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Deadly Attack in Thailand's Muslim South

At least six people died

The southern Thai provinces, known to be run by rebellious Muslim communities, were again the scene of a terrorist attack that claimed the lives of seven people, in two separate incidents. According to police sources, suspected militants ambushed a pack of security guards, who had the mission of picking up some teachers in order to take them to a school, set their truck on fire and then shot them to death. Then the militants took the weapons of the five security volunteers and ran to Yala, one of the Thai southern provinces. In Narathiwat province, two people were shot by two men on motorcycles in the Ra-ngae district. These sources added they knew who the criminals were and were conducting an investigation in order to capture them. Local district Chief Aya Ditapinan stated that unfortunately for everyone, that is the only way security guards can accompany teachers going to school every day. He is talking about a region in which Muslim separatist groups view teachers, schools and other institutions as a symbol of Buddhist presence of the government that must be eliminated. The region is made up of three most important southern provinces, Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat, which have often been the scene of endless fights and almost daily bombs and armed attacks. More than 1, 300 people died as of January 2004. Another tragic statistic displays the fact that more than 60 bombs exploded across the region in only two days at the beginning of this month, which resulted in the death of two people. Around 80 percent of the population living in the southern region of Thailand is Muslim and speaks a Malay dialect.