

BRUNEI SECURITY ANALYSIS REPORT

AI-Assisted Open Source Intelligence Assessment

Analysis Period: October 29, 2026 - November 05, 2026

This report was produced using open-source intelligence analysis. The assessment is grounded in publicly available reporting and should be cross-referenced with primary sources. RSS feed articles are listed in the annex for reference.

Security Analysis Report: Brunei Darussalam (October 29, 2026 - November 05, 2026)

Executive Summary

During the period of October 29 to November 05, 2026, Brunei Darussalam maintained an active and cooperative stance in regional security, defense, and diplomatic engagements. Key developments included significant participation in ASEAN defense and counter-terrorism forums, underscoring its commitment to regional stability and addressing transnational threats. Brunei also advanced its defense modernization efforts with the impending delivery of new Airbus H145M helicopters and demonstrated a strong focus on enhancing national cybersecurity capabilities through conferences and alerts. Diplomatic ties were strengthened with the elevation of partnership with Oman and the reopening of its embassy in Iran, reflecting a balanced foreign policy approach. Overall, Brunei's security posture during this week was characterized by proactive multilateral engagement and internal capacity building.

Key Security Developments

- Diplomatic Engagement at ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus)

On October 29, 2026, Brunei Darussalam's Coordinating Minister for National Security, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office, and Minister of Defence II, Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Retired) Dato Paduka Seri Awang Haji Halbi bin Haji Mohd Yussof, led the delegation to the 13th ADMM-Plus in Cebu, Republic of the Philippines. The meeting focused on regional and international security dynamics and reaffirmed a collective commitment to peace and stability, with Singapore assuming the ADMM Chairmanship for 2027. This participation highlights Brunei's continued dedication to multilateral defense cooperation within Southeast Asia and with its Plus partners.

- Expanded Defense Cooperation with the Philippines

On October 28, 2026, on the sidelines of the ADMM and ADMM-Plus meetings in Cebu, the Philippines and Brunei Darussalam discussed expanding defense cooperation. Initiatives explored included naval engagements, air force training and exchanges, and interactions among junior military personnel. This signifies a deepening of

bilateral military ties aimed at improving operational proficiency and familiarization with diverse operating environments.

• Participation in Sub-Regional Meeting on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (SRM)

Brunei Darussalam participated in the 7th Sub-Regional Meeting on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (SRM) in Jakarta, Indonesia, on November 1, 2026. The discussions addressed critical regional and global security challenges such as terrorism, irregular migration, cybersecurity, and transnational crime. Brunei's active role in this forum, including the announcement that it will co-chair the Senior Officials' Counter-Terrorism Policy Forum with Malaysia in 2027, underscores its commitment to combating these threats through regional collaboration.

• Advancements in Cybersecurity Posture

Brunei's flagship cybersecurity conference, CySec 2026, themed "Resilient by Design," was underway during this period, focusing on protecting critical infrastructure against escalating threats. Furthermore, on November 3, 2026, BruCERT issued an alert on Fake Invoice Attachments, and on October 30, 2026, an alert on a Linux Kernel IPv4 TCP Vulnerability (CVE-2026-98432). These activities demonstrate Brunei's proactive approach to enhancing its digital defenses and raising awareness of cyber threats.

• Elevation of Diplomatic Ties with Oman and Reopening of Iran Embassy

On November 4, 2026, a Joint Declaration on the Elevation of Ties to a Strategic Partnership was announced between Brunei Darussalam and the Sultanate of Oman. Additionally, on October 28, 2026, Brunei announced the reopening of its Embassy in Tehran, the Islamic Republic of Iran. These diplomatic moves indicate Brunei's efforts to diversify and strengthen its international relations, particularly with Middle Eastern partners.

• Defense Acquisition Milestone: Airbus H145M Helicopters

Although the signing of the Customer Acceptance Test (CAT) certificate for the initial batch of Airbus H145M helicopters occurred on October 15, 2026, in Donauwörth, Germany, the delivery of these six multi-role helicopters to Brunei is scheduled for November 2026. This acquisition is a significant step in modernizing the Royal Brunei Air Force, replacing the decommissioned Bölkow BO 105 fleet and enhancing capabilities for missions like close air support and aerial observation.

• Recognition for Ministry of Defence Innovation

On October 29, 2026, the Ministry of Defence received recognition for excellence and innovation during the Civil Service Day 2026 celebration. The HRPulse project, designed by the Air Engineering Unit of the Royal Brunei Air Force, won a Bronze Award for innovation. This highlights internal efforts within Brunei's defense sector to

foster innovation and improve operational efficiency.

- Maritime Security Cooperation through ReCAAP ISC Cluster Meeting

Brunei Darussalam hosted the ReCAAP ISC Cluster Meeting 2026, jointly organized by the Royal Brunei Police Force and the National Maritime Coordination Centre. The meeting brought together representatives from several regional countries, including Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, to share information and strengthen cooperation in mitigating piracy and armed robbery against ships. This initiative underscores Brunei's commitment to enhancing regional maritime security and stability.

- Improvement in Human Trafficking Ranking

Brunei Darussalam's ranking in the United States Trafficking in Persons Report improved to Tier 2 in 2026, marking two consecutive years of upgrade from the Tier 2 Watch List in 2025. This reflects sustained efforts and commitment by Brunei to combat irregular migration and human trafficking.

Geopolitical Impact and Regional Dynamics

Brunei's security developments during this period underscore its consistent foreign policy of active engagement and multilateral cooperation within the dynamic Indo-Pacific region. Its participation in the 13th ADMM-Plus in Cebu on October 29, 2026, reinforces ASEAN centrality in regional security architecture and allows Brunei to contribute to discussions on regional and international security dynamics. The exploration of expanded defense cooperation with the Philippines on the sidelines of these meetings further solidifies bilateral ties and aims to enhance military interoperability, contributing to a more cohesive regional defense posture.

The active role in the 7th Sub-Regional Meeting on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime in Jakarta on November 1, 2026, and the commitment to co-chair a counter-terrorism forum with Malaysia in 2027, positions Brunei as a key player in addressing non-traditional security threats. This collaborative approach is vital for managing threats like terrorism, irregular migration, and cybercrime that transcend national borders. The hosting of the ReCAAP ISC Cluster Meeting 2026 also highlights Brunei's leadership in maritime security, fostering information sharing and cooperation among littoral states to combat piracy and armed robbery in crucial waterways.

Diplomatically, the elevation of ties to a Strategic Partnership with Oman on November 4, 2026, and the reopening of the embassy in Tehran on October 28, 2026, demonstrate Brunei's strategic outreach beyond Southeast Asia. These moves could contribute to broader diplomatic influence and economic opportunities, while also

navigating the complex geopolitical landscape of the Middle East. While China and Brunei exchanged congratulatory messages on their 35th anniversary of diplomatic relations on September 30, 2026, reaffirming a "China-Brunei community with a shared future" and deepening cooperation in defense, this relationship continues to be a significant factor in Brunei's geopolitical calculus, balancing ties with major powers.

Military and Defense Analysis

Brunei's military and defense posture during this period reflects a clear commitment to modernization and enhanced interoperability with key partners. The impending delivery of the initial batch of six Airbus H145M helicopters in November 2026, following the Customer Acceptance Test on October 15, 2026, represents a significant upgrade for the Royal Brunei Air Force. These multi-role helicopters will replace the aging Bölkow BO 105 fleet, substantially improving capabilities for close air support, aerial observation, and other critical missions, thereby enhancing the overall operational effectiveness of the RBAirF.

The discussions with the Philippines on expanding defense cooperation, including naval engagements and air force training, indicate a continuous effort to improve military operational proficiency and familiarize armed forces with different operating environments. This aligns with Brunei's long-standing practice of engaging in bilateral and multilateral exercises, such as the recently concluded CARAT Brunei 2026 with the United States in September 2026, which focused on maritime domain awareness and anti-submarine warfare in the South China Sea. Such exercises are crucial for building interoperability and shared understanding with partner nations.

The recognition received by the Ministry of Defence for innovation on October 29, 2026, specifically the Bronze Award for the HRPulse project by the Royal Brunei Air Force's Air Engineering Unit, highlights an internal drive for technological advancement and efficiency within the defense sector. This focus on in-house innovation can contribute to cost reduction and tailored solutions for Brunei's specific defense needs. While specific defense spending trends for this exact period are not available, the ongoing modernization programs and active participation in regional forums suggest a sustained investment in defense capabilities.

Outlook and Forecast

Short-term trends (1-3 months): In the immediate future, Brunei is expected to integrate the newly acquired Airbus H145M helicopters into the Royal Brunei Air

Force, which will be a key focus for training and operational readiness in November 2026. The momentum from the 13th ADMM-Plus and the 7th SRM will likely translate into continued policy discussions and operational initiatives, particularly in counter-terrorism and maritime security. Brunei's co-chairmanship with Malaysia for the Senior Officials' Counter-Terrorism Policy Forum in 2027 will begin to shape regional counter-terrorism strategies. Cybersecurity efforts will remain prominent, with the outcomes and recommendations from CySec 2026 likely influencing national strategies and public awareness campaigns.

Critical flashpoints and risk areas: The South China Sea remains a persistent area of concern, with potential for maritime disputes and the need for continued vigilance against piracy and armed robbery. While Brunei advocates for "quiet diplomacy" in this region, the presence of various claimant states and major power interests necessitates a robust maritime security posture. The evolving landscape of cyber threats, as highlighted by BruCERT's alerts and the CySec 2026 conference, presents an ongoing risk to critical infrastructure and national security. Transnational crimes, including human trafficking and irregular migration, will continue to require sustained efforts despite Brunei's improved ranking.

Indicators to monitor: Key indicators to monitor include the successful integration and operational deployment of the H145M helicopters, which will signal the effectiveness of Brunei's defense modernization. Progress in implementing the outcomes of the ReCAAP ISC Cluster Meeting and the counter-terrorism forums will be crucial for regional security. Any new bilateral or multilateral defense exercises, particularly with the US or other ASEAN partners, would indicate continued commitment to interoperability. Furthermore, the nature and frequency of cyber incidents reported by BruCERT will be important gauges of the national cybersecurity landscape.

Strategic recommendations: Brunei should continue its balanced diplomatic approach, leveraging its strategic partnerships within ASEAN and with major powers to maintain regional stability. Prioritizing the training and integration of new defense assets, such as the H145M helicopters, is essential to maximize their operational impact. Strengthening cybersecurity defenses, particularly for critical infrastructure, through public-private partnerships and regional collaboration, should remain a top priority. Continued active participation in regional forums on counter-terrorism, maritime security, and transnational crime will be vital for collective security and information sharing. Finally, sustained efforts to combat human trafficking and irregular migration will reinforce Brunei's international standing and human security.

Structured Assessment

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