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Hamburg Universität

Asien-Afrika-Institut

Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1, Flügel Ost

The Current State of the Malay-Muslim Insurgency in Southern Thailand: Never-ending Stalemate?

Though ethnic strife has existed in southern Thailand for over 100 years, in January, 2004, the dissension escalated into a full-scale Malay-Muslim insurgency which has been raging ever since. Neither the Thaksin Shinawatra government (2001-06), the military regime (2006-07), nor the elected governments since have succeeded in taming the insurgency. 'Indeed, though there have been a litany of proposals to defuse the imbroglio, it has continued unabated. Since coming to office in 2011, the Puea Thai government led by Yingluck Shinawatra has used a policy of carrots and sticks to diminish the level of violence, so far with little success. This lecture looks closely at the current situation and argues that any progress in resolving the southern Thai conflict ultimately rests with the state's willingness to seriously reform how it administers local people in the far south and to what extent it is seriously willing to enter into a dialogue with the southern opponents. The lecture asks six questions. What have been the causes of the current conflict? Who and what are the actors involved in the insurgency? How have the policies of the Thai state contributed to the prolongation of the crisis? What are the principal issues involved in the conflict? What might be the most viable proposals to diminish tensions in the region? Finally, what might be the future trend for the conflict?

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