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Thai prime minister meets security chiefs after coordinated attacks in 3 southern provinces



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Thailand's Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, center, speaks during a meeting with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, unseen, at Parliament House in Canberra, Australia, Wednesday, Aug. 19, 2026. (Hilary Wardhaugh/Pool Photo via AP)
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By Grant Peck - Associated Press - Sunday, August 23, 2026

BANGKOK — [Thailand's](#) Prime Minister [Anutin Charnvirakul](#), already facing a flood crisis in the country's north, held an urgent meeting on Sunday with high-level security officials in response to coordinated violence overnight in three southern provinces where a small-scale Muslim insurgency is active.

The meeting, held shortly before Anutin flew north to inspect the badly flooded province of Nan, followed 51 incidents on Saturday night in the southernmost provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala.

The attackers did not engage with military or police forces. Only three civilians were known to have been wounded, and they were reported to be recovering on Sunday.

The violence primarily involved small bombs, arson and other forms of property damage. The highest-profile target was a 7-Eleven convenience store in Pattani. A video circulating on social media appeared to show armed men stalking outside the store while customers and workers fled before it was set on fire.

A bomb that damaged rail tracks in Narathiwat forced the suspension of local and long-haul services. It was not clear when they would be restored due to the uncertain security situation.

As has often been the case with such incidents, no group was immediately publicly blamed or claimed responsibility for the actions.

However, such attacks are generally believed to be carried out by the [Barisan Revolusi Nasional Melayu Patani](#), or BRN. It is the major insurgent group in the south with the organizational means and support to stage such an action. It is also the group with which the Thai government has been holding on-again, off-again peace talks.

FRONT PAGE PODCAST



THE WASHINGTON TIMES FRONT PAGE
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STORY TOPICS

THAILAND

ANUTIN CHARNVIRAKUL

BARISAN REVOLUSI NASIONAL MELAYU
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The three southernmost provinces are the only ones with Muslim majorities in predominantly Buddhist [Thailand](#) and the BRN has said that it is seeking self-rule for them.

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Muslim residents have long complained of being treated like second-class citizens in [Thailand](#), and separatist movements have been periodically active for decades.

Insurgent violence escalated sharply in 2004 and was met with heavy-handed crackdowns, further fueling discontent. According to Deep South Watch, a think tank based at the Prince of Songkla University's campus in Pattani, 7,837 people have died in the violence in the past 22 years.

The last major flare-up came in July, when about 10 attackers opened fire and threw pipe bombs at soldiers at a security checkpoint in Narathiwat. Five paramilitary soldiers were killed and six civilians were wounded, including a 10-year-old boy.

Don Pathan, an independent security analyst, says the BRN carries out attacks largely for leverage as it negotiates with the Thai government.

"From the ground, BRN combatants are turned off by the boasting of military officials and wanted to use the spike in violence to demonstrate their capabilities," said Pathan. "Many of the targets in these latest incidents were civilians, but BRN combatants were not after body counts. They want to send a stern message to the Thais of what they are capable of doing."

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