

# Regional Overview: Southeast Asia 5-11 January 2020

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Elliott Bynum

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## ACLED

Bringing clarity to crisis

In Southeast Asia, key developments last week include: children killed in the ongoing conflict in Rakhine state in Myanmar; increased fighting between state forces and communist rebels in the Philippines; separatist violence in Thailand and Indonesia; and a deadly demonstration over a land dispute in Vietnam.

In **Myanmar**, last week was a deadly week for children in Rakhine state. Clashes continued in the state between the military and United League of Arakan/Arakan Army (ULA/AA), during which five children were killed. Four Rohingya children died in an explosion in Buthidaung township. Later in the week, a ten-month-old Rakhine child was killed by bullets fired by the military near Myebon township. Children have frequently been casualties in the ongoing conflict ([UNICEF, 10 January 2020](#)).

Prior to the State Counsellor, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, visiting Kachin state on Kachin State Day, the military attacked a Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army (KIO/KIA) training camp in northern Shan state. While conflict between the military and KIO/KIA declined significantly in 2019, the KIO/KIA is a member of the Northern Alliance and has held to the idea that bilateral ceasefires would need to be signed between the military and all four members of the alliance in order for the group to consider further negotiations regarding the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) ([Kachin News Group, 13 January 2020](#)).

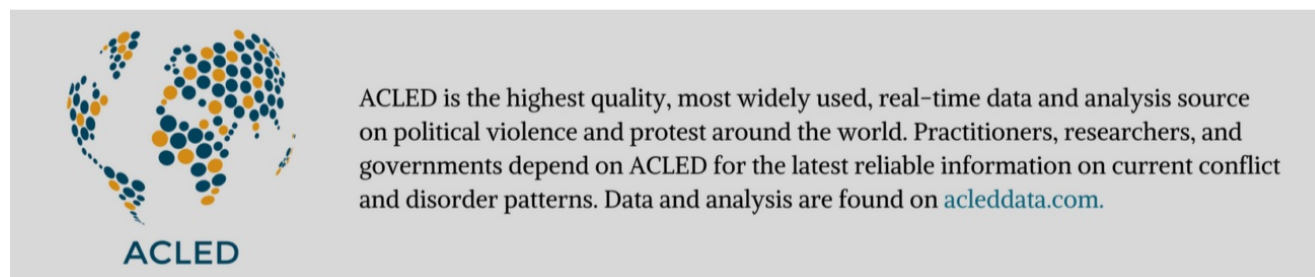
After the end of the Christmas ceasefire in the **Philippines**, clashes between state forces and the New People's Army (NPA) increased. Meanwhile, attacks on drug suspects during police raids continued as Vice President Leni Robredo released a report last week covering

her findings from her time on the Inter-Agency Committee on Anti-Illegal Drugs (ICAD) ([Philippine Inquirer, 13 January 2020](#)). Robredo has been a critic of President Duterte's ongoing "War on Drugs."

Separatist violence was reported in both **Thailand** and **Indonesia**. In Thailand, suspected separatists shot and reportedly killed a civilian in Narathiwat province. In Indonesia, a clash between state forces and the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB) was reported last week in Papua province. Clashes in Papua have been occurring more frequently over the past month.

Demonstrations over land disputes were reported in Indonesia, **Cambodia** and **Vietnam**. In Vietnam, a land dispute turned deadly when farmers and state forces clashed in Hanoi province, leaving three policemen and one civilian dead. Many of the demonstrators were subsequently arrested. The dispute over compensation for land used to build a military airport in the province has been ongoing for several years ([Radio Free Asia, 13 January 2020](#)).

Finally, in **Malaysia** and the Philippines, protests were reported over the current conflict between the US and Iran. In the Philippines, a protest was held after President Duterte's speech calling on the armed forces to be prepared to deploy as needed. As many as one million Filipino migrants work in Middle Eastern countries ([Associated Press, 6 January 2020](#)).



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