

**M'sia to help Thailand resolve Muslim insurgency**  
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Malaysia today promised assistance to Thailand to help resolve the Muslim insurgency in the mainly Buddhist country's southern region.

Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib Razak told visiting Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra that mainly Muslim Malaysia would strive to help find a resolution to the conflict that has claimed thousands of lives since 2004.

Yingluck arrived in Malaysia earlier for a day-long visit as part of the Thai premier's trip around the nine other members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (Asean).

The two leaders were also expected to discuss wide-ranging bilateral issues, including border security drug trafficking, human trafficking and arms smuggling.

Yingluck was also scheduled to have an audience with Malaysia's 14th king, Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah, at the national palace, Istana Negara, before returning to Bangkok later in the day.

Thailand is Malaysia's second-largest trading partner in Asean. Last year, total trade between the two countries was valued at US\$23 billion.

The separatist movement in Thailand's three southernmost provinces, near the Malaysian border, has cost around 4,370 lives since 2004, 90 percent of them civilian.

The area, once called the Islamic Sultanate of Pattani, has been under Bangkok rule for around 200 years but has never fully accepted central government rule or integrated into Thai society.

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