within the government cybersecurity workforce, driven by low compensation, limited training opportunities, insufficient plantilla positions, and competition from the private sector, poses significant challenges to expanding the pool of cybersecurity professionals. If left unaddressed, this shortage may be further exacerbated by the increasing complexity of threats, compounded by the rise of emerging technologies, including AI and the internet-of-things (IoT).

Artificial Intelligence

Closely linked to ICT, artificial intelligence (AI) is propelled by advances in supercomputing, semiconductors, and data center infrastructures, driving digital transformation, economic development, and productivity. AI is projected to contribute up to USD4.8 trillion to the frontier technologies[179] market by 2033,[180] but its rapid adoption also presents complex challenges. Realizing its potential requires significant capital, infrastructure, and sustained investments, favoring digitally advanced states and risking a widening digital divide, global inequality, and economic dependency,[181] while shaping interstate competition and public-private collaboration.

To harness opportunities and address the challenges of AI, the Philippines seeks to play a pivotal role in shaping the domestic and regional AI landscape through coordinated strategies, strong institutional frameworks, human capital development, and innovation-driven diplomacy. In 2024, the Department of Trade and Industry updated the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy Roadmap (NAISR) to guide these efforts. Anchored in the Philippine Innovation Act, NAISR aims to promote the country's interests in AI advancement and ethical governance by: 1) increasing regional and global competitiveness of local industries through AI-driven industrial growth; 2) identifying key areas for investment in R&D and technology application to advance new processes, products, and services; 3) promoting triple-helix collaborations in R&D, crucial for national development; 4) preparing the workforce for future jobs; 5) attracting major industries to create jobs in the Philippines; and 6) ensuring responsible rollout and governance of AI technologies, emphasizing ethics, data privacy, and minimizing the negative impacts on society, including the creation of regulatory frameworks to guide the AI technology deployment, promoting transparency and accountability, and fostering public awareness.[182]

As the country's lead agency for AI development, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) launched the National AI Center for Research and Innovation to consolidate and strengthen existing capabilities of DOST and partner institutions, systematically advancing them into reusable, scalable assets for the country. This coordinated approach addresses the country's longstanding fragmented approach to technological innovation and digital transformation.

Recognizing the potential risks and unintended impacts of AI systems in both military and civilian domains, the Philippine government actively promotes the integration of ethical standards, accountability, meaningful human control, and regulatory safeguards in global AI development through diplomatic engagement. This commitment was demonstrated in 2023 when the Department of Foreign Affairs hosted the Manila Meeting on the Indo-Pacific Perspectives on Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), bringing together governments, academia, and civil society organizations from across the Asia-Pacific to examine the dangers associated with incorporating AI into LAWS. The Meeting highlighted the vulnerabilities of developing states and their collective agency in the rapid modernization of military industries.[183] The Philippines' stance is further reflected in the submission made by the Philippine Permanent Mission in Geneva during the 2026 First Session of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons Group of Government Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of LAWS. The Mission continues to support the strict application of International Humanitarian Law to all emerging weapons systems.[184]

Moreover, the Philippines actively promotes the inclusion of ethical standards, regulatory measures, and normative frameworks within the regional AI landscape. This commitment is reflected in its support for the ASEAN AI Safety Network, which aims to strengthen institutional capacity to coordinate strategy and enhance AI safety efforts among member states.[185] As the 2026 ASEAN Chair, the Philippines has positioned AI as a cornerstone of its agenda to drive ASEAN's Priority Economic Deliverables. Through initiatives like the Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA), a national semiconductor roadmap, and specialized Centers of Excellence for MSMEs and Creative Industries, the Philippines is transforming regional aspirations into tangible outcomes.[186]

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Republic
of Korea

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

Today's instability of the regional security environment has been intensifying as geopolitical tensions persist and uncertainties surrounding the international economic order mount. The continuing nuclear and missile provocations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK), tensions in the South China Sea, the return of strategic competition among major powers, and ongoing military conflicts in various parts of the world pose significant challenges to states in the region. In addition, the growing spread of protectionism, supply chain disruptions, and the current energy crises triggered by the situation in the Middle East have been exacerbating regional economic conditions. In the face of these interconnected global challenges, strengthening regional order that enables countries in the region to cooperate and prosper together has become increasingly important.

Regarding the regional security environment, while the number and intensity of the DPRK's ballistic missile tests and military provocations on the Korean Peninsula decreased in 2025 compared to the previous year, the DPRK continues to pursue the advancement of its nuclear and missile capabilities. Meanwhile, military cooperation between the DPRK and the Russian Federation (Russia) is worsening security instability, as the DPRK and Russia officially acknowledged the former's participation in the Russo-Ukrainian war approximately six months after initiating troop deployment under the Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between Russia and the DPRK (signed on June 19, 2024), emphasizing the significant contribution of DPRK troops to the recapture of the Kursk region. Furthermore, the DPRK is increasing threats in non-traditional domains. The DPRK is procuring substantial funds for large-scale nuclear and missile development by systematically engaging in illicit cyber activities such as virtual asset theft and money-laundering, and the disguised employment of IT personnel.

Peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula remain essential, yet inter-Korean communication and dialogue are stalled. The DPRK has persisted in the "two hostile states" policy and continues its stance of rejecting engagement with the ROK. Overcoming this situation and realizing a peaceful Korean Peninsula based on coexistence, cooperation, and trust - rather than hostility and distrust – is of critical importance. The ROK government is clear in its position that it respects the DPRK current system and will not pursue any form of unification by absorption nor engage in any hostile acts. It has consistently undertaken proactive measures to reduce military tensions and build mutual trust between the two Koreas, while continuing diplomatic efforts to resume dialogue with the DPRK. These endeavors will contribute to peace and stability not only on the Korean Peninsula but also throughout the region and the world.

As we recognize that the meaningful improvements in the human rights situation of the people of the DPRK is essential, the ROK government has been engaging with international organizations and relevant countries to resume humanitarian assistance. The resumption of such assistance, suspended since the COVID-19 pandemic, will help improve the human rights situation in the DPRK. Engagement and dialogue with the DPRK – including inter-Korean dialogue – can create a virtuous cycle, leading to tangible improvements in the lives of people in the DPRK. The ROK will continue to cooperate with the international community to advance these goals.

The ROK also remains attentive to the evolving security environment in the Asia-Pacific, including situation in the South China Sea and Myanmar. The South China Sea stands as a critical maritime domain, serving as a vital artery for global trade. A third of the world's maritime

commerce, including critical energy shipments, transit through this waterway, making its stability paramount for the global economy and security.

Given the immense importance of the South China Sea, the ROK consistently upholds its principled stance. The ROK emphasizes the critical importance of freedom of navigation and overflight, a rules-based order, and the adherence to international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). These are fundamental principles for international maritime stability.

Regarding the ongoing consultation on the Code of Conduct for the South China Sea, the ROK appreciates the efforts of the concerned parties, including the ASEAN member states, to negotiate the Code of Conduct (COC) in a manner that fully respects the rights and interests of third parties and relevant international law.

With regards to ongoing humanitarian crisis in Myanmar despite of the recent development-including the amnesty granted to over 4,000 prisoners, among them U Win Myint, as part of a New Year's pardon-the ROK has consistently urged for the cessation of violence without delay and full implementation of ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus. The ROK will continue to engage closely with ASEAN to support ASEAN centrality and ASEAN's efforts toward a viable political solution in Myanmar.

Given the current security environment, ASEAN-ROK cooperation has become increasingly important in mitigating security uncertainties and enhancing regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. In this regard, at the 26th ASEAN-ROK Summit in October 2025, the President Lee Jae Myung of the ROK proposed the 'CSP (Contributor, Springboard and Partner) Vision' as a policy guidance for substantially developing the ROK's Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) with ASEAN at the 26th ASEAN-ROK Summit in October 2025.

The CSP Vision, aligned with the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, sets out Korea's role vis-à-vis ASEAN as 'a Contributor for dreams and hope, a Springboard for growth and innovation, and a Partner for peace and stability'. It lays out measurable goals such as reaching 15 million people-to-people exchanges annually, which is a 25% increase from the current level, or USD 300 billion in annual trade, which is a 50% increase from the current level.

2. National Security and Defense Policy

a. Overview of National Security and Defense Policy

The government of the ROK has established and is promoting a National Security Strategy to contribute to peace in the security domain. The ROK government is firmly committed to maintaining security while pursuing denuclearization, with the goal of establishing peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and throughout the region.

To realize its defense vision of a strong, advanced, and elite military, the ROK Armed Forces is formulating and implementing comprehensive defense policies. The ROK will maintain a robust security posture to solidify lasting peace on the Korean peninsula, and will continue its efforts to transform into a high-tech, AI and science based military force prepared for future multi-domain warfare.

Furthermore, as a responsible member of the international community, the ROK Armed Forces is advancing defense diplomacy to contribute to global security beyond the Korean peninsula. Defense exchanges and security cooperation are being further expanded, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, through a wide range of bilateral and multilateral frameworks, thereby strengthening regional peace and stability.

b. Data Contribution to ARF Arms Register (as of 2025)

i. Total Defense Expenditure on Annual basis

a) Defense expenditure (in KRW billions): 61,587 (USD 41.8 billion)

b) Defense expenditure as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP): 2.32%

c). Defense expenditure per capita (in KRW billions): 0.001 (USD 680)

*Exchange rate as per April 2026 (USD1=KRW1,473)

3. National Contributions to Regional Security

a. Counter-Terrorism

Terrorism and violent extremism continue to pose a grave threat to international peace and security. With the global increase in the use of the Internet and social media during the pandemic, terrorists and violent extremists are increasingly exploiting online platforms to disseminate extremist content. The ROK stands firm in its position that terrorism should be eradicated and not be tolerated in any form. As a member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) for the 2024-2025 term, the ROK is redoubling its efforts to combat terrorism at the national, regional, and global levels.

Recognizing the challenges and opportunities related to new technologies in countering terrorism, the ROK government is working closely with the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) to make the world safer and less vulnerable to technology-enabled terrorism through the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Since 2017, the ROK government has been providing annual contributions to support various UNOCT programmes.

In 2021, the ROK government took part in the UNOCT Global Counter-Terrorism Programme to help countries strengthen their border security and enhance their capacity to counter and prevent terrorism. As a follow-up activity, the ROK government co-hosted a workshop in October 2022 together with the UNOCT to promote best practices in border security and management in the Southeast Asian region. Additionally, in 2023, the ROK government worked with the UNOCT on Countering Terrorism in Travel and Transport in Africa as part of efforts to launch the UN Joint Appeal for Counter-Terrorism in Africa. In 2024 and 2025, in cooperation with the UNOCT, the ROK government also contributed to the development of practical guidelines and capacity-building programmes for preventing violent extremism using AI.

In addition, the ROK government has been actively engaging in cooperation with the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED). In 2023, CTED delegations visited the ROK to assess the country's implementation of relevant UNSC counter-terrorism resolutions. Following this, the final country visit report was adopted in October 2024, and a follow-up implementation report was submitted in May 2025, demonstrating the ROK's continued commitment to UN counter-terrorism efforts.

The ROK government is also promoting broader participation in the global fight against terrorist financing. The ROK has worked closely with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to prevent illegal financial transactions and encourage member states to implement relevant policies. The FATF's Mutual Evaluation Report, published in April 2020, recognized that the ROK had improved its legal framework since its last evaluation, including measures related to terrorist financing offenses and its confiscation regime. In addition to these international contributions, the ROK has faithfully implemented UNSC resolutions 1267, 1988, 1989, and 2253 to prevent terrorist-related financial flows from entering its domestic financial system.

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

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery systems continue to present significant challenges to the global community. In particular, DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programs remain a serious threat to regional and international peace and security. The ROK will continue to faithfully implement relevant UNSCRs and strengthen its cooperation with the

ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) participants until the complete denuclearization of the DPRK.

The ROK remains firmly committed to the full implementation of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty (NPT), which has been the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. The ROK has actively participated in the NPT review process and will continue to work with other States Parties, including in the 11th NPT Review Conference in 2026, to achieve balanced progress across all three pillars and to maintain and further strengthen the NPT regime.

The ROK supports the Stockholm Initiative and the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV) as key pathways toward tangible progress in nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, the ROK will closely cooperate with its partners to achieve concrete deliverables and will continue to seek an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and its universalization. The ROK also calls for the commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT).

The ROK has supported the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) since its ratification. The ROK welcomes the adoption of the Final Document at the 9th BWC Review Conference in 2022. During the Review Conference, the ROK held a side event on biorisk management and presented the outcome of the ARF Table-Top Exercise on Response Capabilities to Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Incidents, which the ROK, the Philippines, and the United States co-hosted in June 2022. The ROK actively contributed to the Working Group discussions on strengthening the Convention in 2024 and 2025 and will continue its contribution to reinforcing the BWC. Through its contribution to the Global Partnership, the ROK, together with U.S. Department of State and UNICRI, organized a three-day table-top exercise in Bangkok from November 4 to 6 2025 to strengthen capacity to identify and counter CBRN disinformation.

The rapid advancement of emerging technologies in diverse areas, including artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous weapons systems, and outer space, carries multiple impacts on the current international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. In response to these developments, the ROK has taken an active part in the relevant forums on specific disarmament issues, including the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS).

The ROK is also actively contributing to advancing international discussions on the responsible application of AI in the military domain. During its presidency of the UN Security Council in September 2025, the ROK convened the Security Council High-Level Open Debate on "AI and International Peace and Security" chaired by President Lee Jae Myung. This signature event encouraged discussion on maximizing the benefits and mitigating the risks of AI in the context of international peace and security, while considering the Security Council's potential role in this process.

Furthermore, in order to address the international peace and security implications of AI in the military domain in a more inclusive and intergovernmental setting, the ROK and the Netherlands tabled once again the resolution on "AI in the Military Domain and Its Implications for International Peace and Security" at the 80th session of the UNGA First Committee, which was adopted with overwhelming support from 167 Member States.

After hosting the second Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain (REAIM) Summit in Seoul in 2024, the ROK, along with Spain and the Netherlands, co-hosted the third REAIM Summit in Spain. The summit brought together government delegations and diverse stakeholders and focused on translating the principles of responsible application of AI in the military domain, identified in the two previous summits, into concrete actions. In preparation for the summit, the ROK also

co-hosted five regional consultations, including one for the Asia-Pacific region in May 2025.

The ROK has also constructively engaged in the UN Open-ended Working Group on Reducing Space Threats through Norms, Rules, and Principles of Responsible Behaviours and the Group of Governmental Experts on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) to contribute to developing norms in these areas. It is continuing these efforts by fully engaging in the discussions in the Open-ended Working Group on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space in All Its Aspects.

As a reliable and long-standing supporter of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the ROK imposes strict controls over the transfer of conventional arms to prevent illicit transfers and diversion while respecting human rights and international humanitarian law. Drawing on its advanced national control system and well-established best practices, the ROK served as the President of the Ninth Session of the Conference of States Parties (CSP9) to the ATT in 2023 and Vice-President of CSP11 in 2025. The ROK remains committed to advancing the universalization of the ATT and enhancing treaty implementation through close partnership with industry stakeholders.

The ROK has continued to play a pivotal role in strengthening global counter-proliferation efforts through its active involvement in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). As part of such efforts, the ROK continues to participate in annual PSI Operational Experts Group (OEG) meetings and Asia-Pacific Exercise Rotation (APER) exercises. Following the ROK's hosting of the High-Level Political Meeting (HLPM) and Eastern Endeavor 23 exercise in 2023, the ROK plans to actively participate in this year's Maru 26 exercise, enhance the interdiction capabilities of PSI participating countries, and continue to work closely with PSI partners to strengthen the global non-proliferation regime.

Since 2001, the ROK and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs have co-hosted the annual ROK-UN Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues. The 24th conference was held in New York in December 2025 under the theme of "The Evolution of Outer Space Security in an Era of Growing Insecurity." The two-day conference brought together over one hundred experts from governments, international organizations, industry, and academia. The participants discussed opportunities and challenges posed by emerging technologies, such as AI, and measures for establishing international norms and principles for responsible space activities amid the growing strategic importance of the space domain in a volatile global security environment. The ROK-UN Joint Conference will continue to provide a forum where experts from diverse fields can exchange their views on disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

The ROK has been championing youth engagement in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. The ROK has been serving as a champion for Action 38, "Establishing a platform for youth engagement" of the United Nations Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, and has led the adoption of a biannual resolution titled "Youth, Disarmament, and Non-Proliferation" since 2019. It was recently adopted for the fourth time at the 80th session of the UNGA First Committee, with more than 80 co-sponsors. In carrying out the resolution, the ROK has hosted diverse events and programs to promote youth participation, including the Korean Youth Envoys for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation since 2023. The ROK will continue to reinforce its efforts to promote youth engagement in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation through diverse programs and activities.

c. Transnational Crime

ASEAN SOMTC (Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime) has served as a major platform for discussing transnational crimes such as terrorism, arms smuggling, illicit human and drug trafficking. It facilitates the exchange of best practices on related issues, while enabling the participating countries to collaborate on capacity building, training and sharing of information.

In this regard, the ROK participated in the 18th ASEAN SOMTC + ROK in June 2025 and the 6th AMMTC (ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime) + ROK in September 2025. At these meetings, ROK shared its preventive measures and responses to effectively address such crimes, and stressed the importance of effective regional and international cooperation in law enforcement, investigation, and monitoring.

The ROK has been stepping up its efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers pursuant to its Criminal Act and, by doing so, to identify and protect victims of human trafficking. The ROK enacted the Act on the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons and Victim Protection in April 2021, which mandates the establishment of government-wide measures to prevent trafficking in persons and enhance support for victims. Along with these legislative developments, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family developed indicators for identifying victims of human trafficking and issued a public notice in March 2023 in accordance with Article 13 of the Act on the Prevention of Human Trafficking and Protection, which came into effect in January 2023. The indicators were introduced to ensure the early detection and protection of victims of human trafficking, including women, foreigners, and other vulnerable groups. The Ministry provided guidance encouraging related agencies to actively use the indicators for identification and referral of victims to appropriate protection services. In addition, the Ministry provides support funds, including medical, livelihood, and legal assistance, to individuals officially recognized as victims through the Case Assessment Committee and other evaluation processes.

The ROK has also prioritized preventing human trafficking and violation of human rights of workers in the marine and fishing industry. As part of these efforts, it has conducted annual crackdowns to protect victims of human trafficking and prevent humanitarian crimes.

Moreover, the ROK has actively engaged in international discussions on prevention of human trafficking. In 2023, the ROK attended the 8th Bali Process Senior Officials Meeting and Ministerial Conference, where it shared national legal frameworks on human trafficking and discussed ways to enhance international cooperation in this area. In 2024, the ROK also participated in the 12th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) to present insights on recent trends in transnational organized crimes such as human trafficking and explored effective avenues of collaboration among member states. In 2025, the ROK attended the 5th Annual General Meeting of the South East Asia Justice Network (SEAJust) and the 10th Annual General Meeting of the Asset Recovery Interagency Network - Asia Pacific (ARIN-AP) to contribute to the exchange of policies and institutional frameworks related to human trafficking among member states.

Drug trafficking is another pressing challenge that affects not only individual countries, but the entire regions linked by drug flow routes. Illicit drug crimes undermine political and economic stability and it is imperative that countries maintain close coordination in both information-sharing and regulatory responses.

To tackle this issue, the ROK hosts the Anti-Drug Liaison Officials' Meeting for International Cooperation (ADLOMICO) on an annual basis, providing a platform for major drug

enforcement agencies from around the world to convene and discuss effective countermeasures against drug trafficking. In addition, through the cooperative network of the Asia-Pacific Information and Coordination Center (APICC), the ROK has established an 'International Cooperation System for Striking the Origin Point' based on the mutual dispatch of dedicated drug investigators, thereby contributing to the successful apprehension of drug smugglers. The ROK also supports global law enforcement efforts to combat drug crime by funding INTERPOL's MAYAG project, which conducts joint operations each year targeting drug manufacturing and trafficking in the region. Moreover, with the aim of strengthening investigative cooperation in the region, the ROK operates the Asian Narcotics Crime Response Alliance (ANCRA), with the participation of 15 countries and ASEANAPOL.

The ROK is also continuously enhancing its international cooperation framework to respond to transnational and emerging crimes. For instance, in January 2026, the ROK and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) held a strategic dialogue in order to share information on their respective activities on key issues, such as countering online scams, drug control cooperation, and anti-corruption responses, and jointly explored ways to further strengthen cooperation in these areas. The ROK has partnered with UNODC on a variety of projects, with a focus ranging from enhancing investigative capacity and establishing cooperative networks to tackle corruption and transnational crimes to supporting drug-affected communities to promote alternative development, and providing guidelines relate on drug use.

Furthermore, the ROK has been actively strengthening its substantial contribution to regional efforts to respond transnational crimes, particularly in addressing online scams. In partnership with ASEANAPOL, the ROK is preparing to launch a new initiative, "Breaking Chains"-ASEAN-Korea Project for Combating Scam-Related Organized Crime in Southeast Asia, in line with the implementation of the ASEAN-ROK CSP Vision and financed by the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF). Under this initiative, the ROK aims to dismantle organized online scam crimes through information-sharing, joint rescue operations, and capacity-building efforts with the ASEAN member states.

d. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

The ROK continued in 2025 to respond actively to humanitarian needs, providing approximately USD 490 million in humanitarian assistance in 2025. In response to the ongoing crisis in Myanmar, the ROK has provided USD 34 million in humanitarian assistance through international organizations to support affected communities over the past three years.

As the Asia-Pacific remains one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world, the ROK continues to play a constructive role in strengthening regional cooperation in disaster management and relief. Building on its previous contributions to ARF disaster relief cooperation, including its role as co-chair of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief with Thailand in 2018 and its contribution to the drafting of the ARF Work Plan for Disaster Relief 2018–2020, the ROK has supported regional efforts to enhance disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response capacity, including in cooperation with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

In 2025, the ROK also launched a new set of flagship humanitarian partnerships with major UN agencies — UNDP, WFP and UNICEF — in order to respond to growing humanitarian needs in a more strategic, predictable and effective manner. Through these initiatives — REVIVE, REACH, and Resilience for Children+ — the ROK aims to support crisis-affected populations through

early recovery, food and nutrition assistance, and child-centred humanitarian services.

Separately, the ROK is implementing a number of capacity-building initiatives in the region both bilaterally as well as for the whole ASEAN member states, financed by the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF), including projects such as "ASEAN Standard and Certification of Experts in Disaster Management (ASCEND)" to foster a pool of qualified disaster management experts, and the "Disaster Risk Management Capacity Building Project for AMS (D-CAB)" to enhance risk reduction strategies through hands-on learning and exposure to the ROK's innovative practices.

e. Maritime Security

Among the wide range of issues pertaining to maritime security, the ROK has taken an active role in countering and preventing piracy and armed robbery against ships in the region and worldwide. At the regional level, the ROK has actively participated in regional maritime security forums, including the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ISM-MS) and the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP).

Ever since the ROK became a party to ReCAAP in 2006, it has continuously contributed to the organization. The ROK has sent Korean staff to the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre since 2007. Moreover, the ROK has made voluntary financial contributions to ReCAAP to support regional capacity building. The ROK provided approximately USD 90,000 annually from 2008 to 2012 and, from 2013 onwards, the ROK's annual contribution has reached USD 130,000—an increase of nearly a fifty percent—to broaden its role and scope in combating piracy in Asia.

The ROK is also taking an active part in global efforts to combat piracy. The ROK started deploying the Cheonghae Unit to the high seas off the coast of Somalia in 2009, and since then the unit has been conducting convoy missions as part of the Combined Task Force under the command of the Combined Maritime Forces. The Cheonghae Unit has also been participating in the European Union Naval Force's Operation Atalanta since February 2017 to protect vessels of the African Union Mission and the World Food Programme, among others.

Also, since 2009, the ROK has played an important role in the Contact Group on Illicit Maritime Activities (originally, the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia). Until the group announced its plan to close the trust fund by 2021, the ROK had contributed a total of USD 1.7 million to the fund, with the aim of helping to strengthen the capacity of coastal states in countering piracy. The ROK has also been a member of the G7++ Group of Friends of the Gulf of Guinea since 2013 to facilitate international cooperation in promoting maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea.

Moreover, the ROK made financial contributions totaling USD 800,000 to the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Djibouti Code of Conduct Trust Fund to strengthen the judicial capacity of Somalia and its neighboring countries in tackling piracy from 2009 to 2017. The ROK has also supported training programmes together with the IMO for maritime security officers from Gulf of Guinea countries and provided equipment to facilitate communication between the region's maritime operations centers.

In line with the implementation of the ROK-ASEAN CSP Vision, the ROK is advancing 'Korea-ASEAN Maritime Safety Academy (KAMSA)' to strengthen cooperation among coast guards and enhancing capacity-building efforts across the region. The ROK also takes part in ASEAN-related joint exercises, such as Cobra Gold, KAMANDAG, and Super Garuda Shield, thereby further contributing to regional maritime security cooperation. In addition, the ROK is actively pursuing bilateral cooperation in maritime security, including maritime dialogues

with Viet Nam and the Philippines, as well as the transfer of patrol ships and decommissioned vessels.

f. Cybersecurity

The rapid development of information and communications technology is opening up new possibilities for fostering social and economic development, but at the same time it is posing potential risks. The recent increase in the number of malicious cyber activities and the level of sophistication of such activities are posing significant challenges to international peace and security.

In response to the changing security landscape, the ROK launched a new version of the National Cybersecurity Strategy in February 2024. The new strategy covers a broader strategic scope, with a special focus on enhancing robust defense capabilities against cyber threats and deepening international cooperation.

Given the transnational nature of cyberattacks and threats, strong partnerships at the bilateral, regional, and international levels are key to protecting cyberspace from malicious cyber activities. The ROK remains committed to promoting mutual understanding and working together to address cybersecurity challenges. In this regard, the ROK has engaged in bilateral cyber consultations with 14 countries and two organizations (the EU and NATO).

The ROK has been an active and constructive member of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ISM on ICTs Security) and the ARF Open-Ended Study Group on Confidence Building Measures. The ROK also expects that the confidence building measures adopted at the recent ISM on ICTs Security will produce synergy effects with the ROK-led capacity-building projects currently underway in the ASEAN region, such as the training sessions held by the Asia-Pacific Cybercrime Capacity Building Hub (APC-Hub), the ASEAN Cyber Shield (ACS) Project, the Capacity Building for Responding to Cryptocurrency Heist in ASEAN Region, and the regional education and training programme of the Asia Pacific Information Security Center. In particular, the ACS Project, which is financed by ASEAN-KOREA Cooperation Fund (AKCF) aims to nurture top cybersecurity experts and contribute to the development of ASEAN Member States' cybersecurity response capabilities and related industries by promoting healthy competition and the exchange of knowledge and experience among leading talents in the region. The ROK also participates in the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) Experts' Working Groups (EWG) on Cybersecurity.

At the international level, the ROK has played a meaningful role in the work of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, supporting the adoption of a consensus-based final report. In particular, the ROK actively led negotiations during the adoption of the OEWG final report in July 2025. The ROK will continue to engage actively and in good faith in the Global Mechanism, established to serve as a regular consultative body following the OEWG and the mechanism will convene its first substantive session in July, while also contributing to the development of international norms in cyberspace and advancing capacity-building efforts.

In addition, at the 11th OEWG session held in July 2025, the ROK presented its National Position on the Application of International Law in Cyberspace, thereby reaffirming its commitment to clarifying the application of international law in cyberspace.

Furthermore, the ROK has actively participated in discussions on the UN Convention against Cybercrime aimed at establishing a global

framework for joint responses to cybercrime, thereby contributing to the consensus-based adoption of the Convention on 8 August 2024. In order to strengthen international cooperation on cybercrime, the ROK also submitted a letter of intent to the Council of Europe in October 2022 and was invited to accede to the Convention on Cybercrime (Budapest Convention) in February 2023, with a view to its accession to the Convention in the near future.

4. Role of the ARF

a. Contributing to Advancing the ARF and Regional Security

As a founding member, the ROK is committed to realizing the ARF's vision of promoting confidence-building measures, developing preventive diplomacy, and elaborating approaches to conflicts in the region. The ROK actively participated in various ARF confidence-building and preventive diplomacy activities during the inter-sessional year of 2025–2026, including the Inter-Sessional Support Group Meeting, Inter-Sessional Meetings, and the Defense Officials' Dialogue, as well as other workshops and seminars.

With a view to further contributing to ARF Track 1 activities, the ROK has expressed its intention to assume the co-chair of the ARF ISM on CTTC for the 2026-28 period, in support of efforts to strengthen capacity in counter-terrorism and transnational crime. In addition, to further enhance its contributions in the area of maritime cooperation, the ROK co-chair the workshop, "ARF Concept Paper on Best Practices for Port State Measures to Combat IUU Fishing," for the inter-sessional year 2026–2027. Through this workshop, regional cooperation on maritime security is expected to be further promoted. The ROK looks forward to working closely with ARF participants to secure peace and stability and build confidence in various fields such as counterterrorism, maritime security, transnational crime, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and other security-related areas.

Furthermore, the ROK has maintained active engagement in EEPs discussions. As a co-chair last year, the ROK put forward the inclusion of transnational crime on the ARF agenda, which has been formally adopted this year and is now under substantive discussion. This demonstrates the

ROK's proactive role in identifying and advancing key issues of regional interest. In addition, at 18th ARE EEPs meeting held in April, the ROK has urged the ARF to develop a cooperative mechanism to effectively address security challenges originating from outside the region.

b. Future of the ARF

Since its establishment in 1994, the ARF has played an essential role in promoting regional peace and stability as a unique intergovernmental forum for multilateral security cooperation. The ARF has served as an effective platform for exchanging views on common security threats and identifying both common ground and differences to build confidence among countries in the region.

Moreover, the international environment is becoming increasingly complex, volatile, and unpredictable. This growing complexity underscores the importance of working in concert with other regional mechanisms. In times of such uncertainty, it is imperative for countries in the region to work together to foster shared prosperity and strengthen mutual trust.

Now is the time for the ARF to evolve beyond its role as a platform for dialogue and to intensify efforts toward confidence-building and preventive diplomacy. In this regard, it is essential for ARF participants to enhance the forum's efficiency and effectiveness. In addition to candid and open exchanges of views and the active participation of member states, the voices of the private sector and youth—who are also key stakeholders in the region's future—should be heard.

In line with these objectives and the ASEAN-ROK CSP Vision, the ROK will continue to contribute to ASEAN-led mechanisms, particularly the ARF, by actively participating in and co-chairing Track 1 activities. The ROK will also endeavor to implement the Manila Plan of Action, which is expected to be adopted at the 27th ARF Foreign Ministers' Meeting in July 2026. Through these efforts, the ARF, as a platform for broadening our understanding of security and fostering joint responses, will further strengthen peace in the region.



Russian Federation

1. Regional Security Landscape

The situation in the Asia-Pacific region has been steadily deteriorating. The West is pushing ahead with its deliberate course towards militarising Asia through embedding NATO's military and political capabilities across the region. Alongside the United States, countries such as the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany and France are actively involved in this process.

By launching the "Indo-Pacific project" to address its goals, the West is seeking to replace inclusive cooperation mechanisms with a network of minilateral arrangements and military-political blocs, which poses an existential threat to the established ASEAN-centred architecture of interstate cooperation. This activity relies on "trilateral alliances" such as the US-Japan-South Korea, the US-Japan-Australia and the US-Japan-Philippines partnerships, as well as Quad (US, Japan, Australia and India), Squad (US, Japan, Australia and Philippines), the AUKUS military-technological partnership (US, United Kingdom and Australia), and their offshoots. There are growing signs that an overarching regional structure—the Indo-Pacific Treaty Organisation—is beginning to take shape on this basis.

Within AUKUS, the US and UK commit to have a "rotational nuclear submarine presence" in Western Australia while advancing work on the non-submarine component (Pillar II) with the prospect of engaging Tokyo and Wellington. The scope for positive cooperation in the region is shrinking, and national sustainable development goals are becoming less and less realistic to achieve.

Taiwan, being a major flashpoint in US-China relations, remains one of the most severe sources of tension in the Asia-Pacific. Despite the Trump administration's initial declarations of intent to deescalate the situation, the United States has continued its provocative policy to support Taipei, ramping up arms exports. The island is being woven into the "containment chain" around the PRC. Russia remains firmly convinced that there is one China only and that the PRC government is the only legitimate government representing all of China, with Taiwan being its integral part.

Complex environment persists in the South China Sea due to recurring incidents between the PRC and a number of countries in the region. The situation is aggravated by regular naval exercises held by the US and its allies under the pretext of defending the freedom of navigation. The Russian Federation stands for settling territorial disputes within the framework of international law, including on the basis of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and the 2011 Guidelines for the Implementation of the DOC. A Code of Conduct in the South China Sea being drafted by China and ASEAN Member States should become an effective mechanism for dispute resolution.

To resolve the situation in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar international efforts should strictly adhere to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states. The general elections successfully held in Myanmar in December 2025–January 2026 are aimed at contributing to normalising the situation in the country, ensuring internal peace, security and stability. Russia opposes the attempts to use UN mechanisms and its Security Council to put political and diplomatic pressure on Myanmar. We welcome ASEAN's willingness to facilitate solutions for stabilising the situation in and around Myanmar and give impetus to implementing the provisions of the Five Point Consensus in close cooperation with the official government. The Western policy to toughen sanctions against Nay Pyi Taw while supporting the country's radical opposition undermines the regional community's efforts to restore peace in Myanmar and threatens the security of neighbouring states and Southeast Asia as a whole.

The territorial conflict between Cambodia and Thailand should be settled exclusively through peaceful means on a bilateral basis in the spirit of good-neighbourliness and with support from ASEAN. The agreement on a ceasefire signed on 27 December 2025 between Bangkok and Phnom Penh was a significant step towards dialogue to resolve the ongoing tensions, drawing on the provisions of the Kuala Lumpur Joint Declaration signed on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit in October 2025. Today it is especially important to act in the spirit of unity and solidarity inherent in the Association to overcome historical legacies of Western colonialism.

The situation on the Korean Peninsula remains volatile due to the continued military provocations by the United States, the Republic of Korea and Japan, acting either in a bilateral or a trilateral format and leveraging US nuclear capabilities. The DPRK responds by taking measures to strengthen and defend its sovereignty. International efforts to prevent further deterioration should focus on building mutual trust and creating reliable security mechanisms for the sake of stability and durable peace in Northeast Asia.

Another cause for serious concern is Japan's growing remilitarisation, including steps to revisit the pacifist provisions enshrined in its Constitution and move towards engagement in US extended nuclear deterrence schemes through encouraging public debate on whether to abandon the country's three non-nuclear principles. Tokyo's consistent and deliberate efforts to build up naval activity together with Washington and other Western states fuel tensions in the region.

The threat of the spread of terrorism and drug trafficking stemming from the territory of Afghanistan remains a significant factor contributing to the regional security deterioration. Despite the counterterrorist and anti-drug efforts of the Afghan authorities, ISIS and other terrorist organisations, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, the Islamic Movement of Eastern Turkestan, Jamaat Ansarulla, Al Qaida, etc., are still present in the country. Afghanistan remains one of the world's largest suppliers of opiates (80 per cent). There is a high level of drug-related crime and increased methamphetamine production. Measures undertaken within the Moscow Format Consultations, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Neighbouring Countries of Afghanistan mechanism play an important role in Afghan state-building and the country's integration into regional economic systems.

2. Defence Policy of the Russian Federation and International Military Cooperation in Asia-Pacific

The activities of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in the Asia-Pacific comply with international norms, bilateral agreements and arrangements and aim to strengthen peace and security in the region through developing bilateral and multilateral military-to-military contacts.

A special role in maintaining regional stability belongs to the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) where Russia (together with the Lao PDR) oversees humanitarian mine action in 2024-2027. Our work is focused on forging common approaches for the ADMM-Plus countries to address tasks on this track, identifying the most promising development areas for countermine equipment and potential use of high-tech capabilities, robotic systems and unmanned aerial vehicles in humanitarian demining operations, and organising specialised tabletop training and exercise.

The Russian Defence Ministry actively promotes ties with key partners in Asia-Pacific, primarily China, India, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka as well as ASEAN Member States, and closely cooperates with the DPRK.

Experts from the International Mine Action Centre of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation continued to provide assistance in clearing Lao territory of the unexploded ordnance remaining from the Indochina War and training Lao military personnel in demining. Regular joint exercises and mutual port calls contribute to strengthening ties in defence.

3. Nuclear and Missile Disarmament, Nuclear Security, and Non-Proliferation of WMD in Asia-Pacific

The escalation of tensions and arms race in the region is triggered by the West's bloc mentality leading to an extensive build-up and assertive projection of its military power, including strategic platforms and systems capable of delivering nuclear weapons, in order to establish its overwhelming superiority and exert coercive pressure on "unwelcome" states. The fact that among the opponents of the West there are states that possess – *de jure* or *de facto* – nuclear capability, and the failure to address their security concerns makes the Asia-Pacific region increasingly prone to conflict.

The situation is destabilising due to the US military-technical programmes on building a regional segment for its global and multi-domain missile defence system; forward deployment of first-strike counterforce capabilities for decapitation and disarmament operations, including ground-based medium- and shorter-range missiles; and development of "extended nuclear deterrence" capabilities and schemes in Asia-Pacific with the involvement of formally non-nuclear allies.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), one of the instruments for ensuring international peace and security, is put to a serious test. The Treaty has been increasingly used to serve narrow political agendas having nothing to do with its subject matter (US-Israeli aggression against Iran is a dangerous example). With the development of cooperation between the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia within AUKUS, there is a risk for the Asia-Pacific that the nuclear states' infrastructure will emerge in a formally non-nuclear state or weapons-grade nuclear material will be transferred to it, which is especially alarming given Canberra's obligations under the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (the Treaty of Rarotonga). The prospect of building nuclear-powered submarines for the naval forces of the Republic of Korea raises deep concern. Such initiatives put additional strain on the IAEA safeguards system and the international NPT regime.

An urgent task is to find a proper balance between non-proliferation efforts and securing the legitimate rights and interests of UN Member States in the field of scientific and technical cooperation and industrial development. The Western countries led by the US are putting obstacles to it, introducing export control measures to make sure that "unwelcome" states have no access to cutting-edge technologies. Equally disturbing are attempts to introduce punitive mechanisms without Russia's participation, as was the case with the well-known COCOM, and refer to "export controls," which is a tool for ensuring non-proliferation, as a pretext for imposing unilateral illegitimate sanctions against those who appear to be inconvenient to the self-proclaimed "global leaders."

Russia supports efforts to formalise the status of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Southeast Asia and is open to consultations with ASEAN Member States to sign as soon as possible a Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty of 1995) with standard reservations and an interpretative statement, which are becoming ever more relevant in the context of a deteriorating international security environment.

There is a danger of an arms race in outer space and turning it into a springboard for aggression and war, which could have a direct impact on the

Asia-Pacific. This negative trend is addressed by the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects, proposed by Russia and China, as well as by the international initiative/political commitment on no first placement (NFP) of weapons in outer space. At the 80th session of the UN General Assembly a number of ARF participants co-sponsored the Russia-proposed resolutions on space security: "Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space" (China, the DPRK, the Lao PDR, Sri Lanka), "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities" (Cambodia, China, the DPRK, Myanmar), and "No first placement of weapons in outer space" (Cambodia, China, the DPRK, Indonesia, the Lao PDR, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam).

4. Combating International Terrorism and Transnational Crime in Asia-Pacific

There is a growing terrorist and extremist threat in the Asia-Pacific region due to the increasing activities of international terrorist organisations, including Al-Qaida and ISIS. Aimed at undermining trust between the state and society, they are promoting ideas of radicalism and violence among the local population, including through the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). These structures actively recruit new members, primarily young people and foreign terrorist fighters returning to Southeast Asia from armed conflict zones.

In this context, it is especially vital to strengthen international cooperation against terrorism and extremism. The established ASEAN-led model is a key element of the security architecture in Southeast Asia. It is unacceptable to try to undermine this model from outside, to politicise expert-level dialogue, or to build "exclusive" geopolitical alliances that compel the countries of the region to escalate their differences. Fruitful cooperation can be achieved only through the equal participation of all Asia-Pacific states and their partners, based on the norms and principles of international law, and without imposing standards or monopolising the relevant agenda by any individual countries.

Russia attaches great importance to further developing cooperation within the framework of the existing multilateral formats, including specialised mechanisms of the ARF, the ADMM-Plus, and ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Partnership. The International Counter-Terrorism Database of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation accessible to 47 states, including ARF participants (Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, India, the Republic of Korea, the Lao PDR, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Viet Nam), contributes to more efficient information sharing.

The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (the SCO RATS) remains one of the key instruments for coordinating efforts to counter new challenges and threats in the Asia-Pacific region. In accordance with the agreement signed by the heads of SCO Member States during the Tianjin Summit on 1 September 2025, it has been decided to convert the SCO RATS into the Universal Centre for Countering Challenges and Threats to the Security of SCO Member States.

The region is experiencing a sharp rise in the manufacture of and illicit trafficking in dangerous synthetic drugs, which are gradually replacing plant-based narcotics in illegal markets, as well as consumption patterns. The digitalisation of drug trafficking has a significant impact on the problem, including the near-complete shift of the distribution of such substances into the virtual space.

It is necessary to strengthen multilateral anti-drug cooperation in full conformity with the three UN conventions, while preserving its depoliticised nature. Russia wholly aligns itself

with zero tolerance towards illicit drugs practised by the ASEAN Member States, as well as with the Association's initiative for achieving a drug-free Southeast Asia. The annual ASEAN-Russia Senior Officials Meeting on Drug Matters, along with technical assistance rendered to Asia-Pacific partners in countering the drug threat and money laundering, have proven to be a positive factor in strengthening ties. Thus, in 2025, educational institutions of the Russian Ministry of the Interior conducted two specialised online training sessions for law enforcement officers from ASEAN Member States under the auspices of ASEANAPOL, as well as a field training course for experts of the Indonesian National Narcotics Agency in Bogor.

5. International Information Security in Asia-Pacific

Russia seeks to develop cooperation in the field of ICT security in the Asia-Pacific and to promote the establishment of a fair legal regime governing information space with the UN coordinating role. It is necessary to ensure the entry into force of the UN Convention against Cybercrime, signed in Ha Noi on 25 October 2025. The next step is to facilitate the elaboration of comprehensive legally binding norms aimed at preventing conflicts in the ICT environment within 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.

It is crucial to secure the UN central role in the issues related to artificial intelligence (AI), which is a type of ICTs, by stimulating discussion on this topic within the Global Dialogue on AI Governance and the Independent International Scientific Panel on AI. The functioning of these platforms should be based on principles of state sovereignty, compliance by AI developers with national legislation, as well as ensuring trusted AI.

Secure and stable operation and development of the national Internet segments need to be ensured on the basis of equal participation of states in the Internet governance. It is important to prevent, through a joint effort within the International Telecommunication Union, interference into domestic affairs using low-orbit Internet satellite systems.

The Russian Federation advocates a pragmatic, non-politicised agenda and confidence-building measures within the ARF, aimed at implementing the ARF Work Plan on Security of and in the Use of ICTs. Our interaction with ASEAN at the 5th ASEAN-Russia Dialogue on ICT Security-Related Issues (Sochi, 23 October 2025) confirmed the parties' readiness to further develop capacity-building cooperation and exchange views on the discussion on IIS.

The information security centre of the Universal Centre for Countering Challenges and Threats to the Security of SCO Member States is intended as an effective platform for developing joint steps in this direction. Russia as well attaches great importance to the specialised cooperation within the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) where it coordinates the Security of and in the Use of ICTs confidence-building measure. Specialised seminars are held regularly, including those aimed at raising awareness of CICA members in this area.

6. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief in Asia-Pacific

Russia continues to promote regional cooperation in the field of emergency prevention and response. The ARF is considered a key venue in this context. Russian experts regularly attend thematic meetings and seminars conducted in this format.

We attach great importance to enhancing practical cooperation and experience sharing with ASEAN. The ASEAN Member States participated in the Arctic expedition of the EMERCOM of Russia in the Arkhangelsk region (January

2025) and in the joint EMERCOM-UN OCHA training course on the use of the Command and Coordination Management System (ICMS) of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG; Moscow, April 2025).

Humanitarian assistance continues to be delivered to Asia-Pacific countries impacted by natural disasters. In March and April 2025, the EMERCOM Airmobile Rescue Team conducted a rescue operation to respond to the devastating earthquake in Myanmar. They assisted 508 local residents, surveyed over 130,000 square metres of debris, and delivered 160 tonnes of humanitarian aid. In October 2025, the EMERCOM aviation transferred over 29 tonnes of humanitarian aid to Viet Nam for the population affected by the typhoon, and more than 34 tonnes to Sri Lanka to help overcome the severe consequences of the cyclone.

As part of the Russian Federation's 2024 contribution to the UN World Food Programme (WFP), over 422 tonnes of sunflower oil were shipped to Myanmar in February 2025. In March, August and September 2025, a total of 318 tonnes of sunflower oil and canned fish were delivered to the Lao PDR. Under Russia's additional 2025 contribution to the WFP, USD 2.5 million was allocated.

7. Regional Security Architecture and Trends of Multilateral Diplomacy in Asia-Pacific

Attempts to undermine ASEAN integrity and its operational capacity, as well as to strip the practical dimension from the agenda of ASEAN-led frameworks, constitute a serious challenge to the current Asia-Pacific security and cooperation architecture. Russia consistently stands for the preservation and strengthening of the ASEAN-led architecture of interstate relations in the region.

The Russian initiatives aimed at building a Greater Eurasian Partnership and creating equal and indivisible security for all across the Eurasian space are a positive catalyst for continental development. Such a system would afford all Eurasian states solid security guarantees for their national development, free from threats and destructive interference.

The ARF remains an important platform for developing confidence-building measures and introducing preventive diplomacy tools to the region. Further Forum consolidation, enhanced practical output, preventing its focus from shifting to politicised and non-core topics are on the agenda. We believe an atmosphere of constructive and equal dialogue, underpinned by commitment to the principles of consensus and equality, as well as the readiness of all participants without exception to follow the high ARF inclusivity standards, are the prerequisites for achieving these goals.



Singapore

I. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

The foundations that have sustained decades of global stability and order are under strain. While international law and multilateral rules have provided guardrails for states' behaviour, states today feel less bound by rules, and are more inclined to act whenever they have the power to do so. This is especially dangerous amidst deepening geopolitical tensions. Russia's invasion of Ukraine and conflicts in the Middle East may be geographically distant, but have real implications for the region, such as supply chain disruptions. At the same time, we face emerging transnational challenges such as the threats to our critical underwater infrastructure, all while sea robberies, terrorism and cybercrime remain serious concerns. As states seek to strengthen their security and resilience amidst the challenging security environment, it is all the more important that ASEAN and its partners do not turn inwards, but continue using ASEAN-led mechanisms to strengthen mutual confidence and trust, enhance practical cooperation to tackle common challenges, and uphold the multilateral rules-based order. These mechanisms include the ASEAN Plus Three (APT), ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), East Asia Summit (EAS), and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). ASEAN can only be relevant and effective as a regional bloc if it remains at the core of the regional architecture. It must stay innovative and continually reinvent itself to meet the needs of our citizens as security threats evolve. Singapore will continue to work towards strengthening ASEAN-related initiatives and mechanisms with ASEAN Centrality as our guiding principle.

II. National Security and Defence Policy

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 continue to enjoy peace and security. A strong defence also provides us with the space and freedom to act independently and safeguard the interests of our people. Over the years, Singapore has invested steadily and prudently in defence 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 to augment our well-educated conscript force and to train our soldiers to fight effectively. The SAF has also played an important role in assisting in domestic and international contingencies, such as evacuating Singaporeans and other nationals from the Middle East in March 2026.

III. National Contributions to Regional Security

Singapore firmly believes in the value of diplomacy and dialogue to enhance regional and international stability, by minimising the potential for misunderstanding and miscalculation, as well as enhancing responses to common security challenges. As a small country, Singapore's security and prosperity are highly dependent on regional peace and stability. Through extensive bilateral and multilateral cooperation, Singapore seeks to establish strong and friendly ties with defence establishments and armed forces regionally and globally. Singapore believes in the importance of a rules-based, open and inclusive regional security architecture that encourages countries to engage constructively in dialogue and practical cooperation. As such, Singapore actively participates in ASEAN-led platforms like the ADMM, ADMM-Plus, EAS, ARF as well as other multilateral fora like the Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD) and the Five Power Defence Arrangements.

The ADMM is the highest defence consultative and cooperative mechanism in ASEAN which aims to promote regional peace and stability through dialogue and practical cooperation. Singapore actively contributes to the ADMM and ADMM-Plus. In 2025, Singapore, Brunei, and Thailand co-sponsored the Concept Paper on "Critical Underwater Infrastructure (CUI) Security from a Defence Perspective" which laid out broad principles and potential areas for defence cooperation in CUI, and was adopted by the 19th ADMM.

Through the Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological and Radiological (CBR) Defence Experts, Singapore contributes to strengthening regional capacity to deal with CBR threats. Since its inaugural meeting in 2019, the Network has kept up a steady momentum of meetings, training and workshops in each of the C, B, and R domains, covering topics of interest such as scientific

cooperation to deal with COVID-19. Regional and international experts are invited as resource speakers to exchange views and experiences. Singapore co-organised the Network's 7th Annual Meeting with Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur in 2025 to deepen cooperation in this area.

Singapore contributes through the ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence (ACICE). Since its official opening in July 2023, ACICE has enhanced information sharing and capacity building among defence establishments against cyber and information threats. The 3rd Digital Defence Symposium (DDS) was held in July 2025, bringing together senior military and defence officials, renowned academics, and industry experts to discuss the latest developments in the cybersecurity and information landscapes. The 3rd ASEAN Roundtable on Digital Defence was also held at the same time, providing a platform for AMS to exchange views on the implications of cyber and information challenges, and to explore areas of cooperation within the defence sectoral.

The ADMM-Plus enables practical cooperation among the 18 ADMM-Plus countries through the EWGs. The EWGs focus on maritime security (MS), humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), peacekeeping operations (PKO), counter-terrorism (CT), military medicine (MM), humanitarian mine action (HMA), and cybersecurity (CS). Singapore is committed to sustaining military-to-military cooperation and building trust among militaries through the EWGs and is actively participating in the fifth EWG cycle from 2024-2027 through the co-chairing of the EWG on HADR with New Zealand.

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 22nd SLD was held from 30 May to 1 June 2025. It saw participation from 47 countries – the highest to date, featuring a slate of speakers from the US, China, ASEAN, and Europe. There were 40 Ministerial-level delegates and more than 40 senior defence officials, including Chiefs of Defence Force. There were three Heads of State / Heads of Government in attendance: besides President of France Emmanuel Macron who delivered the Keynote Address, Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim delivered a Special Addres s, and President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste Dr José Ramos-Horta spoke on a plenary session on "Managing Proliferation Risks in the Asia-Pacific." This year marks the 23rd edition of the SLD, which will be held from 29 to 31 May 2026. In the lead-up to the annual SLD, the IISS Sherpa Meetings supplement the SLD process by providing an inter-sessional platform for senior officials to engage in frank discussions on security issues.

(i) Counter-Terrorism

Terrorism and its underlying ideologies pose complex and long-term challenges. Modes of radicalisation have evolved with rising consumption of digital content. Continued vigilance and international cooperation are vital to deal with this threat.

Since the 1997 Declaration on Transnational Crime, ASEAN's counter-terrorism efforts have made much progress. Singapore was one of the first AMS to ratify

the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism (ACCT) in 2007, which is the first regional legally-binding anti-terrorism pact. Recognising the importance of preventing violent extremism conducive to terrorism, Singapore supported the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent

Extremism 2018-2025 in 2018. More recently, Singapore actively contributed to the drafting of the Work Plan of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism 2019-2025 ("Bali Work Plan") and supported its adoption at the 13th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime in November 2019. Singapore supported the ARF Statement on the Treatment of Children Recruited by or Associated with Terrorist Groups in 2020. Singapore welcomes these significant achievements by ASEAN, which enhance regional cooperation and commitment to the global strategy on counter-terrorism.

Singapore is committed to strengthening the regional counter-terrorism security architecture. We support the ASEAN "Our Eyes" (AOE) initiative that was adopted by the 12th ADMM in 2018 and its Standard Operating Procedures that was adopted by the 14th ADMM in 2020, and hosted the 8th AOE Working Group meeting in March 2024. The AOE enhances strategic information exchange on counter-terrorism among ASEAN defence establishments. To complement the AOE, we operationalised the Counter Terrorism Information Facility (CTIF) in January 2021 as an operational level CT information-sharing initiative. Singapore's Network of ASEAN CBR Defence Experts facilitates 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 and promote greater regional counter-terrorism preparedness against CBR threats.

(ii) Non-Proliferation, Counter-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament

Singapore is active in combating the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). We 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. Singapore supports the universalisation of both the CSA and the AP, and works closely with the IAEA on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. 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 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 in August 2011. In September 2014, Singapore acceded to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and accepted the 2005 Amendment to the CPPNM. Singapore ratified the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT) in September 2017.

Singapore signed the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the first legally binding international instrument that regulates the international transfer of conventional arms, in December 2014. This reaffirms Singapore's commitment to the elimination of the threat posed by the illicit arms trade, and to international disarmament and non-proliferation initiatives that promote global peace and security. Singapore became a High Contracting Party to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) in March 2024. The CCW, as a

framework convention, has yielded important protocols that have further enhanced international law. Singapore's accession to the CCW underscores our commitment to international humanitarian law.

Singapore strongly supports counter-proliferation initiatives such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), and recognises the importance of preventing rogue groups, such as terrorist organisations, from acquiring WMD. 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), we have hosted PSI exercises and meetings. In October 2021, Singapore hosted Exercise Deep Sabre, which was the fourth time Singapore hosted a PSI exercise. More recently, Singapore participated in the APER Exercise Pacific Shield and the OEG meeting hosted by Japan in December 2025.

Singapore fully 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. We participated in the 30th Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in November 2025. 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. The seventh instalment of the course was conducted in May 2023, which benefitted 9 participants from 7 of the OPCW Member States in Asia, and Singapore will continue to conduct the eighth run of the course in 2025. The course has been a platform for the sharing of experiences on the management of hazards. The Network of ASEAN CBR Defence Experts also organised a virtual technical workshop in May 2025 that was conducted by experts from the OPCW. Most recently, Singapore and the EU co-organised the ARF Workshop on Detection, Response, and Deterrence of Chemical, Biological, and Radiological Incidents in June 2024 via the Network of ASEAN CBR Defence Experts and the EU CBRN Centre of Excellence. In addition, Singapore had contributed experts to serve on the Scientific Advisory Board of the OPCW between 2017 and 2019 and the Technical Requirement Team of the OPCW ChemTech centre between 2020 and 2021. Since 2024, Singapore has contributed a technical expert 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. We participated in the 9th Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in November 2022 as well as the Meeting of States Parties in December 2024, and have submitted returns on BWC CBMs annually since 2012.

As a reflection of our commitment to prevent WMD proliferation, Singapore adheres to a robust and enhanced export control regime. The Strategic Goods (Control) Act 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 Act's control list is regularly updated to ensure that it keeps abreast of technological developments and remains aligned with the four multilateral export control regimes. Singapore also works closely with international partners on regional capacity building in this area. In November 2025, the U.S. Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS), U.S. Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS), Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and Singapore Customs organised The 13th Joint Industry Outreach Seminar on Strategic Trade Management, which provided invaluable opportunities for the industry to hear from the government regulators and private sector practitioners/experts, and enhance the industry's understanding of recent developments on strategic trade management. 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 and their means of delivery to non-state actors.

Singapore also participates actively in international discussions on emerging technology domains, such as Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), outer space security, and military AI. We recognise that it will be more effective to have consensus and regulation early in the development of any new technology, and appropriate governance frameworks will be needed to safeguard international peace and 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 1993.1 We have 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.

On 1 July 2022, Singapore assumed the Presidency of the FATF for a term of two years. In this capacity, we have spearheaded initiatives aimed at strengthening global asset recovery efforts. This includes enhancing countries' domestic capabilities and advocating for stronger regional and international cooperation to interdict and recover proceeds linked to criminal activities, including scams. We have:

a. Singapore also worked with INTERPOL and Egmont Group at the FATF **to co-lead a project to counter the illicit funding of cyber-enabled fraud**. The project, involving over 80 jurisdictions, aimed to understand and combat online scam-related money laundering risks. The report was endorsed by FATF, INTERPOL, and the Egmont Group, and published on the FATF website in November 2023, including a set of best practices/recommendations to enable countries to effectively recover proceeds of cyber-enabled fraud. Subsequently, Singapore facilitated discussions and presented the findings at various international forums throughout 2023 and 2024, including FATF meetings, FATF-INTERPOL Roundtable, and the Egmont Group meeting.

Under the aegis of the ASEAN Ministerial and Senior Officials' Meetings on Transnational Crime (AMMTC & SOMTC), Singapore is the ASEAN Voluntary Lead Shepherd for international economic crime (IEC). Singapore conducted an annual ASEAN Workshop on International Economic Crime to equip relevant investigators with the competencies required for the investigation of commercial crime. These workshops reviewed the latest trends, threats, and challenges facing law enforcement agencies in the area of commercial crime and provided updates on the latest developments in white-collar crime. The last workshop was organised in 2019, and covered common concerns such as international fraud, payment systems fraud and money laundering).

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 with 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.

- The ASCom participated in two such operations in 2024. The first was INTERPOL's Operation First Light, which involved more than 70 countries. During the operation, more than 1,000 persons were investigated and over 3,500 bank accounts were frozen in Singapore, leading to the recovery of more than $16 million. In addition, a total of more than $203,000 worth of virtual assets were blocked by the ASCom.
- The second was INTERPOL's Operation HAECHI V, which involved 40 countries. During the operation, the ASCom investigated more than 1,600 suspects involved in scams and money laundering, blocked more than 5,100 bank accounts and seized over $54.8 million in Singapore. More than $798,000 virtual assets were also blocked by the ASCom.
- The SPF participated in INTERPOL Operation HAECHI VI in 2025, where more than 3,000 subjects involved in scams were investigated and more than 7,800 bank accounts were blocked, seizing more than $24.13 million. More than 100 virtual accounts were frozen, resulting in the seizure of more than $3.37 million in virtual assets
- Project RESCUE (2025) – CAD supported the course and meetings, which strengthened law enforcement capacity in South and Southeast Asia to investigate illicit financial flows linked to cyber-enabled fraud. CAD supported the project by sending officers for the courses and meetings.

Singapore has also taken a lead role in regional asset recovery assets as one of the nine steering group members of the Asset Recovery Interagency Network – Asia Pacific (ARIN-AP) since 2024, alongside fellow ASEAN members, 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 – CAD, CID, CNB and 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).

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 member states. Singapore also plays a crucial role in facilitating

ASEAN's initiatives against cybercrime, including organising regional workshops and conferences. In 2024 and 2025, the Singapore Police Force (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 LEAs were also engaged by CCC via sideline meetings.

The Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) Working Group on Cybercrime (SOMTC WG on CC) is also another platform for ASEAN Member States to (i) discuss and adopt a coordinated approach to deal with cybercrime; (ii) follow up on recommendations on cybercrime from other ASEAN-related fora; and (iii) engage dialogue partners on cybercrime collaboration.

Under the SOMTC WG on CC, we worked with AMS to develop the ASEAN cybercrime roadmap, focusing on strengthening AMS cooperation to combat transnational cyber-enabled fraud and improve asset recovery. The roadmap identified 13 workstreams relating to information sharing, capacity building, coordination in joint operations, identifying gaps in asset recovery frameworks and discussions on a turnaround timeframe for the freezing of assets. To mark the conclusion of the development phase of the cybercrime roadmap, an ASEAN declaration on cybercrime and online scams was drafted to signal our continued commitment to addressing this transnational threat together.

The ASEAN cybercrime roadmap and its key deliverables will continue to be monitored at the SOMTC WG on CC from 2024 to 2026.

We have 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.

In November 2022, Singapore co-organised the Course on Cybercrime with Italy. The 3-day course, held in Rome for AMS and ASEANAPOL, explored the cybercrime fighting efforts of the Italian agencies and discussed strengthening cooperation between Italy and the ASEAN region. Due to the success of the cybercrime course, Italy has proposed the Project Falcone Borsellino to deliver a webinar and two face-to-face courses in Rome, Italy. The webinar titled 'Webinar on Cybercrime and International Economic Crime' was held from 6 to 9 May 2025 virtually. This led to a face-to-face course that was held in Rome from 10 to 14 November 2025, with a second run expected to take place by end 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 ASEAN member states 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 from the following ASEAN sectoral pillars:

- SOMTC
- Senior Officials Meeting on Youth (SOMY); and
- Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC).

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 iteration of Work Plan complement 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. Singapore also collaborates with international law enforcement agencies on joint operations to combat TIP crimes. For example, SPF, in collaboration with INTERPOL's Crimes Against Children (CAC) Unit, organised the 7th Victim Identification Task Force (VIDTF) Asia 2025 from 8 to 12 December 2025 in Singapore. The VIDTF brought together 28 law enforcement officers from 20 Asia-Pacific jurisdictions to jointly analyse CSAM using specialised victim identification techniques, under the guidance of trainers from INTERPOL and Europol. These coordinated efforts led to the identification of 20 victims and nine offenders, as well as the establishment of 308 abuse locations across various countries through the analysis of 214 CSAM series involving 348 child victims and 198 offenders. In addition, Singapore continues to enhance its own as well as international prosecutorial and judicial capabilities in the prosecution and adjudication of TIP cases. This was demonstrated at the 30th Annual Conference and General Meeting of the International Association of Prosecutors (IAP), held in Singapore from 7 to 10 September 2025, where AGC co-organised a "Human Trafficking Special Interest Session: Fostering Better Cooperation Across Borders to Combat Trafficking in Persons" with the IAP Secretariat.

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 oversees the region's effort to combat drug trafficking. Singapore also participates actively at the Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) and ASEAN Senior Officials on Transnational Crime (SOMTC), where we pledged to work with countries to effectively combat illicit drug trafficking We have also supported capacity building efforts in the region. Annually, the Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) organised capability building workshops dedicated for international audience. The Singapore Drug Control Programme, a 5-day workshop, where Singapore shares its comprehensive drug strategies through site visits and physical demonstrations of our technologies. The workshops provided a platform for senior officials from various countries to exchange and share experiences and best practices in drug control. A total of 105 participants from over 44 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 had the opportunity 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, in a follow up to the 2025 World Drug Report on the societal impact of illicit drug use, Singapore has pledged at the 69th CND to sponsor another thematic chapter in the 2026 World Drug Report examining impact of illicit drug use on public safety. Singapore will be seeking re-election for membership in the CND, 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 disaster, it is integral for Singapore to remain proactive in the field of disaster management while enhancing our HADR capabilities. Working on the principal 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 ASEAN Member States 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): 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. The 6th ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Partnership Conference held in June 2021 generated pledges close to USD 11 million from 21 partners to support the implementation of the AADMER Work Programme 2021 – 2025. 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 ASEAN Member State in the aftermath of a disaster. Most recently, Singapore, represented by the Singapore Civil Defence Force (ASEAN-Singapore) deployed three ASEAN-ERAT officers to support the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (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, ASEAN-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 8 townships, including shelter areas, hospitals and collapsed sites for assessment.

In April 2025, Singapore co-organised the inaugural ASEAN-ERAT Level 3 (Team Leader) course with the AHA Centre, which was held in at the Civil Defence Academy. Upon completion of the course, participants are regionally recognised to lead emergency response operations under the ASEAN-ERAT mechanism. Four officers from the Singapore Civil Defence Force participated in and completed the course; and one officer from Singapore's Changi Regional HADR Coordination Centre (RHCC) participated as a facilitator at the ASEAN-ERAT Level 3 Course.

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 10th run of the SPDDM in August 2025. In view of it being 20 years of AADMER and 10 years of SPDDM, the event serves as an opportunity to reflect on two decades of regional cooperation in disaster risk reduction and emergency response, while forging the post-2025 vision for the ACDM. 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 ASEAN-Singapore will be hosting the 11th SPDDM in August 2026; and the 12th run of SEPDM in Oct 2026.

Singapore launched the Changi RHCC in September 2014 which aims to provide a platform

for both military-to-military and civil-military HADR coordination in support of the Affected State. The Changi RHCC complements existing disaster response institutions – such as the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the AHA Centre. The Changi RHCC's OPERA Computer Information System fuses information on assessed ground needs, status of deployments and key logistics movements to aid its partners and the Affected State in coordination and planning functions. Singapore is appreciative of like-minded countries that have supported and partnered with the Changi RHCC. These countries include 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 Dec 2025, the Changi RHCC coordinated the delivery of humanitarian aid supplies contributed by the SAF to Thailand, following severe floods in the country. The RSAF's C-130 aircraft transported over seven tonnes of relief items, which included food, water, medicine, and hygiene supplies. Changi RHCC was also involved in coordinating Singapore's relief efforts to affected populations in Gaza since Nov 2023. Most recently in Aug 2025, the RSAF deployed a C-130 transport aircraft to Jordan at the invitation of the Jordanian government to conduct airdrop operations alongside other foreign air forces to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza. The C-130 carried humanitarian aid comprising medical supplies from the Ministry of Health (MOH), and food supplies from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), coordinated through the Changi RHCC.

Exercise Coordinated Response (Ex COORES) is the Changi RHCC's flagship table-top exercise co-organised biennially with US INDOPACOM'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 international organisations, governmental agencies and non-government organisations. The most recent iteration of Ex COORES was held in October 2025 with CFE-DM and the Viet Nam National Steering Committee for Civil Defense (VINASARCOM), and saw international 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 most recent iteration of the UN CMCoord course was held in April 2025, with participants from international and local IOs/NGOs, including the AHA Centre.

Singapore, through the ASEAN-Singapore, was classified as a Heavy Urban Seach 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, the ASEAN-Singapore deployed an 80-member Operation Lionheart contingent 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.

Moving forward, ACDM Singapore remains steadfast in our commitment to building and nurturing a disaster resilient ASEAN. ACDM Singapore will continue to proactively contribute

to the AADMER Work Programme 2026 – 2030 that was recently launched in Oct 2025.

Singapore will also be hosting the ASEAN Regional Disaster Exercise (ARDEX) in 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 in the South China Sea (SCS), the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS), the Lombok Strait and the Sunda Strait, 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 bodies, like the IMO, have an important role to play; and (iii) cooperative measures should be in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, the relevant standards and recommended practices of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and instruments and conventions of the International Maritime Organization (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 the littoral States of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand, to enhance maritime security in 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 operational linkages to 163 partners across 58 countries, the

IFC serves as a platform for multinational and inter-agency collaboration to resolve common maritime security concerns, including piracy and armed robbery against ships, contraband smuggling, irregular human migration and maritime terrorism. The IFC fuses, sense-makes, and disseminates maritime information through its Real-time Information-sharing System (IRIS) to enable rapid collaboration between maritime agencies and the shipping community. The IFC also supports broader efforts to enhance regional capacity for maritime security though 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 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, 21 States are Contracting Parties to the ReCAAP.[2] Singapore has hosted the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) since its inception in November 2006, and has renewed its commitment to host the ISC for another 5 years, from 2022 to 2027. 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 shipping industry members alike.

The ReCAAP ISC has collaborated with partner organisations and the shipping industry, maritime training centres and institutes of higher learning to produce and review useful reference materials for the maritime community, such as the Regional Guide 2 to Counter Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia in March 2022 and the Guidance on Abduction of Crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and Waters off Eastern Sabah in July 2019. The ReCAAP ISC has also supported numerous capacity building efforts to improve the capability of regional governments to combat piracy and armed robbery against ships in the region. In November 2023, the ISC launched the online ReCAAP Data Visualisation Map and Panel (Re-VAMP) tool that enhances the delivery and analysis of key information on piracy and armed robbery incidents in Asia. 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 (GoA).

(vi) ICTs Security

Cyber threats are a transboundary and cross-cutting challenge to all AMS. At the same time, cybersecurity is also a key enabler of economic progress, job creation and better living standards as AMS step up their digitalisation efforts.

Under Singapore's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2018, the first ever ASEAN Leaders' Statement on Cybersecurity Coordination was endorsed to reaffirm ASEAN's commitment to a secure and resilient rules-based cyberspace. Since 2016, Singapore has also been hosting the ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity (AMCC), held on the side-lines of the Singapore International Cyber Week (SICW). AMS subscribed in-principle to the 11 voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs at the 3rd AMCC in 2018, making ASEAN the first and still the only region to do so. At the 9th AMCC in 2024, the meeting recognised the heightened level of cyber threats, including the emergence of new threats to critical information infrastructure protection, ransomware, AI-security and cyber-enabled scams. This focus on the evolving cyber landscape

continued at the 10th AMCC in 2025, where AMS expressed keen interest to deepen regional cooperation in addressing emerging technology (e.g., AI and quantum), and IoT security.

As set out in the 2018 ASEAN Leaders' Statement, Singapore worked closely with ASEAN to draft the initial proposal for better cybersecurity policy coordination in ASEAN. The proposal to establish an ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee (ASEAN Cyber-CC) comprising representatives from relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies overseeing cybersecurity issues was considered at the ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting (ADGMIN) in 2019. Its objective is to strengthen cross-sectoral coordination on cybersecurity while preserving the exclusive work domains of the sectoral bodies. Singapore chaired the 5th ASEAN Cyber-CC meeting in November 2024.

At the 10th ASEAN Network Security Action Council (ANSAC) Meeting and 2nd Telecommunications and IT Senior Officials-ASEAN Telecommunications Regulators' Council (TELSOM-ATRC) Leaders Retreat in August 2019 in Bangkok, the methods for the implementation of the ASEAN Regional Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) were noted, and the scope of work for the ASEAN CERT was agreed on.

The objective of the ASEAN Regional CERT is to promote and facilitate information sharing related to cyber incident response to complement the operational mandate exercised by individual national CERTs in each AMS. The ASEAN Regional CERT will focus on the following workstreams: information sharing, maintain the ASEAN points-of-contact network, cybersecurity trainings and workshops, regional cybersecurity exercises, international collaboration, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and cybersecurity awareness-raising. It would also include capacity building initiatives to better equip AMS' national CERTs with the tools and knowledge to deal with increasingly sophisticated cross-border cyber threats. Following AMS' agreement in 2020 to establish the ASEAN Regional CERT, Singapore, in consultation with AMS, tabled an ASEAN Regional CERT Implementation Paper at the 2nd ADGMIN in January 2022, the Operational Framework (OF) at the 3rd ADGMIN in February 2023, and the Financial Model at the 4th ADGMIN in February 2024, which were all successfully adopted. AMS have agreed for Singapore to host and fund approximately USD10.1 million for 10 years to finance the ASEAN Regional CERT. The ASEAN Regional CERT has been launched in 2024 with a physical facility in Singapore. Its work is overseen by the ASEAN Regional CERT Task Force, currently chaired by the rotating overall coordinator Lao PDR and comprising representatives from all ASEAN Member States. The Task Force looks forward to working with ASEAN Dialogue Partners to explore possible collaboration opportunities. The ASEAN Regional CERT will allow AMS to work together even more closely to further strengthen regional cyber resilience, in the face of increasingly sophisticated and transboundary cyber threats facing ASEAN, and the negative impact that such threats and successful attacks can have on the digital economy.

Singapore has also been convening an annual ASEAN CERT Incident Drill (ACID) for the last 20 years to strengthen the cybersecurity preparedness of AMS, exchange best practices in incident response, and enhance regional cooperation.

Alongside Malaysia and Japan, Singapore co-chaired the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications

Technologies (ARF ISM on ICTs Security) from August 2018 to July 2021. The ARF ISM on ICTs Security and its Open-ended Study Group (OESG) focuses on the adoption of CBMs to facilitate communication, information sharing as well as the exchange of know-how and best practices. In so doing, we can reduce the risk of cyber conflict, and build inter-country trust and confidence in cyberspace. Singapore is co-sponsored two proposals at the 2025 OESG.

The first is on a workshop on National and Regional Approaches to Incident Management of ICT-Enabled Critical Infrastructure with the European Union, and the second is on a workshop on the ASEAN Checklist for the Implementation of the Norms of Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace with the United States.

In support of international and regional capacity building efforts, Singapore has also organised several programmes under the ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence (ASCCE). The intent is to continue to work with fellow ARF Member States to enhance our collective competencies and exchange of perspectives in the policy, operational, technical and diplomacy domains of cybersecurity. Some examples of key capacity building activities include the United Nations-Singapore Cyber Fellowship (UNSCF) Programme which is co-organised with the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs. The UNSCF is open to all UN Member States, including ARF Member States and is targeted at Cyber Ambassadors and/or the heads/deputy heads of national agencies overseeing cybersecurity., with the sixth iteration concluded in May 2025. Singapore has also collaborated with ARF members to conduct cyber capacity building programmes endorsed through the ARF OESG, such as the ARF Workshops on the Protection of ICT-Enabled Critical Infrastructure jointly organised by the EU and Singapore in 2021 and 2024. Singapore and the EU will co-organise the third ARF Workshop on ICT Security on Operationalising Critical Infrastructure Protection and Voluntary Consultation in July 2026, pending improvements to the travel situation.

In ASEAN, Singapore and Malaysia co-lead the efforts on norms implementation and have worked together with AMS to develop a Regional Action Plan (RAP) Matrix on Norms Implementation which was eventually approved at the 2nd ASEAN Cyber-CC meeting in November 2021. The RAP Matrix is ASEAN's commitment to implement the 11 UN voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace, and is intended to serve as a guide for ASEAN Member States' implementation efforts. Following its adoption, the RAP Matrix remains a living document and can be reviewed whenever required. At the 4th ASEAN Cyber-CC meeting in November 2023, AMS agreed to review and update the RAP Matrix with their ongoing and future national and regional initiatives. AMS also have regular discussions on the progress of the RAP at platforms such as the ASEAN Network Security Action Council meetings. The annual review exercise for Sectoral Body initiatives under the RAP Matrix was presented by the ASEAN Secretariat at the 5th ASEAN Cyber-CC Meeting in 2024, and was subsequently acknowledged at the 5th ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting in January 2025.

In line with guidance from ASEAN Cybersecurity Ministers and Senior Officials at the ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity in 2018, Singapore worked with AMS to finalise the ASEAN Norms Implementation Checklist in support of the practical implementation of 11 voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour. The Checklist was further developed with AMS through workshops held over the course of 2024 and was completed and presented at the 9th AMCC. Subsequently, the Checklist was endorsed at the 5th ASEAN Cyber-CC and its endorsement was noted by ASEAN Ministers at the 5th ADGMIN in January 2025. The Checklist, the first regional checklist of its kind, was launched during the SICW24 and will serve as a reference for both AMS and extra-regional countries to build a safer and more secure cyberspace. Given this steady progress in ASEAN and ASEAN's commitment to norms implementation, ASEAN is well-positioned to contribute to the norms implementation discussions at the UN.

Multilaterally, Singapore participates actively in international discussions, including at the UN.

Singapore has participated in and contributed to strengthening the rules-based multilateral order at the 6th UN Group of Governmental Experts (UN GGE) on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security and the inaugural Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on Developments in the Field of ICTs in the Context of International Security. Both processes concluded in 2021 with their respective consensus reports adopted by the UN General Assembly. The reports contained specific recommendations on how countries should work together towards an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful cyberspace. Singapore chaired the five-year UN OEWG on Security of and in the use of ICTs (2021 – 2025), which built on the work of the inaugural UN OEWG and the sixth UN GGE. The OEWG (2021 - 2025) has successfully adopted three consecutive Annual Progress Reports and the Final Report by consensus in 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025. This is a clear indication of the commitment of States to work together towards building a common understanding on areas such as emerging threats; rules, norms and principles of responsible behaviour; and the application of international law to cyberspace. Following the successful adoption of the Final Report, members agreed to establish a UN 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.

Singapore continues to participate actively in discussions at the UN 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.

Within the defence sectoral, the ADMM-Plus EWG on CS is a platform for defence establishments from ASEAN and Plus countries to enhance cooperation in addressing challenges to cybersecurity. Singapore actively participates in the EWG on CS to foster understanding, strengthen practical cooperation and support capacity-building efforts in the region. ACICE is also supporting the EWG on CS through the development and hosting of a web portal for the ADMM-Plus countries.

ACICE is part of Singapore's contributions to strengthen cooperation amongst AMS in building a safe, secure, stable and accessible cyber and digital space. Since September 2021, ACICE has circulated more than 120 monthly reports to AMS to raise shared situational awareness, provided updates on recent developments and trends, as well as tactics and techniques used by malicious actors in the cyber and information domains. These reports are also published on ACICE's website and LinkedIn page, to provide easy access to ACICE's products and updates on ACICE's events. ACICE's Malware Information Sharing Platform (MISP) and ACICE Chat enable AMS to access, read and share real-time information on cyber malware and other relevant cyber and information threats. The timely sharing of cybersecurity threat information leverages the collective knowledge of AMS for early warning, timely response and mitigation of cyberattacks. ACICE conducted two iterations of its cybersecurity course in February 2024 and 2025, and conducted its inaugural information course in June 2025. These courses allow ASEAN military cyber practitioners to gain a deeper understanding of cybersecurity and information issues and exchange perspectives on the challenges and threats across Southeast Asia. ACICE conducted the 4th Advisory Board meeting in-person on 24 July 2026, with nominated representatives from all AMS as well as the ASEAN Secretariat in attendance. The Meeting exchanged views on how ASEAN defence establishments could cooperate in the cyber and information domains, as well as the research areas, activities and products that ACICE could work on. The 5th Advisory Board meeting will be held in July 2025. ACICE Experts Panel was formed in June 2023, and

comprises 10 academics and industry professionals from diverse geographical representation. It aims to advise ACICE on emerging trends and developments in the cyber and information domains. ACICE Experts Panel had its inaugural meeting in July 2023 and meets twice a year; the 5th meeting was held in July 2025. The Experts Panel provided useful suggestions and feedback for ACICE to enhance its events and product offerings. The Experts Panel will meet again in July 2026. ACICE also seeks to partner a range of extra-regional partners to expand its product offerings for AMS. In 2026, ACICE will partner

the US and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research to run a cyber capacity building course and cyber norms workshop respectively.

IV. Role of ARF

Since its inception in 1994 as an open and inclusive forum to discuss key political and security issues, the ARF has evolved from Stage I Promotion of CBMs to Stage II Development of Preventive Diplomacy (PD) mechanisms. As the Ha Noi Plan of Action (POA) II to implement the ARF Vision Statement expired in 2025, ARF Participants are developing a new POA (2026-2030), which will guide ARF's future progress in accordance with universally recognised norms and principles of international law. The ASEAN Foreign Ministers also adopted the Paper on Recommendations to Revitalise the ARF in October 2025, which will help to ensure the ARF's continued relevance. These are timely initiatives as the world grapples with growing fragmentation.

Against this backdrop, we should be prepared to face more complicated regional security challenges. More than ever, recovery and success would depend on greater confidence and trust among ARF Participants, fostering closer collaboration and candid dialogue, as well as responding collectively to the complex geopolitical landscape. ASEAN will have to ensure our continued Centrality and unity through initiatives, including at the ARF, that assert our relevance. The regional architecture is constantly in flux and the increasing complex geopolitical environment has intensified some centrifugal forces. The ARF must be vigilant and renew our value as an open and inclusive platform for engaging all friendly partners. To this end, Singapore remains fully committed to the ARF and its role as a key pillar in the multi-layered regional security architecture.

Endnotes

1. FATF Style Regional Bodies (FSRB) are autonomous regional bodies which help to implement FATF's policies and Standards across the global network of over 205 jurisdictions (compared to only 40 FATF members) by conducting mutual evaluation of their members.

2. The 21 countries are Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Denmark, Germany, India, Japan, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, the ROK, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the UK, the US, and Viet Nam.


Thailand

I. Overview

Global and Regional Geopolitical Context

The international order is undergoing profound transformation. Intensifying geopolitical competition, growing strategic mistrust, and increasing fragmentation of the system of international institutions and multilateral frameworks are reshaping the regional and international security environment. Recent crises have demonstrated the deep interconnectedness of today's world, where developments in one region can rapidly generate political, economic, and security consequences far beyond their immediate geographical scope.

At the same time, emerging technologies, the digital economy, climate change, public health risks, and other non-traditional security challenges are creating new opportunities while introducing increasingly complex risks. As such, traditional and non-traditional security challenges are becoming increasingly interconnected, underscoring the importance of strengthening international cooperation and developing inclusive norms and frameworks capable of addressing evolving challenges.

Against this backdrop, multilateralism is also facing growing pressure. The increasing use of unilateral measures, the emergence of competing political and economic arrangements, and a more transactional approach to international relations risk undermining trust, predictability, and the collective ability of States to address shared challenges. This trend risks weakening trust, predictability, and the collective capacity to address shared challenges. Preserving open, inclusive, rules-based cooperation therefore remains essential to regional and global stability.

Role of ASEAN Centrality

In this evolving environment, ASEAN continues to serve as a constructive and stabilising force at both the regional and global levels. ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the ASEAN Plus One, ASEAN Plus Three, the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) remain important platforms for dialogue, confidence-building, and practical cooperation among countries in the region.

Over time, these mechanisms have evolved into inclusive forums that help shape norms, foster mutual understanding, reduce strategic uncertainty, and strengthen trust among States. As geopolitical competition intensifies and regional challenges become increasingly interconnected, ASEAN's role in promoting dialogue, preserving strategic trust, and facilitating practical cooperation will become even more important.

Thailand's Commitment

As a founding member of ASEAN, Thailand remains firmly committed to strengthening ASEAN unity, resilience, and Centrality. ASEAN continues to serve as a cornerstone of Thailand's foreign policy and an essential platform for advancing peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

Thailand remains committed to enhancing ASEAN's institutional capacity and responsiveness in addressing emerging geopolitical, economic, technological, and security challenges. Thailand also continues to champion the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) as an open, inclusive, and forward-looking framework for promoting practical cooperation and fostering mutually beneficial partnerships.

Thailand stands ready to work constructively with all partners to strengthen ASEAN Centrality, uphold international law, promote strategic trust, and advance practical cooperation in addressing both traditional and non-traditional security challenges. Thailand remains committed to ensure that ASEAN-led mechanisms continue to contribute meaningfully to regional peace, stability, resilience and prosperity.

II. Regional Security Environment

Geopolitical Environment

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 influence regional dynamics. In response, many States are increasingly pursuing diversified partnerships and issue-based cooperation in order to reduce strategic vulnerabilities and preserve strategic autonomy.

At the same time, economic statecraft has become a more prominent feature of international relations. Tariff and non-tariff measures, export controls, investment restrictions, and technological regulations are increasingly being used as instruments of leverage and strategic competition. Multilateral institutions also face growing challenges, reflected in declining confidence in established mechanisms, the emergence of alternative arrangements, and the growing prominence of bilateral and minilateral initiatives.

Beyond traditional security concerns, States must also respond to increasingly complex transnational threats, including cybercrime, online scams, trafficking in persons, public health emergencies, environmental degradation, and the disruptive effects of rapid technological advancement. These challenges transcend national borders and require coordinated regional and international responses. In this evolving environment, resilience, adaptability, and effective cooperation will be essential to maintaining stability and advancing shared prosperity.

Emerging Cyber Threats and the Nexus with Transnational Crime

The rapid convergence of emerging technologies, transnational organised crime, and geopolitical fragmentation is creating new security challenges that transcend national borders. Cyber threats are becoming increasingly sophisticated, scalable, and difficult to contain, with implications not only for economic security but also for regional security and public trust.

Rapid advance in artificial intelligence (AI), automation, digital finance, and communication technologies have created new opportunities for criminal networks to expand their operations. According to the recent assessment by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), organised criminal networks in Southeast Asia are increasingly leveraging AI, cryptocurrency ecosystems, and digital platforms to facilitate cyber-enabled fraud, phishing, malware development, disinformation, illicit financial flows, and other criminal activities.

These developments highlight the growing nexus between cyber threats, transnational organised crime, and regional security. Cyber-enabled criminal activities are increasingly evolving from isolated incidents into sophisticated industrial-scale operations that exploit regulatory gaps, technological asymmetries, and cross-border vulnerabilities. Addressing these challenges requires stronger national resilience, enhanced law enforcement cooperation, greater information sharing, sustained regional and international collaboration.

Thailand's Security Priorities

The regional security landscape is increasingly shaped by the intersection of geopolitical uncertainty, transnational crime, technological disruption, and economic vulnerabilities. These challenges are closely interconnected and require comprehensive national responses supported by effective regional and international cooperation.

Thailand also continues to closely monitor developments in neighbouring countries, including the situation in Myanmar and border tensions, while addressing emerging transboundary security challenges such as online scams, human trafficking, cyber threats, and other forms of transnational organised crime.

At the same time, global energy market volatility, demographic changes, labour shortages, and the rapid development of artificial intelligence present growing challenges to economic resilience and long-term competitiveness. The weakening of the multilateral system has further complicated efforts to address increasingly complex challenges that no single country can tackle alone.

The Role of ASEAN and the ARF

Against this backdrop, Thailand believes that ASEAN and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) should continue to evolve as practical, inclusive, and action-oriented platforms capable of addressing increasingly interconnected regional security challenges.

Thailand supports ASEAN and the ARF in strengthening dialogue, confidence-building, and practical cooperation to address both traditional and non-traditional security challenges, including the growing nexus between cyber threats and transnational crime. As individual national responses are insufficient, these ASEAN-led mechanisms remain among the region's most valuable platforms for promoting shared norms, practical cooperation, and collective resilience.

By fostering open dialogue, enhancing mutual trust, and strengthening cooperation among participants, ASEAN and the ARF will continue to play an important role in preserving regional peace, stability, and prosperity amid an increasingly uncertain strategic environment.

III. National Contribution to Regional and Global Security

Thailand is actively committed to enhancing security and stability through a combination of robust national policies and proactive engagement in regional and international cooperation mechanisms.

A. Defence and Security Cooperation

National Security and Defence Policy

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) of Thailand remains committed to advancing defence policies and operations in line with the Government's priorities and strategic direction outlined in the Ministry of Defence White Paper 2026-2027. Thailand's 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, while continuing to serve as a trusted institution dedicated to safeguarding 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.

To promote transparency and confidence-building, the MOD regularly publishes its policy directions and strategic priorities, reflecting Thailand's commitment to strengthening ASEAN-led security architecture and contributing proactively to regional peace and stability.

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. Thailand believes that strengthened defence cooperation and mutual trust remain essential in maintaining peace, stability and resilience in the region.

Data Contribution to ARF

Thailand attaches importance to transparency and confidence-building as key pillars of effective arms control. In this regard, 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.

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.

2026 marks the 45th iteration of the Cobra Gold joint exercise, co-hosted annually in Thailand by the Royal Thai Armed Forces and the United States Indo-Pacific Command. Seven primary participating countries, namely Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, and the United States attended the

exercise, while Australia, China, and India participated as supplemental participants.

Under the Multinational Planning Augmentation Team programme, ten countries contributed staff, while ten countries participated as observers under the Combined Observer Liaison Team framework. The exercise took place from 24 February to 6 March 2026 in the First Army Area (Royal Thai Army Region 1) and the Upper Gulf of Thailand, involving 25 countries and 8,277 personnel.

Women, Peace, and Security (WPS)

Thailand remains firmly committed to advancing the WPS agenda, recognising that the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women at all levels of decision-making and leadership, across all pillars of peace and security, is essential to sustainable peace, effective conflict prevention, and inclusive security governance.

As part of this commitment, Thailand launched its first National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2024–2027) in December 2025. The Action Plan serves as a key mechanism to translate the WPS agenda into concrete actions and to ensure its effective implementation at the national level.

On peacekeeping, Thailand has consistently deployed women military and police personnel to UN peacekeeping missions worldwide. Their participations serve as catalysts for change, enhancing the inclusivity and effectiveness of peace operations and contributing to sustained peacebuilding efforts.

Currently, 27 out of 257 Thai military and police personnel serving in the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), in Juba and Rumbek, are women. Within the Individual Uniformed Personnel category, 8 women peacekeepers are currently serving in two UN peacekeeping missions: in UNMISS and UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan. Moreover, a woman police personnel is presently seconded to the Department of Peace Operations, UN Headquarters in New York.

B. Transnational Crime and Emerging Security Threats

Counter-terrorism

Although there have been no terrorist incidents reported in Thailand in 2025, terrorism remains a serious concern of Thailand at both regional and global levels. Ongoing conflicts and geopolitical tensions in various parts of the world continue to create conditions that may facilitate the spread of extremist narratives, terrorist propaganda, and online radicalisation, underscoring the importance of sustained vigilance and international cooperation. Geopolitical volatility involving Iran, Israel, and the United States heightens the regional risk of terrorist financing, expanded support networks, and the creation of safe havens for foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs).

Thailand recognises that terrorist organisations and extremist networks have increasingly exploited digital technologies, social media platforms, and encrypted communication channels to disseminate propaganda, recruit supporters, and encourage self-radicalisation. The growing use of online platforms has increased concerns regarding the spread of extremist content, hate speech, distorted religious teachings, and incitement to violence, particularly among vulnerable groups and youth.

Thailand is also concerned by the growing risk of lone-actor or "lone-wolf" attacks inspired by online radicalisation and exposure to extremist content. These evolving trends highlight the need to strengthen preventive measures, enhance public awareness, and promote resilience against violent extremism in both online and offline environments.

Located at the heart of mainland Southeast Asia, with extensive regional and international connectivity, Thailand remains firmly

committed to maintaining robust monitoring, preparedness, and response capabilities.

Cooperation among government agencies, as well as engagement with the private sector and civil society, remains essential in supporting early detection, prevention, and disruption of terrorism-related activities. Thailand will continue to implement a whole-of-government approach to counter-terrorism through its National Action Plan for Counter-Terrorism 2023–2027, focusing on prevention, preparedness, resilience, and regional cooperation. Thailand has strengthened efforts to monitor terrorist movements, cross-border activities, terrorist financing, impersonation, and the smuggling of dual-use items. Amendments to relevant legislation, including the Anti-Money Laundering Act and the Computer Crime Act, have further enhanced Thailand's ability to address terrorism-related activities and cyber-enabled threats.

Thailand also continues to strengthen cooperation with neighbouring countries and international partners through information sharing and intelligence cooperation, and border security measures.

At the regional level, Thailand remains actively engaged in ASEAN counter-terrorism efforts, including through the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), as well as security-related cooperation under ASEAN Plus One mechanisms, the EAS, the ARF, and the ADMM-Plus.

Promoting Multiculturalism and Interfaith Dialogue

As a multicultural society, Thailand believes that promoting interfaith and intercultural dialogue is an important component of conflict prevention, social cohesion, and sustainable peace. By fostering mutual respect, understanding, and peaceful coexistence among people of different faiths and cultures, Thailand seeks to strengthen societal resilience against intolerance, discrimination, and violent extremism, to build a more inclusive society grounded in social equity and a strong sense of belonging for all.

At the international level, Thailand has consistently advocated for peace process and peaceful reconciliation, while encouraging cooperation to promote mutual respect, understanding, and peaceful coexistence. As a member of the Group of Friends of the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) since its establishment in 2005, Thailand has remained active in working with the international community to promote dialogue among civilisations. These efforts contribute to the broader objectives of the UN, including the New Agenda for Peace, by fostering preventive diplomacy and interfaith dialogue.

Thailand has supported relevant resolutions adopted at the UN General Assembly (UNGA), including its resolution 54/115 titled "International recognition of the Day of Vesak at the United Nations Headquarters and other United Nations offices." Since 2000, Thailand has co-hosted the annual International Day of Vesak at UN Headquarters together with Sri Lanka, promoting the Buddha's teachings on peace, compassion, tolerance, and harmonious coexistence while fostering greater international understanding among cultures and religions.

In addition, as the co-sponsor of the UNGA resolution 78/286 titled "International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations," Thailand, together with UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and other ESCAP member states, co-hosted the Asia-Pacific Commemoration of the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations on 10 June 2025. The event promoted dialogue among nations and peoples, and strengthened mutual understanding and respect across cultures.

At the national level, Thailand's commitment to multiculturalism and religious harmony is

reflected in its constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion and supported by national policies promoting peaceful coexistence in a multicultural society. These frameworks seek to protect cultural and religious rights, prevent discrimination, and foster mutual respect among diverse communities.

Cybersecurity

Thailand attaches great importance to maintaining an open, secure, stable, accessible, interoperable, and peaceful information and communications technology (ICT) 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 actively supports international efforts to strengthen cybersecurity governance and cooperation. Over the past five years, Thailand has participated actively in all substantive sessions of the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on security of and in the use of ICTs. Following the successful conclusion of the OEWG's work in July 2025, Thailand welcomed the establishment of 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 as the first permanent United Nations mechanism dedicated to cybersecurity. Thailand looks forward to working closely with all partners to ensure a smooth transition from the OEWG to the Global Mechanism.

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 also 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.

Thailand Computer Emergency Response Team (ThaiCERT) continues to play a central role in monitoring cyber threats and supporting incident response. In 2025, ThaiCERT recorded 3,384 cybersecurity incidents, with intrusion attempts, information content security incidents, fraud, malicious code, and availability-related incidents among the most frequently reported categories. These trends underscore the growing importance of strengthening national preparedness and cyber resilience.

Thailand also places strong emphasis on regional capacity building. The ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC) in Bangkok continues to enhance the cybersecurity capabilities of ASEAN Member States through technical training, workshops, and exercises covering cyber defence, malware analysis, digital forensics, penetration testing, and operational technology security. The Centre also promotes youth development through initiatives such as the Cyber SEA Game, whose winners represent ASEAN in the International Cybersecurity Challenge.

As the current phase of the AJCCBC project approaches completion, Thailand and Japan are exploring a follow-on initiative to further strengthen regional cybersecurity cooperation in emerging areas, including artificial intelligence security, post-quantum cryptography, operational technology security, and collaboration among governments, industry, and academia.

Combatting Online Scams

Thailand places high priority on combating online scams and cyber-enabled transnational organised crime, recognising their growing impact on economic security, public trust, and regional stability. The increasing sophistication of criminal networks, enabled by digital technologies, artificial intelligence, cryptocurrencies, and cross-border financial systems, underscores the need for comprehensive national responses and strengthened regional and international cooperation.

Thailand continues to play an active role in advancing regional cooperation in its capacity as Chair of the ASEAN Working Group on Anti-Online Scam (WG-AS). The Working Group serves as an important platform for information sharing, policy dialogue, capacity building, and cooperation among ASEAN Member States to address online scams across digital and telecommunications platforms.

Among the Working Group's key achievements are the **Report on Online Scam Activities in ASEAN (2023–2024) and the ASEAN Recommendations on Anti-Online Scams**, both endorsed at the Fifth ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting. Together, these documents strengthen ASEAN's collective understanding of the evolving threat landscape and provide practical guidance for Member States in preventing, detecting, and responding to online scam activities.

At the national level, Thailand continues to strengthen its legal and institutional framework to combat online scams. The Royal Decree on Measures for the Prevention and Suppression of Online Crime B.E. 2566 (2023) provides an important legal framework to address challenges such as illicit SIM cards, mule accounts, and illegal telecommunications signals.

The National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) plays a central role in coordinating national efforts through policy development, inter-agency cooperation, technical operations, and public awareness. Working closely with ThaiCERT, the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission, financial institutions, telecommunications operators, and digital service providers, the NCSA supports the detection and disruption of malicious online activities, including phishing, smishing, malicious websites, illegal online content, and fraudulent SMS messages. The NCSA also operates a public help desk to facilitate reporting and the timely removal of malicious websites.

To further strengthen operational responses, the Royal Thai Police, in cooperation with financial institutions and service providers, established the Anti-Cyber Scam Centre (ACSC) in December 2025. The Centre facilitates real-time monitoring of suspicious financial transactions, rapid intervention to minimise financial losses, and close operational coordination with international counterparts in addressing cross-border online scam networks.

Recognising that online scams are a global challenge requiring collective action, Thailand continues to promote stronger international cooperation. 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, bringing together more than 400 participants from 67 countries. The Conference adopted the 2025 **Bangkok Joint Statement**, reflecting a shared commitment to strengthening global cooperation across the five pillars of prosecution, prevention, protection, policy, and partnership.

Thailand also participated actively and presented Thailand's national pledge on combating fraud at the Global Fraud Summit organised by UNODC and INTERPOL in Vienna in March 2026, which endorsed the **Call to Action on Combating Fraud and the Global Public-Private Partnership Framework against Fraud**.

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.

Drug Trafficking

The continued production and trafficking of synthetic drugs from the Golden Triangle remain among the most significant transnational security challenges facing the Mekong sub-region and Southeast Asia. Despite sustained law enforcement efforts, the illicit manufacture and trafficking of narcotic drugs continue to evolve, facilitated by the diversion of precursor chemicals and the growing sophistication of transnational criminal networks. Increasingly, these networks exploit porous borders, digital platforms, online financial services, cryptocurrencies, and regional logistics networks to expand and conceal their operations.

Given its geographical proximity to the Golden Triangle, Thailand faces the dual challenge of being a major transit route and a destination market for illicit drugs. Methamphetamine tablets (yaba) remain the country's most pressing narcotics concern, with serious consequences for public health, community safety, and social well-being.

In response, the Royal Thai Government continues to prioritise 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.

Recognising that drug trafficking is a transnational challenge that requires collective action, Thailand continues to work closely with regional and international partners to strengthen law enforcement cooperation, intelligence sharing, and capacity building.

At the sub-regional level, Thailand cooperates closely with Mekong countries under the Greater Mekong Subregion framework to strengthen controls over precursor chemicals and dismantle transnational trafficking networks. The Safe Mekong Coordination Centre (SMCC) continues to facilitate real-time information exchange and operational coordination among participating countries. Thailand also participates actively in the Safe Mekong Joint Operation (2024–2027) to enhance cross-border law enforcement cooperation in the Mekong sub-region.

At the regional level, Thailand actively contributes to ASEAN's efforts to combat illicit drugs under the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing the ASEAN Community Against Illicit Drugs (2016–2025). As host of the **ASEAN Narcotics Cooperation Centre (ASEAN-NARCO)** and lead shepherd on illicit drug trafficking under the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC), Thailand promotes intelligence sharing, operational cooperation, and capacity building among ASEAN Member States and partners, including INTERPOL and Australia. Thailand also continues to support regional mechanisms such as the ASEAN Drug Monitoring Network (ADMN), the ASEAN Airport Interdiction Task Force, and the ASEAN Seaport Interdiction Task Force. In July 2025, Thailand hosted the 19th ADMN Meeting in Bangkok and presented the draft ASEAN Drug Monitoring Report 2024, contributing to evidence-based regional responses to emerging drug trends.

At the global level, Thailand continues to support international cooperation through the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). At its 69th Session in March 2026, Thailand shared progress in implementing UN General Assembly resolution 68/2 on promoting research on scientific evidence-based interventions for stimulant use

disorders during a dedicated side event. Thailand also reaffirmed its longstanding commitment to Alternative Development by co-presenting, together with Germany and Peru, a resolution on an appendix to complement the UN Guiding Principles on Alternative Development, with the objective of strengthening international efforts to address evolving drug-related challenges.

Initiatives to Counter Transnational Crime and Enhance Border Security

Thailand attaches great importance to strengthening regional cooperation on border management as an essential element of combatting transnational crime, facilitating legitimate cross-border movement, and enhancing regional security. As security threats become increasingly interconnected and technology-driven, effective border management requires closer coordination among relevant authorities, stronger institutional frameworks, and practical regional cooperation.

In this regard, Thailand has played a leading role in advancing ASEAN's border management cooperation. Building on Thailand's initiative, ASEAN adopted the **ASEAN Border Management Cooperation Roadmap** at the 19th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) in September 2025. Developed through extensive consultations with relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies, the Roadmap represents ASEAN's first comprehensive framework for strengthening regional border management cooperation. It provides practical recommendations to enhance coordination, address evolving security and socioeconomic challenges, facilitate legitimate trade and travel, and strengthen regional connectivity.

To support the implementation of the Roadmap, Thailand, together with 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. Bringing together more than 60 officials from border management agencies across ASEAN Member States and the ASEAN Secretariat, the Dialogue served as an important platform to exchange best practices, identify common challenges, and promote practical cooperation in translating the Roadmap into concrete outcomes.

Discussions focused particularly on addressing the growing misuse of technology by transnational criminal networks involved in online scams, trafficking in persons, drug trafficking, and other cross-border crimes. Participants highlighted the importance of strengthening digital capabilities among frontline officers, improving data collection and analytical capacity, enhancing inter-agency coordination, and promoting information-sharing to support more effective and adaptive border management.

Thailand also continues to strengthen regional cooperation to combat 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 to counter-trafficking efforts across ASEAN.

Thailand remains committed to working closely with ASEAN Member States and Dialogue Partners to strengthen practical border management cooperation, recognising that secure, efficient, and well-coordinated borders are fundamental to regional security, economic resilience, and ASEAN community building.

C. Arms Control, Disarmament, and Non-Proliferation

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 currently maintains no stockpiles of anti-personnel mines and has continued to carry out mine clearance operations along border areas despite operational challenges, including in areas pending boundary demarcation. To date, 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. In this context, Thailand is 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, the fulfilment of mine clearance obligations, and strengthened international cooperation to reduce the humanitarian impact of anti-personnel mines.

Thailand also places high priority on comprehensive victim assistance. As a former member of the Committee on Victim Assistance, Thailand continues to promote an integrated approach covering emergency assistance, rehabilitation, vocational training, and income-generation support, while strengthening coordination among relevant agencies to enhance community resilience, restore human dignity, and promote social inclusion.

Thailand has also been recognised by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) for its good practices in residual contamination management. Building on this experience, Thailand continues to share knowledge, experiences, and best practices in humanitarian mine action within ASEAN. In June 2025, the Thailand Mine Action Centre (TMAC), together with the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC), co-hosted the ARMAC Regional Workshop on the Development of National Mine Clearance Operational Standards (NMAS), contributing to strengthened regional cooperation, risk management, and quality assurance in humanitarian mine action.

Through these efforts, Thailand remains committed to advancing humanitarian mine action and supporting ASEAN's shared vision of a region free from the humanitarian impact of anti-personnel mines.

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. Thailand also fully complies with its commitments and obligations on the 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 to each other in order to fulfil the objectives of the NPT.

The failure of the Review Conferences to adopt a consensus outcome document for three consecutive review cycles, including the most recent 11th Review Conference in 2026,

underscores the urgent need to strengthen the NPT review process. Thailand stresses that such failure neither diminishes nor alters the legal obligations and commitments undertaken under the Treaty, including the unequivocal obligation to pursue nuclear disarmament under Article VI. In this regard, Thailand calls for continued efforts to engage in serious reflection on the structural and political challenges confronting the implementation of the NPT, with a view to making the review process more inclusive, transparent, accountable, and action-oriented. Strengthening continuity between review cycles, enhancing substantive engagement, and rebuilding trust among States Parties are essential to preserving the integrity, credibility and long-term viability of the NPT regime.

As one of the first three countries to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), Thailand welcomes the successful conclusion of the first three Meetings of States Parties held between 2022 to 2025. With the Treaty's membership continuing to grow—now encompassing nearly 100 signatories and over 75 States Parties—it is imperative to accelerate universalisation efforts to achieve the goal of general and complete disarmament. Thailand remains committed to working closely with all partners to broaden the Treaty's reach and foster common understandings in the lead-up to the First Review Conference in 2026.

Thailand is fully committed to its obligations under the TPNW, particularly the national implementation mandated by Article 5.[1] In 2025, Thailand adopted an 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. The workflow serves as a robust domestic application of Article 5 of the TPNW. By institutionalizing these procedures, Thailand has enhanced its law enforcement capabilities to monitor and control WMD-related items.

Thailand recognises the complementarity and synergy between various international instruments and frameworks on disarmament and non-proliferation, including the NPT, the TPNW, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. As TPNW's informal co-facilitator, together with Ireland, Thailand remains convinced that through our collective will across these diverse frameworks, the international community can bridge existing divides and accelerate progress toward the common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thailand acknowledges the significance of the CTBT and its verification regime. Over the past year, Thailand has actively engaged by nominating representatives from key government agencies, including the Office of Atoms for Peace (OAP), to participate in meetings, training programs, and workshops organised by the CTBTO Preparatory Commission. In September 2025, Thai representatives also took part in the CTBT Article XIV Conference, which focuses on advancing the Treaty's entry into force and strengthening global nuclear non-proliferation efforts.

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), which aims to prevent the proliferation of WMD. Currently, Thailand is in the process of preparing a national report to assess and review its implementation of the resolution.

In light of rapid developments of emerging technologies, the integration of AI into military systems raises concerns over its potential use in nuclear command, control, and communication

1 Article 5 of the TPNW requires countries to translate the treaty's prohibitions into domestic laws and enforcement mechanisms, ensuring that individuals and entities cannot engage in activities banned by the TPNW.

(NC3). As a non-nuclear-weapon State, Thailand emphasises that AI must remain under meaningful human control and must be used to support disarmament, non-proliferation, and the peaceful use of nuclear technology in full compliance with international law.

At the regional level, Thailand remains committed to advancing ASEAN's non-proliferation agenda, including through the establishment and 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. Thailand also remains committed to engaging with the nuclear-weapon States on the signing of the SEANWFZ Protocol. While initial engagement may not be able to secure immediate outcomes, Thailand believes that it would help enhance mutual understanding between ASEAN and the NWS on their interpretative declaration

Thailand further contributes to international efforts through the participation in the Qualified Group of Experts established pursuant to UN General Assembly resolution 79/241 on a Comprehensive Study of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones. This process provides an important opportunity to reflect ASEAN's experience and perspectives on the role of SEANWFZ in maintaining peace and stability in our region.

As Depositary State of the SEANWFZ Treaty, Thailand also places importance on promoting public awareness and youth engagement. In December 2025, Thailand, together with the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, organised activities to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the signing of the SEANWFZ Treaty in Bangkok on 15-17 December 2025, including an award ceremony for the winning multimedia artworks under the theme "Envisioning a World free from Nuclear Weapon." Later, the winning artworks were also exhibited on the sidelines of the 11th NPT RevCon in New York. As the Depositary State of the SEANWFZ Treaty, Thailand's co-hosting of the youth activities and the exhibition reflects its proactive role and steadfast commitment to preserving Southeast Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free region. These initiatives reaffirm Thailand's commitment to preserving Southeast Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free region while promoting greater public awareness of the Treaty's enduring relevance.

Nuclear Security

Thailand attaches great importance to ensuring the safe, secure, and peaceful uses of nuclear technology in accordance with international standards and the guidance of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The OAP continues to strengthen Thailand's nuclear security preparedness, prevention, detection, and response capabilities. Recent 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. To support operational readiness, OAP provides radiological measuring instruments and related equipment that meet established standards and are supported by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Personnel capacity building forms another pillar of OAP's work. The Office regularly dispatches its personnel to participate in training courses and drills on nuclear security incident response, in cooperation with international organisations such as the IAEA and domestic agencies. OAP also hosts and organises national and international training courses and workshops on detection and response, and participates in nuclear security threat response exercises under the National Crisis Management Exercise, held annually.

In parallel, OAP 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. This work is undertaken in collaboration with relevant agencies, including the Ministry of Commerce and the Thai Customs Department, to support the application of radiation measurement technologies and systems for the detection and interdiction of such materials, thereby contributing to the prevention of terrorism.

D. Regional Cooperation

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Thailand attaches great importance to strengthening regional cooperation in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), recognising that disasters are becoming increasingly frequent and severe as a result of climate change, urbanisation, and other evolving risks. Thailand remains committed to supporting the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), and strengthening ASEAN's collective capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

Throughout 2025, Thailand actively contributed to the development of the new **AADMER Work Programme (2026–2030)**, which was officially launched at the 13th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management in October 2025. Guided by the vision of building a disaster-resilient ASEAN, the Work Programme seeks to reduce losses in lives, livelihoods, and environmental assets through strengthened national capacities, enhanced regional cooperation, and a shared commitment to safer and more resilient communities.

Thailand also continues to strengthen regional disaster management capacity through close collaboration with the **ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre)**. In 2025, Thailand co-hosted the **ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) Localisation Training**, which focused on enhancing national capacity for rapid damage assessments tailored to local contexts and coordination mechanisms. Thailand also hosted the **Training for ASEAN Standards and Certification for Experts in Disaster Management Competency Assessors**, contributing to the expansion of ASEAN's pool of qualified assessors, and supporting the regularisation of competency standards for disaster management professionals across the region.

Thailand remains committed to ensuring regional disaster response mechanisms are well understood and effectively implemented at the national level. In March 2026, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, in its capacity as Thailand's national ASEAN Secretariat, together with the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, organised a special programme on **Thailand's Efforts to Strengthen ASEAN's Coordination in Disaster Management**, including a tabletop exercise to enhance understanding of ASEAN disaster management mechanisms and the **Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP)**. The programme also strengthened coordination among relevant Thai agencies and reinforced practical cooperation with the AHA Centre and other regional and international partners. Participants also visited the **Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA)** Satellite Warehouse in Chai Nat Province to better understand its role in supporting regional humanitarian operations.

Thailand also continues to contribute actively to ASEAN's operational disaster response efforts. Following the **28 March 2025 earthquake**, Thailand deployed personnel as part of the **ASEAN-ERAT** team to conduct rapid damage assessments in coordination with other ASEAN Member States. Military personnel were also deployed to support humanitarian operations, while Thailand Emergency

Medical Team provided essential medical and public health services in affected areas.

In support of humanitarian assistance efforts following the **M7.7 Mandalay Earthquake in Myanmar**, Thailand contributed **THB 14.9 million (approximately USD 460,000)** to the AHA Centre in October 2025. Thailand also facilitated the distribution of emergency relief supplies through the **DELSA Satellite Warehouse** in Chai Nat Province. These contributions reflect Thailand's continued commitment to ASEAN solidarity and the principle of **"One ASEAN, One Response."**

Thailand will continue to work closely with ASEAN Member States, the AHA Centre, and relevant partners to strengthen regional preparedness, improve interoperability, and enhance ASEAN's collective capacity to respond effectively to future disasters.

Maritime Cooperation

Maritime Security

Thailand places strong emphasis on maritime security and the protection of its national maritime interests, recognising that safe, secure, and sustainable seas are essential to regional stability, economic prosperity, international trade, and global connectivity. As a maritime trading nation situated along major sea lines of communication, Thailand also attaches growing importance to protecting critical maritime infrastructure, particularly submarine cables, given their vital role in supporting the global digital economy and international communications.

Thailand continues to strengthen its legal, institutional, and operational frameworks to address evolving maritime security challenges through a comprehensive and integrated approach. The Act on the Protection of National Maritime Interests B.E. 2562 (2019) provides the principal legal framework for maritime governance by establishing mechanisms for policy formulation, operational coordination, and inter-agency cooperation. Under this framework, the Maritime Interests Protection Policy Committee provides strategic direction, while the Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Centre (Thai-MECC) serves as the central operational coordinating body, integrating the work of relevant agencies across the full spectrum of maritime security, from law enforcement to crisis and emergency response.

To operationalise the Act, Thailand adopted the National Maritime Security Plan 2023–2027 and related national policies and plans, providing a whole-of-government framework to strengthen maritime governance, enhance inter-agency coordination, and improve national capacity to address evolving maritime challenges. Priority areas include the prevention and suppression of crimes at sea, maritime safety and security, sustainable maritime resource management, and strengthened regional and international cooperation.

Recognising the increasing strategic importance of critical maritime infrastructure, 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. The Plan aims to strengthen national preparedness and response to incidents affecting submarine cables in accordance with international law and relevant international practices.

Thailand also actively promotes international cooperation on submarine cable protection. The Office of the National Security Council has worked with partners in the Indo-Pacific and the European Union to exchange best practices on incident management, explore international legal approaches to addressing damage to submarine cables, and strengthen maritime domain awareness. Within ASEAN, Thailand supports greater cooperation through the exchange of experiences, joint activities, and capacity-building initiatives to enhance regional preparedness and resilience in protecting critical maritime infrastructure.

Thailand also continues to strengthen maritime governance through the development of common tools and integrated frameworks that promote the sustainable use of the seas and oceans in accordance with international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982. Thailand regards UNCLOS as the fundamental legal framework governing activities in the maritime domain and underscores its importance in maintaining a predictable and rules-based maritime order, safeguarding regional peace and stability, and promoting shared prosperity.

Situated along strategic sea lines of communication, Thailand attaches particular importance to ensuring the safety and security of navigation, especially 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. Since 2008, Thailand has actively participated in the MSP Joint Coordinating Committee, including the Malacca Straits Sea Patrol Joint Working Group, the Eyes in the Sky Joint Working Group, and the Intelligence Exchange Group.

Thailand also contributes actively to broader regional maritime security cooperation. 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, the exchange of best practices, and operational cooperation. Thailand further strengthens 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 Ecosystem Protection

Plastic Waste and Marine Debris Management

Thailand remains firmly committed to reducing marine debris, particularly plastic waste, through an integrated approach that combines national policy, legal measures, circular economy principles, and multi-stakeholder participation.

National efforts are guided by the Roadmap on Plastic Waste Management (2018–2030) and the National Action Plans on Plastic Waste Management. The current Action Plan (2023–2027) promotes eco-design, sustainable consumption and production, environmentally friendly alternatives to plastics, and the development of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) mechanisms. Thailand aims to recycle all targeted plastic waste and reduce plastic leakage into the marine environment by at least 50 per cent by 2027, in line with the ASEAN Regional Action Plan for Combating Marine Debris (2021–2025).

To support these objectives, Thailand prohibited the import of plastic scrap from 1 January 2025, reducing the risk of becoming a destination for foreign waste while supporting domestic resource utilisation and the transition towards a circular economy. In parallel, the Pollution Control Department is developing a Sustainable Packaging Management Law to establish a comprehensive regulatory framework for packaging waste management based on EPR principles, while strengthening national systems for waste collection, recycling, and public awareness.

Thailand has also continued to improve municipal solid waste management through enhanced waste segregation, local implementation, and economic incentive mechanisms. Community participation remains an important component of these efforts.

Local initiatives in coastal provinces, including Koh Tao, demonstrate how partnerships among local authorities, businesses, and communities can contribute to reducing marine debris and protecting sensitive marine ecosystems.

At the regional level, Thailand continues to work closely with ASEAN Member States to implement the ASEAN Regional Action Plan for Combating Marine Debris and supports ongoing discussions on its next phase.

Oil Spill Management

Thailand recognises that oil spill pollution poses significant risks to marine ecosystems, coastal livelihoods, and human health. The Pollution Control Department continues to strengthen regional cooperation to improve preparedness and response, including through technical exchanges, knowledge-sharing, and the development of an oil fingerprint database to facilitate source identification and improve emergency response. As part of these efforts, Thailand proposed to host a regional webinar on Oil Spill Management under the Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) Working Group on Environment.

Marine Spatial Planning for Balanced and Sustainable Use of Coastal and Marine Areas

Thailand regards Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) as an important tool for promoting sustainable ocean governance by balancing economic development, environmental protection, and the sustainable use of marine resources.

Through the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, Thailand has implemented MSP at the national, provincial, and site-specific levels in accordance with the national Blue Economy Policy and the National Ocean Governance Strategy. Pilot projects in both the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand have supported spatial data collection, stakeholder consultations, compatibility assessments, and the development of marine zoning approaches for sustainable resource management.

Thailand also continues to strengthen governance arrangements and technical capacity for MSP through research, pilot studies, training programmes, and practical workshops on spatial data technologies and evidence-based decision-making. Thailand remains committed to sharing its experience and best practices with ASEAN Member States and ARF participants in support of sustainable ocean governance across the Asia-Pacific region.

Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

Thailand remains firmly committed to combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing as an essential element of sustainable fisheries management, marine resource conservation, food security, and the blue economy.

Thailand has strengthened its legal framework through the Royal Ordinance on Fisheries B.E. 2558 (2015), including subsequent amendments, to establish an effective fisheries management system consistent with the FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and the law of the sea. Thailand has also played a proactive regional role as an initiator and coordinator of the ASEAN Network for Combating IUU Fishing.

In addition, Thailand serves as the shepherd for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture under the ASEAN Coordinating Task Force on Blue Economy. In this capacity, Thailand organised the Workshop and Study Visit on Small-Scale Marine Fisheries Data Collection for Fisheries Management in ASEAN in July 2025, contributing to stronger regional cooperation and sustainable fisheries management across ASEAN.

IV. Role and Future of the ARF

Over the past three decades, the ARF has established itself as an important platform for dialogue, confidence-building, and practical cooperation on political and security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. The ARF has contributed to promoting transparency, enhancing mutual understanding, and fostering inclusive dialogue among participants with diverse political systems, strategic interests, and security perspectives.

Today, however, the regional security environment has become significantly more complex. Strategic competition is intensifying, geopolitical fragmentation is increasing, and emerging technologies are reshaping both opportunities and risks. At the same time, non-traditional security challenges—including cyber threats, online scams, transnational crime, climate-related disasters, and disruptions to critical infrastructure—are becoming increasingly interconnected and transboundary in nature.

Against this backdrop, the continued relevance of the ARF will depend on its ability to adapt to evolving realities while preserving its core strengths as an ASEAN-led, inclusive, and consensus-based platform for dialogue and cooperation.

National Contributions to Enhance the ARF and Regional Security

Thailand believes that the ARF should continue to evolve in a pragmatic, action-oriented, and future-focused manner. While confidence-building measures remain an important foundation of the Forum, the ARF should gradually strengthen its preventive diplomacy role and enhance its capacity to address emerging security challenges through practical cooperation and concrete initiatives.

Thailand therefore welcomes ongoing efforts to revitalise the ARF and supports the adoption of the Manila Plan of Action (MPOA) 2026–2036 as an important opportunity to ensure that the Forum remains relevant, responsive, and effective in an increasingly dynamic security environment. In this regard, Thailand hosted the first Senior Officials' Working Group Meeting on the MPOA in Bangkok and remains committed to supporting efforts to strengthen the ARF process.

For the 2025–2026 inter-sessional year, Thailand co-chaired the ARF Workshop on Lessons Learned in Governance of Security of and in the Use of ICTs with Canada and Japan. Held in Bangkok on 9–10 February 2026, the workshop underscored Thailand's proactive role in advancing regional cybersecurity cooperation and strengthening collective responses to emerging cyber threats, including online scams. The workshop provided a forward-looking platform for participants to exchange best practices and policy approaches on key issues such as national cybersecurity strategies and legal frameworks, AI governance, post-quantum preparedness, incident response, and public-private partnerships, with the aim of enhancing regional resilience and fostering a secure, open, and trusted digital environment.

Advancing Preventive Diplomacy

Thailand believes the maturity of confidence-building measures within ARF provides a basis for gradually advancing preventive diplomacy in accordance with the pace and comfort level of Participants. Preventive diplomacy should not be viewed as a departure from the ARF's traditional approach, but rather as a natural evolution aimed at strengthening the Forum's ability to anticipate, prevent, and manage emerging tensions before they escalate into crises.

In this regard, Thailand supports efforts to update the ARF Preventive Diplomacy Work Plan and relevant ARF ISM Work Plans following the adoption of the MPOA 2026-2036. These updates should ensure that ARF mechanisms

remain responsive to evolving regional challenges and emerging security risks.

Thailand also sees merit in strengthening engagement between Track I and Track II processes, including through closer cooperation with the EEPs, CSCAP and ASEAN-ISIS, and other stakeholders. Such engagement can contribute to the development of innovative ideas, strengthen early-warning capabilities, and support practical preventive diplomacy initiatives.

Conclusion

At a time of growing geopolitical fragmentation and increasing strain on multilateral institutions, the ARF remains an indispensable component of the regional security architecture. Its unique ability to bring together major powers, middle powers, and developing countries in an inclusive and ASEAN-led setting remains one of its greatest strengths.

Thailand remains committed to working closely with all ARF Participants to ensure that the Forum continues to evolve in a manner that is practical, responsive, and future-oriented while preserving the principles of ASEAN Centrality, inclusivity, and consensus that have underpinned its success for more than three decades.



United States of America

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

The United States remains committed to advancing peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific through sustained engagement, credible deterrence, and equitable burden sharing with allies and partners. In an increasingly complex security environment marked by strategic competition, rapid technological change, and transnational challenges, the United States works alongside regional partners to uphold a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

As an Indo-Pacific nation with enduring political, economic, and security interests, the United States recognizes that regional stability depends upon respect for sovereignty, peaceful resolution of disputes, freedom of navigation and overflight, and resilience against coercion in all domains. The United States seeks practical cooperation with all countries willing to contribute constructively to regional peace and security.

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) continues to play an essential role in fostering transparency, confidence-building, and preventive diplomacy. The United States strongly supports ASEAN centrality and remains committed to strengthening the ARF as a results-oriented mechanism capable of effective cost sharing and addressing emerging security challenges, including maritime security, cyber threats, supply-chain vulnerabilities, and disaster resilience.

2. National Security and Defense Policy

a) Overview of National Security and Defense Policy

U.S. national security and defense policy seeks to preserve peace through strength by deterring aggression, defending the homeland, and cost sharing with allies and partners to maintain regional stability. The United States will prioritize dealing with the greatest threats to America's interests while sensibly and prudently pressing and enabling U.S. allies and partners to take primary responsibility for defending against other threats with critical, targeted U.S. support to set the conditions for lasting peace through strength across all theaters. The United States is modernizing its armed forces, strengthening forward posture in the Indo-Pacific, and revitalizing its defense industrial base to ensure readiness and resilience in a rapidly evolving security environment. These efforts are complemented by investments in interoperability, logistics cooperation, and partner capacity development that enable collective responses to shared challenges.

America First does not mean America alone. Durable security depends on capable partners and resilient regional institutions. The United States therefore prioritizes defense cooperation that facilitates burden sharing by enhancing partner self-defense capabilities, improving operational readiness, and strengthening collective deterrence while preserving regional stability.

b) Data Contribution to ARF Arms Register

(1) A broad range of defense budget data is publicly available from the Office of the Undersecretary of War (Comptroller) here: https://comptroller.defense.gov/Budget-Materials/

(2) Total number of personnel in national armed forces:

Service	FY2025 Enacted	FY2026 President's Budget Request	FY2026 Enacted	Change from Enacted FY2025-FY2026
Army	442,300	454,000	454,000	11,700
Navy	332,300	344,600	344,600	12,300
Air Force	320,000	321,500	321,500	1,500
Marine Corps	172,300	172,300	172,300	0
Space Force	9,800	10,400	10,400	600
Total	**1,276,700**	**1,302,800**	**1,302,800**	**26,100**

Table B2-A. FY2025 and FY2026 Active-Component End-Strengths

Sources: Congress.gov; Department of Defense (Department of War), Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller). Coast Guard Reserve, part of the Department of Homeland Security, is not shown.

Service	FY2025 Enacted	FY2026 President's Budget Request	FY2026 Enacted	Change from Enacted FY2025-FY2026
Army National Guard	325,000	328,000	328,000	3,000
Army Reserve	175,800	172,000	172,000	-3,800
Air National Guard	108,300	106,300	106,300	-2,000
Air Force Reserve	67,000	67,500	67,500	500
Navy Reserve	57,700	57,500	57,500	-200
Marine Corps Reserve	32,500	33,600	33,600	1,100
Total	**776,300**	**764,900**	**764,900**	**-1400**

Table B2-B. FY2025 and FY2026 Reserve Component End-Strengths

Sources: Congress.gov; Department of Defense (Department of War), Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller). Coast Guard Reserve, part of the Department of Homeland Security, is not shown.

3. National Contributions to Regional Security

The United States remains an active and enduring contributor to regional security through participation in ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the ASEAN Defense Minister's Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) and ARF. U.S. engagement focuses on building practical capabilities that enhance transparency, crisis response, and deterrence while reducing the risk of conflict.

ADMM-Plus exercises, such as Exercise TRIDENT RESOLVE and the maritime Joint Cooperative Activity, work in conjunction with other multilateral exercises, such as Super Garuda Shield, Cobra Gold, Balikatan, Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT), and Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT), to strengthen interoperability, maritime domain awareness, and humanitarian response capabilities. These activities contribute to regional security by fostering deterrence, improving preparedness, and reinforcing professional military standards.

Maritime cooperation initiatives, including the ASEAN-United States Maritime Exercise, enhance regional capacity to address shared challenges including illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU), trafficking, and disaster response while promoting safe and responsible behavior at sea.

(1) Counterterrorism

Terrorism remains a persistent transnational threat that undermines regional stability and economic security. The United States works with ASEAN member states and ARF partners to counter terrorist networks, disrupt financing and recruitment activities, and strengthen border and aviation security.

Recognizing the evolving threat environment, U.S. efforts emphasize information sharing, lawful data use, initiatives to counter radicalization to terrorist violence, and whole-of-society approaches that reinforce rule of law institutions and community resilience. Cooperation on traveler screening, watchlisting systems, and implementation of international obligations — including UN Security Council Resolution 2396 — remain essential to preventing terrorist mobility.

The United States also supports regional initiatives addressing online radicalization to terrorist violence and exploitation of false and falsified information by terrorist organizations, recognizing that digital environments increasingly shape security outcomes.

(2) Nonproliferation, Counter-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament

The United States remains committed to preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and reducing nuclear risks through responsible deterrence, transparency, and dialogue.

Growing nuclear threats, advances in missile technologies, and emerging space and dual-use capabilities present new challenges to strategic stability. The United States will maintain a safe, secure, and effective strategic deterrent while strengthening extended deterrence commitments to allies and supporting meaningful risk-reduction measures and strategic stability.

The United States reaffirms its commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and encourages full compliance with international nonproliferation obligations, including implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 and strengthened strategic trade controls.

Cooperation within the ARF supports practical measures that reduce proliferation risks, prevent misuse of emerging technologies, and reinforce global norms against chemical and biological weapons.

(3) Transnational Crime

Transnational organized crime poses significant risks to governance, economic stability, and public safety across the Indo-Pacific. Criminal networks increasingly exploit digital technologies, global financial systems, and maritime routes to conduct illicit activities, including online scams, trafficking in persons, narcotics and precursor production and trafficking, natural resource crimes, cybercrime, and money laundering.

The United States supports partner nations through capacity building, legal cooperation, and operational training aimed at strengthening investigative, prosecutorial, and judicial capabilities. These efforts promote resilience against illicit financial flows and emerging cyber-enabled criminal activity that affects the prosperity of both regional economies and the U.S. homeland, as well as the safety of our combined one billion people of the United States and Southeast Asia.

Enhanced cooperation among governments, industry, and international organizations is essential to addressing online scam operations, money laundering, forced criminality linked to trafficking networks, and tackling the organized crime groups financed by these and other crimes.

(4) Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Natural disasters increasingly affect security, economic stability, and human welfare across the Indo-Pacific. The United States works with regional partners to strengthen disaster preparedness, early warning systems, and coordinated civil-military response mechanisms.

U.S. humanitarian assistance efforts aim not only to respond to crises but also to build long-term resilience that reduces vulnerability and promotes recovery. Exercises and training, combined with capacity building programs, conducted with ASEAN partners enhance interoperability and enable rapid multinational responses to disasters and complex emergencies.

A strong and coordinated disaster response contributes to regional stability by mitigating the secondary security effects of humanitarian crises, including displacement and economic disruption.

(5) Maritime Security

Maritime security remains fundamental to regional prosperity and global commerce. The United States supports efforts to uphold freedom of navigation and overflight and other lawful uses of the sea in accordance with international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The United States continues to safely and responsibly fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows, while encouraging peaceful resolution of disputes and opposing coercive or unsafe activities that increase the risk of miscalculation.

Through initiatives such as the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness, Southeast Asia Maritime Law Enforcement Initiative (SEAMEI), and participation in ADMM Plus maritime security activities, the United States and partners are enhancing shared awareness, transparency, and law enforcement capacity to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, trafficking, and other illicit maritime activities.

Persistent cooperation, exercises, and capacity-building efforts strengthen regional deterrence and help ensure maritime disputes are managed peacefully.

(6) Information and Communications Technology Security

Secure and resilient digital infrastructure is essential to economic prosperity and national security. Malicious, state-sponsored cyber activity, cybercrime, online scams, and irresponsible state behavior in cyberspace pose growing risks to regional stability.

The United States supports practical confidence-building measures that promote transparency, responsible state behavior, and crisis communication in cyberspace. Cooperation within the ARF contributes to strengthening incident response capacity, protecting critical infrastructure, and reducing the risk of escalation following significant cyber incidents.

The United States also promotes secure and trusted technology ecosystems that safeguard innovation while protecting societies from cyber-enabled crime and malicious exploitation of emerging technologies.

4. Role and Future of the ARF

a) National Contributions to enhancing the ARF and regional security

The ARF remains a vital platform for dialogue, preventive diplomacy, and practical cooperation addressing evolving regional security challenges. The United States supports continued progress from confidence-building toward preventive diplomacy and effective conflict management, as well as supporting ASEAN's efforts to revitalize the ARF to be more impactful and relevant.

b) Future of ARF:

As strategic competition and transnational challenges intensify, ASEAN-led institutions play an increasingly important role in promoting transparency, resilience, and cooperation. It is important to highlight the context of the ARF as one element of a broader regional security architecture that includes the EAS, ADMM-Plus, and the EAMF. The United States remains committed to sustained engagement with ARF participants to strengthen institutional capacity and advance shared approaches to emerging security challenges. The United States also supports ASEAN's efforts to revitalize the ARF and make the platform more dynamic and responsive to ASEAN's evolving security environment.


Viet Nam

1. Overview of the Regional Security Environment

The global and regional security landscape is undergoing profound changes, creating both opportunities and challenges, with challenges becoming more prominent. Structural shifts in the international order are becoming more evident and clearly reflected in regional dynamics, shaping the Asia-Pacific security environment in a more complex manner.

In this context, constructive dialogue, balanced approaches, practical cooperation, and diversified partnerships are increasingly regarded as essential to enhancing resilience and adaptability. For most countries, multilateralism remains indispensable, complemented by more flexible and issue-based frameworks of cooperation. Against this backdrop, 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. ASEAN-led mechanisms continue to serve as important platforms for dialogue, confidence-building, and practical cooperation.

2. National Security and Defence Policy

a) Overview of national security and defence policy

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 a peaceful and self-defensive 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 and 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.

b) Data contribution to ARF Arms Register

Viet Nam builds its military potential according to a unified strategy as required by the tasks of national defense and construction. The combat competency and readiness of the armed forces are expressed in their organisation, structure, weaponry, military art and science and technology, and logistics warranty facilities, which are usually maintained, improved, and developed to meet the requirements of the people's war for 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 on the country's economy.

3. National Contributions to 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 mechanisms such as the ASEAN Our Eyes Initiative (AOE), the 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 the 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 is 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 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 Lancang-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, and 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 warnings, as well as supporting disaster response, and 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), and 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 (Ha Noi Convention) and a High-Level Conference on 25-26 October 2025 in Ha Noi. Viet Nam has also become one of the first three State Parties that ratified the Ha Noi 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 Exellence (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 the 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 cybersecurity, preventing crimes using high technology in various initiatives such as the Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams (FIRST), the Association of Asia-Pacific Computer Emergency Response Team (APCERT), the Cybersecurity Alliance for Mutual Progress (CAMP), Global Forum on Cyber Expertise (GFCE).

In 2026, Viet Nam continues to take an active part in the ongoing progress of ICT 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.

4. Role of the ARF

a) National contribution to enhancing the ARF and regional security

As a founding member of the ARF, Viet Nam is committed to actively and responsibly participating in various activities of the Forum. Viet Nam has been deepening and widening its participation as well as making more substantial contributions to important activities of ARF.

Viet Nam has just concluded the co-chairmanship of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief (ISM-DR) for the 2023-2026 period with Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. During the co-chairmanship, the ARF Work Plan for Disaster Relief for the 2024-2027 period was adopted, which serves as the guiding document to further enhance regional capabilities for disaster risk reduction, preparedness, and response.

In 2025, Viet Nam hosted the 2nd ARF Workshop on Women, Peace and Security: Recognising 25 Years of the WPS Agenda in Ho Chi Minh City to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council's Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS).

In the intersessional year 2026-2027, within the framework of the ARF's Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ISM-MS), Viet Nam plans to co-chair, with Australia, an ARF Workshop on the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), and the 7th ARF Workshop on Implementing UNCLOS and other international instruments to address emerging maritime issues with Australia, Canada, the EU, and New Zealand.

The aforementioned activities demonstrate Viet Nam's steadfast dedication to upholding the principles and achieving the objectives of the

ARF, thereby contributing to the collective efforts in promoting Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and Preventive Diplomacy (PD) for peace, security, and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

b) Future of the ARF

More than three decades after the establishment of the ARF, the regional and international security landscape has evolved considerably, posing significant challenges to the ARF's original design and underscoring the need for the Forum to modernize its operational model. Revitalizing the ARF is therefore essential to maintaining its relevance and enhancing its ability to effectively address both traditional and emerging security challenges. In this regard, Viet Nam welcomes the adoption of the Recommendations to Revitalize the ARF on 23 October 2025 and looks forward to their effective implementation.

To advance this revitalization process, the ARF should continue to uphold its founding purposes and principles, including support for ASEAN Centrality as a core guiding principle. The "Guide to ARF Processes, Procedures, Practices and Protocol" should remain an important reference for the conduct of ARF activities and initiatives. At the same time, revitalization efforts should be pursued in a comprehensive and coherent manner to ensure complementarity and synergy with other ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the ADMM+, AMMTC, and the East Asia Summit (EAS). By minimizing duplication and leveraging its comparative advantages, particularly its inclusive nature and diverse membership, the ARF can further enhance its effectiveness and relevance. Consideration could also be given to the admission of new participants that are able and willing to make meaningful contributions to regional peace and security.

By continuing to embrace dialogue, consultation, and cooperation, the ARF can maintain and further strengthen its role as a key pillar of the regional security architecture, capable of responding to an increasingly complex geopolitical environment. In doing so, the Forum can continue contributing to the building of an open, transparent, inclusive, and rules-based regional architecture anchored in international law. In this process, Viet Nam remains fully committed to working closely with all ARF Participants.

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