

SOUTHEAST ASIA MARITIME LAW ENFORCEMENT INITIATIVE



“No region can be secure in the absence of effective law enforcement in territorial waters...this assistance will foster greater regional cooperation on maritime issues and ultimately provide the ability of Southeast Asian nations to carry out humanitarian activities and to police and monitor their waters more effectively.”

Secretary of State John Kerry

The waters of Southeast Asia contain some of the world’s busiest shipping lanes, and the region plays a crucial role in the movement of U.S. and international goods. Southeast Asian nations confront maritime security challenges such as illicit trafficking of goods, drugs, and persons. The networks and illicit markets supporting traffickers undermine the rule of law and weaken public institutions. They perpetuate corruption and contribute to geopolitical tensions throughout the region.

Addressing Transnational Maritime Crime

To address these critical international issues, and as part of a larger Asia maritime initiative that Secretary Kerry announced in December 2013, the Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs designated \$25 million to develop the Southeast Asia Maritime Security Law Enforcement Initiative (MLE).

The MLE uses a bilateral approach to increase maritime law enforcement capabilities in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam while working to enhance regional security. MLE facilitates cooperation and interoperability among our partner countries’ civilian maritime law enforcement entities to enhance regional responses to criminal activities and threats.

These efforts provide non-lethal equipment and training to identify and address crimes involving the trafficking of persons, weapons, or illicit drugs; detecting and stopping illegal fishing; and combatting wildlife trafficking and environmental crimes. Specific programs are tailored to each country’s unique challenges, needs, and existing capabilities.

Indonesia: Projects strengthen the capabilities of the Indonesian Coast Guard, Marine Police, and other agencies to monitor illicit activities and interdict illicit

goods. Assistance includes training, technical assistance, facilities renovation to improve monitoring capabilities, and facilitating coordination among Indonesian agencies involved in maritime law enforcement.

Malaysia: Projects will include training and curriculum development to help maritime law enforcement institutions develop needed expertise. Assistance may also include operational and maintenance support for training classes and technical advice.

Philippines: Projects focus on building and sustaining the capacity of maritime law enforcement agencies. Efforts include supporting the development of the Philippine Coast Guard’s (PCG) aviation unit by providing aircraft and pilot training; establishing a PCG Law Enforcement Training Center; and developing curriculum and specialized training for the PCG and maritime police to address environmental crimes.

Vietnam: Projects will complement ongoing U.S. and international efforts to improve the Vietnamese Coast Guard’s (VCG) capabilities and strengthen overall law enforcement. Planned assistance includes communications equipment, training, and support for operations, maintenance, and logistics; construction of VCG regional training centers; and specialized maritime law enforcement curricula and training, including for VCG trainers.

Regional Program: Projects involving all of these countries will enhance maritime law enforcement capacity in areas such as intelligence gathering, monitoring and surveillance, interdiction, and communications. Assistance will also go toward limited infrastructure support to ports and marine terminals, and the development of specialized maritime law enforcement curricula and training programs.