



Countering Terrorism

The images of crumpled metal, crushed concrete and broken glass flashed across the world. Terrorists had targeted an international hotel chain where important meetings were taking place and detonated a bomb. Australians were killed in the blast.

While strikingly similar to 21st century terrorist attacks, this is a description of a bombing that happened 30 years ago in Australia. The attack on the Sydney Hilton Hotel in 1978 was the catalyst for the formation of the Australian Federal Police (AFP).

In the aftermath of the explosion the Australian government reviewed the country's existing law enforcement structure. In 1979, it agreed to establish a national police force. Within a year the AFP had several operations with national security implications under way, including an investigation into Australia's first political assassination.

In 1980, the Turkish Consul-General to Australia and his bodyguard were shot dead on a Sydney street. The same obscure terrorist organisation which claimed responsibility for the attack struck again in 1986 when it bombed the Turkish Consulate in Melbourne.

In 1982, a bomb was detonated near the Israeli Consulate in Sydney and, within hours, another blast had rocked a nearby Jewish community building.

The AFP was also investigating a number of attacks targeting the Family Law Courts. Justice David Opas was shot and killed in 1980



at his Sydney home. Four years later, Justice Ray Watson's wife Pearl was killed when a bomb targeting her husband exploded as she opened the door of their family home.

But by the end of the 1980s, incidents of politically-motivated violence in Australia had declined. The AFP's priorities changed to reflect a national focus on crimes like illegal drug importation.

That changed in 2001.

Since the September 11 terrorist attacks, the AFP has been involved in several successful counter terrorism operations.

The organisation's determination and expertise was put to the test in October 2002, when three bombs exploded in a busy tourist area on the resort island of Bali.

In all, 202 people were killed, including 88 Australians.

AFP Response to the Bali bombings

In response to the bombings and at the request of the Indonesian National Police (INP), the AFP deployed a response team to Indonesia to assist in the immediate aftermath of the explosions.

The immediate assistance provided by the AFP included a 14 person response team which was sent to Bali on 13 October 2002, including specialist victim identification officers, scientific crime scene investigators and post-bomb-blast investigators.



The AFP's support to the Indonesian response to the Bali bombings was one of the most significant and resource intensive operations the AFP has ever undertaken.

What became known as *Operation Alliance*, at its height had approximately 500 AFP members focused on matters relating to the bombings, including up to 100 personnel based in Indonesia.

On 17 October 2002, a formal joint investigation agreement was signed by Chief of the Indonesian National Police (INP) and former AFP Commissioner Mick Keelty.

As part of the investigation, an AFP Forward Command Post was established in Bali, which included Bali based investigators, Disaster Victim Identification, Forensics, Intelligence, Media, and Post Administration, Security, IT and Communications.

The primary focus of AFP involvement in the Bali bombings was supporting the INP investigation.

This AFP offshore response to the bombings was complemented by a domestic effort in which the AFP spoke to passengers as they arrived back from Bali and identified potential witnesses to the incidents. In total, the AFP spoke with more than 7000 passengers within 10 days.

This assistance the AFP provided to Indonesia by the AFP in response to the incidents represents one of the AFP's proudest moments in working with, and assisting a foreign law enforcement agency.



AFP and INP

The 10th anniversary of the 2002 Bali bombings is an opportunity to reflect on the ongoing efforts by the AFP and INP to combat the ongoing threat of terrorism in Indonesia since that time.

The threat of terrorism to Australia is real and enduring. It has become a persistent and permanent feature of Australia's security environment.

Over the past decade the threat of terrorism in the region and around the world has remained constant, as evidenced by attacks including the twin bombings on the Marriott and Ritz Carlton hotels in Jakarta in 2009, and a range of other acts of terrorism within Indonesia.

In response, the INP has arrested over 750 terrorism suspects, undoubtedly sparing the lives of would-be victims, including Australians.

Over the past 10 years, the AFP has expanded its presence in Indonesia working with INP on a range of capacity building initiatives and transnational crime investigations.

The relationship forged between the AFP and INP during the response to the Bali bombings remains very strong, and the two law enforcement agencies continue to work closely together on a wide range of law enforcement related issues.



The AFP continues to work alongside the INP in counter terrorism efforts through collaborative working arrangements, liaison positions and capacity building initiatives.

There are currently 23 AFP officers working alongside INP in Indonesia.

Over the past decade, the AFP has delivered a range of supporting and capacity building activities to the INP in order to assist them in their ongoing efforts to counter terrorism, including investigations and intelligence training, crime scene management and post blast response, forensic disciplines and major criminal investigation management.

Since 2004 the joint Indonesian-Australian academic facility, the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation, has trained more than 11,000 regional law enforcement students in various disciplines. The establishment and ongoing development of the Republic of Indonesia Bomb Data Centre.

AFP counter terrorism

The threat of international terrorism is real and continues to diversify. Terrorism continues to pose a significant threat to Australia's national security and preventing terrorism remains a high priority for the AFP.

Since 2002, the AFP has been restructured to include a dedicated Counter Terrorism portfolio.



The AFP's approach to combatting terrorism is underpinned by an integrated strategy of counter-terrorism investigations, countering violent extremism strategies, community engagement and off-shore investigations and capacity building leading to prevention and disruption.

Domestically, Joint Counter Terrorism Teams (JCTT) have been established in each jurisdiction to undertake preventative investigations. These teams comprise of AFP, state and territory police and in the case of New South Wales, the NSW Crime Commission.

The AFP's International Network is a crucial component of Australian law enforcement's efforts in combating the growing threat of transnational crime, including terrorism, within the Asia-Pacific region.

The AFP currently has 23 officers from the AFP International Network posted within the Asia-Pacific region to work in close liaison with international law enforcement partners.

In addition to this network, the AFP has dedicated Regional Cooperation Teams in Jakarta, Manila and Bangkok, as well as a Counter Terrorism Police Advisor based in Jakarta and embedded in the INP Headquarters.

On a world scale, dedicated Counter Terrorism Liaison Officers are also now based in Islamabad, Washington DC and London.