Deep South Incident Database:

Context, Development, Applications and Impacts

1. Context of Violent Conflict

Development of the conflict-monitoring database is a new concept in Thailand. The escalation of violence in the Southern border provinces [Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and 4 districts of Songkla province] since 2004, has a strong impact on academics, practitioners as well as policy makers, who sought appropriate tools for analyzing cause and consequences of the violence that, over years, has become protracted and indeterminate. Systematic and objective collection of data about violent conflict, particularly selecting relevant data in space and time, is a crucial component in the effort to develop policy and academic tool for better analyses to find a peaceful solution. This article aims to elaborate on the origins, context, development, applications and impacts of the Deep South Incident Database (DSID) towards the solutions of violent conflict in the southernmost region of Thailand.
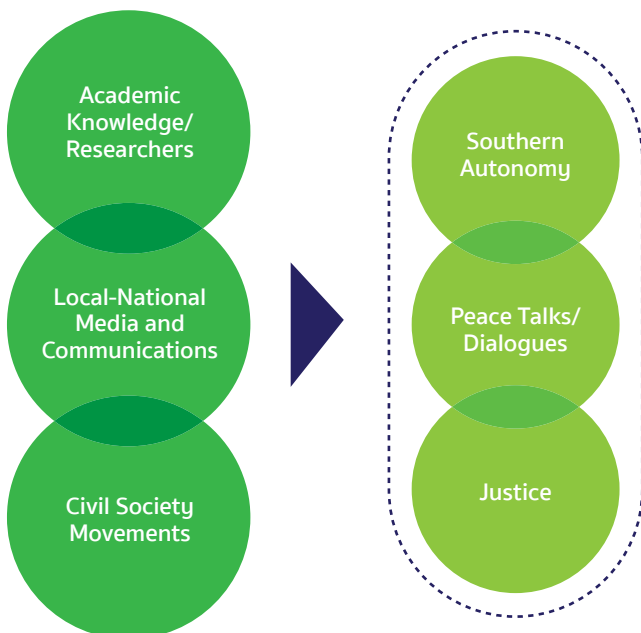
Patani Darusalam (Patani Kingdom) prides itself in its history spanning over 1,000 years as an independent state in the Malay peninsular, and as "center of Islam in Southeast Asia." The Siamese Kingdom invaded it 200 years ago. Conflicts between Siamese state and Patani Malay Muslims have developed over hundred years since Patani kingdom was subjugated by Thai state in 1786 and subsequently fully annexed to the Siamese centralized administrative system in 1909 as a result of Anglo-Siamese Treaty.

Violence and conflict in Thailand's Deep South have unfolded as a result of a variety of factors. Central to these factors is identity politics, which is the claim to power of a particular identity, be it national, clan, religious or linguistic. In the process of nation-state building, Thai state had transformed Patani's elite and political structures, including Islamic education and legal systems, into more secularized, Thai-oriented system. As Duncan McCargo puts it, Malay-Muslims in the Deep South of Thailand

are very proud of their identity, the distinctive nature of the communities, as Malays (Melayu), as Muslims and as people of Patani, an ancient kingdom and center of Islamic learning and culture (McCargo, 2008, 4). Without going further into details of the academic and popular historiographies one can argue that from post-World War II area to end of1970's a body of knowledge was generated from a Patani "resistance" and "liberation" perspective as well as from the Thai state perspective to justify their respective interpretation of political developments in the region (Jory 2007, Puaksom 2009, Aphornsuvan 2009,Walker 2013, Suwannathat-Pian 2013, Mansurnoor 2013).

On the other hand, in recent years the public sphere in the sub-region has been significantly expanded (ICG 2012, 23 - 24). Three areas of visible civilian engagements are obvious: civil society, alternative and local media, and the academia. Some of them are also closely linked with each other and a general trend is the development of network-structures to encourage the collaboration among a broader spectrum of people and organizations. In parallel to this development three content-related discourses have emerged: on issues of "Southern Autonomy" and decentralization, peace talks and dialogue and justice. The following diagram indicates the links between the social spaces and the content-related discourses.

Picture Discursive Formation Model for Conflict Transformation

Against the backdrop of this discursive process, academic research about conflict played a significant role in shaping the understanding of people about the violent conflict. Deep South Incident Database has emerged from an academic research undertaking that was subsequently refined into a valid fact-finding tool for the general public and local civic groups in particular. Further development of the dataset and related research would enable more quantitative work conducive to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. As has been proven in conflict settings elsewhere, valid and reliable data and data sets could effectively generate inputs for policy formulation leading to conflict transformation. (Kreutz, 2010).

2. Origins and Development of Deep South Incident Database (DSID)

Dataset on incidence of violence in the Deep South was originally developed at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of Prince of Songkla University at Pattani by Srisompob Jitpiromsri, then as the Associate Dean for Research and Outreach, with a view to understand and analyze the upsurge of violence since January 2004. By March 2004, the data collection process was launched, using Microsoft Access version 2003. Sources of data included daily newspapers, such as mass-circulation Thai Rath, DailyNews, Khaosod. The researcher aimed to develop database of incidence of violence in the Southern border region spanning Pattani,Yala and Narathiwat province and 4 districts of Songkla. The database included daily, monthly and annual statistics. The researcher initially intended to apply statistics refined and extracted from this database in the situational analyses and predicting pattern of violence for policy recommendations (Srisompob, 2005).

Data analysis was published and disseminated to the geneal public drawing attention from researchers, academics, media and government agencies, nationally and internationally. The database was also intended to support development of similar situation database amongst agencies concerned and make it accessible for the public. The incident database was first used for policy analysis in 2005, when the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) appointed a fact-finding research team to investigate the causes and effects of violent conflicts since escalation in 2004.

Based on the research project, developed in 2004 by the researcher at Prince of Songkla University's Pattani campus, the incident of violence database was used and cited in the NRC's final Report to show that violence has been coordinated and well-organized by unknown insurgency entity, different from the conspiracy theories alleging that local authorities orchestrated some of these incidents.
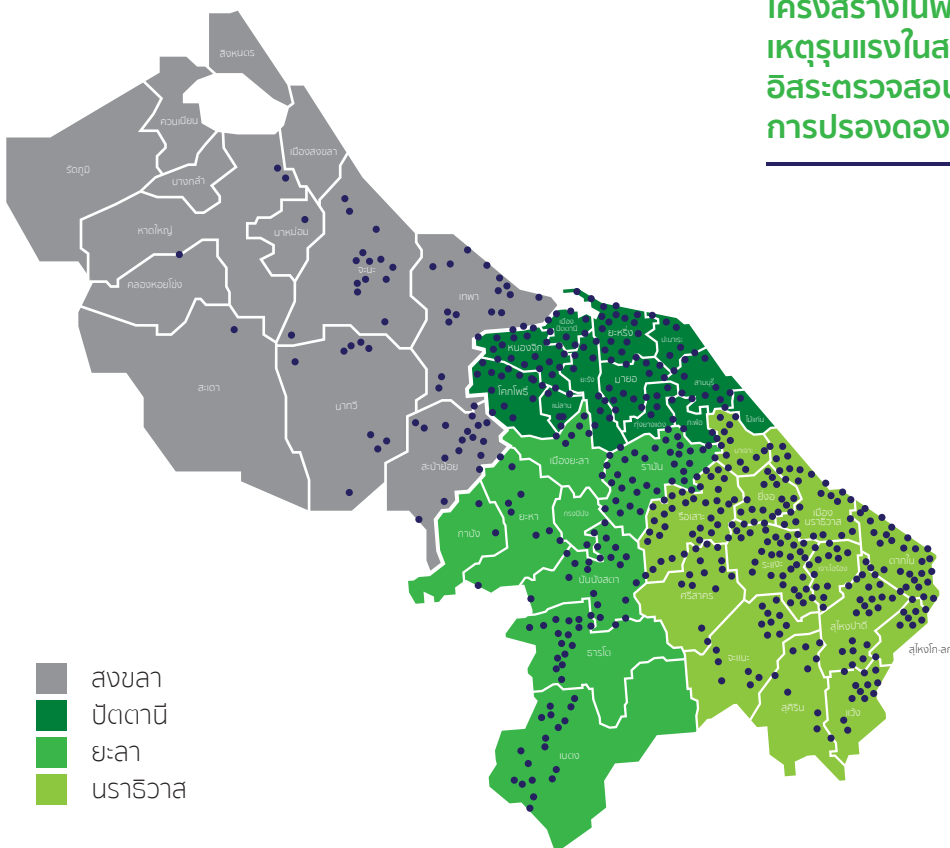
Deep South Watch Database, later called Deep South Incident Database (DSID), has thus become a prominent source of reference in the public policy analysis concerning conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. Beyond reporting statistics of deaths and injuries, database applications could demonstrate variations and trend, significant patterns of violent conflict in the Deep South.

As a result, the situation analysis of Deep South Watch (DSW) could show that, in the overall picture, the statistics of violence appeared to have declined as often described by the State. If one takes June 2007 as the turning point, it would appear that the frequency of violent incidents actually started declining in a certain way.

However, it is noticeable that from 2008 onwards, there were attempts at insurgency in the form that would sustain the goals of the struggle, and would also cause the situation in the area to rapidly become very intense at intervals. Therefore, from 2008, if we monitor the situation closely and continuously, the situation of unrest in the Deep South would be of a continuous pattern with occasional spikes, reflecting an image of a never-ending situation of violence. The lack of stability and uncertainty of the situation, with fluctuating frequency of incidents represents the dynamics of continuity of the unrest, the prime nature of the conflict. Such dynamics should be monitored with great care, as they may also have an impact on undermining the State's legitimacy in the long run.

This situation is later identified as the "protracted violence" due to the continuity of violence day in day out, every month, and every year. It is a state of violence that consists of shooting different groups of people going about their daily lives, bombing of public places and attacking targets that are state officials, attacking the base of the military, police, or volunteer forces, armed clashes during the "surround, search, and arrest" raids of state officials against the insurgents, as well as killing of innocent individuals. Such incidents frequently appear in the news, and shown in the analysis (Jitpiromsri and McCargo, 2010).

ความรุนแรงเชิงโครงสร้างหรือว่าความรุนแรงที่มีโครงสร้างในพื้นที่ชายแดนภาคใต้ ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับเหตุรุนแรงในสองปี (2004-2005) คณะกรรมการอิสระตรวจสอบ และค้นหาความจริงเพื่อการปรองดองแห่งชาติ 2005

จังหวัด	จำนวนเหตุการณ์
นราธิวาส	1299
ปัตตานี	926
ยะลา	764
สงขลา	102

Legend:
- สงขลา
- ปัตตานี
- ยะลา
- นราธิวาส

The reliable sources of data have contributed to the further development of incident of violence dataset. In the process, the data has been collected from 4 sources: the Emergency Call Center operated by the Ministry of Interior based in Yala province, the daily military report compiled by the Internal Security Operations Command Region 4 (ISOC 4), the Southern Border Provinces Police Operation Center, and the regional news centers of media agencies. All centers would report daily to Deep South Watch (DSW), where the database team collected and triangulated the validity of data from different sources. The data has thus been coded and entered into to the dataset that is updated on the daily basis.

In data entry process, the staff would conduct encoding and entering data every day. By the end of every month, there would be editing process and fact-checking, and correction. Then data summarizing would be done. Monthly summary report is due to be issued by the fifth of the following month. Only significant data would be reported, such as total number of violent incidents, deaths and injuries. The users of this report are mostly media outlets, domestically and internationally, foreign embassies in Thailand, public and private agencies. A monthly summary would usually feature:

- Number of incidences including different forms of violence
- Number of deaths and injuries by religious background
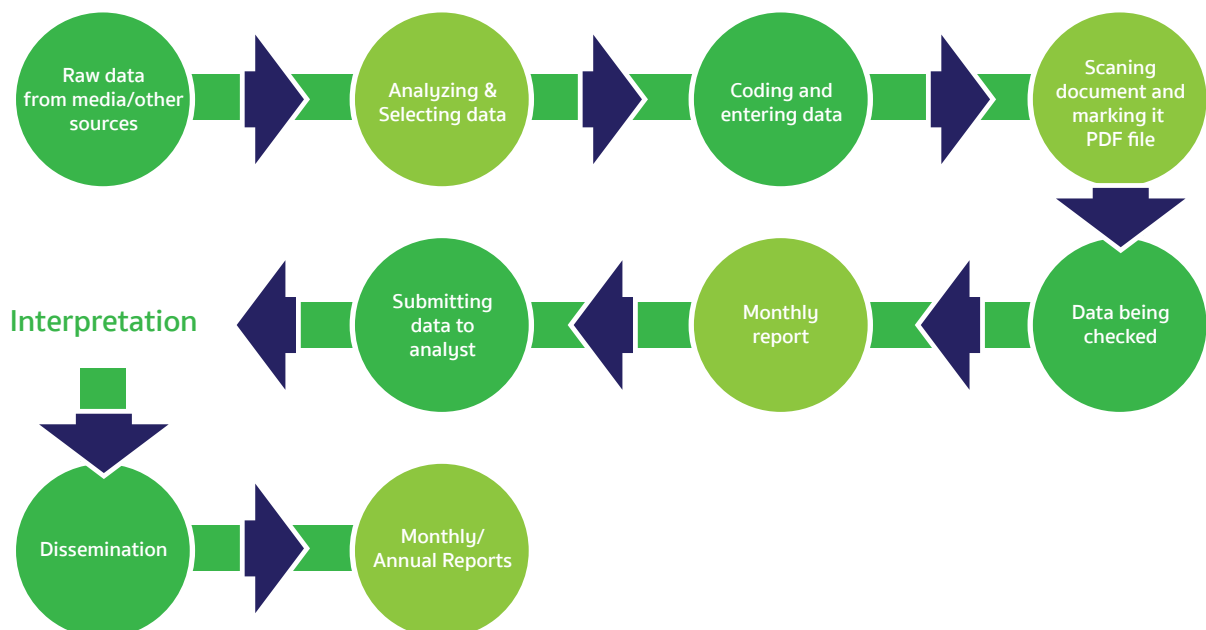- Number of deaths and injuries by occupations

Causes of incidents varied, multiple motives including insurgency, crime and other personal conflicts. It has been difficult to ascertain the causes of violence in the Deep South violence for years. The data for entering process would be selected to make sure that it includes only cases considered security –related, as well as those under active investigation. Cases that were clearly not related to insurgency would be dismissed. The original sources of data have already been scrutinized by the authorities working on the grounds, including the military officers, police officers and district officers, to screen in only cases directly related to the insurgency.

3. A New Deep South Incident Database (DSID 2.0): A New Phase of Development

Since 2014, Deep South Watch (DSW) and Center for Conflict Studies and CulturalDiversity (CSCD) have collaborated with the World Bank and Asia Foundation to strengthen the Deep South Incident Database (DSID). New concepts have been formulated, and set to restructure the database into a new one. With this undertaking, DSID has to redefine and recode about 15,000 incidents recorded in predecessor database. To this end, the process includes:

- Using consistent codes and clear definitions
- Making clear work processes
- Instituting and implementing two stage quality control
- Securing storage of raw and processed data.
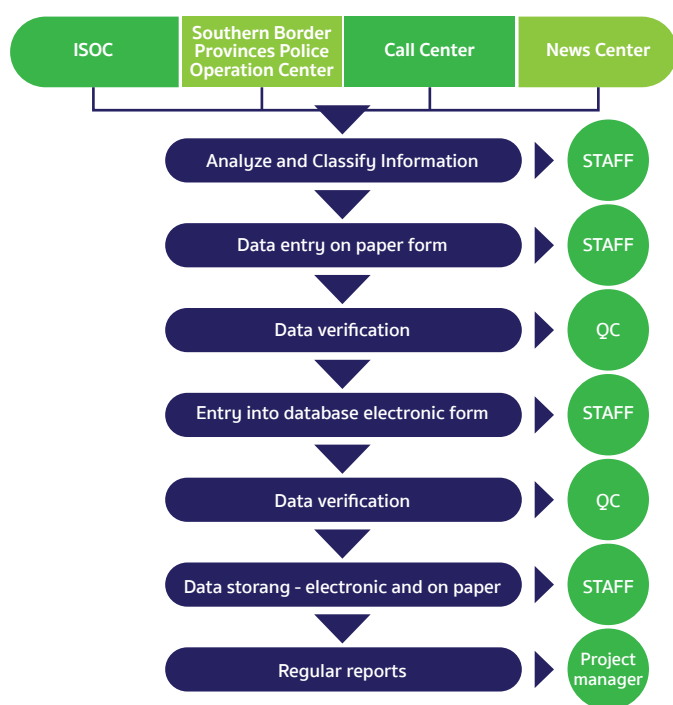
Working Procedure

The reconstructed database will operate according to the following key principles:

- Rely on standard definitions/codes where possible
- Build on local capacity
- Keep it simple

The new version of database has improved accessibility, reliability and speed of output. As a result, working process has become more complicated and qualified, encompassing analyzing and classifying information, data entry on paper forms, data verification, entry into database in electronic form, data storage – electronic and on paper, and regular reports. All steps need to be implemented by staff with functional differentiation and quality control.

Working Process

ISOC	Southern Border Provinces Police Operation Center	Call Center	News Center

Process	Role
Analyze and Classify Information	STAFF
Data entry on paper form	STAFF
Data verification	QC
Entry into database electronic form	STAFF
Data verification	QC
Data storang - electronic and on paper	STAFF
Regular reports	Project manager

The new database enables preparation of monthly summary report by the 5th of the following month. Significant data is reported, such as trends in incidence of violence, deaths and injuries. The users of these reports are primarily domestic and international media, foreign embassies, international organizations, government agencies and the private sector. Research use is facilitated by use of standard definitions, coding and simplified extraction of data. A more complex database structure comprises of three major components: incidents, perpetrators and victims.

Database Structure Incident Details

Incident ID	Date	Time	Violence	Admin
Province ID	District ID	Sub district ID	Village ID	Military GIS
Civilian GIS	Human Impact	Impact on Property	Type of Incident	Cause of Incident
Weapon Used	One-sided or two-sided	Vehicles Used	Extreme Violence	Sources

Database Structure Perpetrator Data

Incident ID	Perpetrator ID	Organization	Numbers of Perpetrators	Status of Perpetrators
Actions	Legal Classification	Name	Alias	Age
Province ID	District ID	Sub district ID/Municipal ID	Vilage ID	Civilian GIS
House no.	ID Card no.	Gender	Religion	Occupation

Database Structure Victims

Incident ID	Victims ID	Victim Group	Victim Category	Status of Victim
Title	Name	Alias	Age	Province ID
District ID	Sub district ID/Municipal ID	Village ID	House no.	Civilian GIS
ID Card	Gender	Religion	Occupation	CSO

Deep South Incident Database 2.0 also has a spatial dimension of data to upgrade capabilities of data analysis. Most research works on conflict examine national averages while neglecting spatial variations within the country. Spatial information can improve conventional country-level measures and help our understanding of how local features and variations give rise to sub-national violence. DSID 2.0 project is integrating GIS into the Deep South Watch Database. The initial version of the database includes spatial data – addresses and military coordinates – but it still lacks structure essential for analytical purposes. A separate project was set up to code detailed standard GIS information into the database. An initial obstacle was the lack of accurate base maps covering the area. To solve the problem, the database team has created the village base map.

The program ArcView GIS is used for assigning coordinates to each village in the area. Village roster can be obtained from Ministry of Interior, with standard Thai ISO codes for province, district, sub-district and village as assigned by the Ministry of Interior. Sources of geographic information for identifying coordinates would be secured to have existing village level maps. The satellite images are procured from GISTDA (Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency). Some data can be obtained from Google Earth. As there is no standard Thai definition of what a village center is, the team assigned the coordinates based on a centrally located fixed point such as road intersection, school, mosque. Eventually, DSID 2.0 can develop geocoding events. Geocoding has been done for large number of incidents based on satellite images with locations of all 15,000+ incidents. Satellite images are used for identifying location of events, saving costs and time required of actual fieldwork.

The next step is geocoding of supplementary data. The following data would be obtained and geocoded.
1) Social and economic information
- Unemployment, employment and poverty
- Education
- Religion and language use
2) Infrastructure
- Roads
- Railways
3) Physical geography
- Forests
- Agricultural land
- Built up areas
4) Institutions
- Schools
- Religious institutions
5) Government
- Security operations
- Security infrastructure (forthcoming)
- Development projects (forthcoming)

4. The Next Step of Database Development

Development of Deep South Watch Database is under a critical phase, the turning point. There are 3 ways of technical and political developments. We are making a better database. We have to develop the database that allows for better presentation and info graphics. We are trying to construct a monitoring database and bringing about people's participation in the peace process.

On the other hand, we are developing more rigorous field and survey researches in order to build structures that will directly support and strengthen local networks to engage people's participation in conflict transformation. In fact, DSID needs 5 further steps to:

1) Strengthening quantitative skills Objective is to strengthen quantitative skills by matching violence databases with information from other databases.
2) Constructing violence intensity indices Objective is to assess different ways of constructing these indices, their potential applications and policy relevance.
3) Developing data presentation techniques Objective is to increase capacity of the team to display their data in visually appealing ways via their websites
4) Developing violence monitoring capacity and peace process Objective is to draw on different experiences across the three countries, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia to highlight uses of violence monitoring data at different stages of peace processes.
5) Influencing policy locally
Objective is to assess the potential for influencing the local governments in conflict areas to use violence data in their decision-making.

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