Politics in Action:
Updates from Southeast Asia

4-13 May 2020
Online event: Tune in on the SSEAC Facebook page for video updates.
Sydney Southeast Asia Centre

The Sydney Southeast Asia Centre is forging Australia's relationship with one of the world's fastest growing regions by educating students and building new partnerships with academics and governments based on research excellence.

With more than 500 academics across six faculties and three schools working on and in Southeast Asia, the University of Sydney has one of the highest concentrations of regional expertise in the world.
Event proceedings

In this public forum, invited experts provided an analysis of the current political situation in Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Vietnam, and discuss the broader implications of events in these countries for our region.

Each of our country-specialists will record a 15-minute video presentation which will be made available in the week of 4-8 May 2020.

Following each presentation, audience members will be invited to send in their questions by filling out this survey by 4pm, Friday 8 May 2020.

The speakers will then record short videos responding to the main questions raised by the audience, which will be made available in the week of 11-15 May 2020.

All videos recorded as part of Politics in Action 2020 will be made available for public viewing on our Facebook page and our YouTube channel from the 4th of May 2020 onwards.
**Program:**

**Week 1 - Video presentations**

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Institution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday 4 May</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>Dr Kearrin Sims</td>
<td>James Cook University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 4 May</td>
<td>17.30</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Dr Huong Le Thu</td>
<td>Australian Strategic Policy Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 5 May</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Dr Sebastian Dettman</td>
<td>Singapore Management University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 5 May</td>
<td>17.30</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Dr Susan Banki</td>
<td>University of Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 6 May</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Dr Jean Franco</td>
<td>University of the Philippines, Diliman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 6 May</td>
<td>17.30</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Dr Risa Toha</td>
<td>Yale-NUS, Singapore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 8 May</td>
<td>09.00</td>
<td>Wrap-up</td>
<td>Dr Thomas Power</td>
<td>University of Sydney</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 8 May</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>Deadline to submit your questions to SSEAC</td>
<td>Dr Thomas Power</td>
<td>University of Sydney</td>
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## Program:

### Week 2 – Q&A videos

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<tr>
<td>Monday 11 May</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>Dr Kearrin Sims</td>
<td>James Cook University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 11 May</td>
<td>17.30</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Dr Huong Le Thu</td>
<td>Australian Strategic Policy Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 12 May</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Dr Sebastian Dettman</td>
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Laos

Dr Kearrin Sims
James Cook University

Kearrin Sims is a critical development scholar trained in sociology and international relations. Kearrin has a keen interest in China’s growing presence in Mainland Southeast Asia, and particularly how the Belt and Road Initiative is transforming the livelihoods and wellbeing of impoverished communities. Kearrin coordinates and lectures into James Cook University’s (JCU) Master of Global Development. Kearrin is a Member of the Development Studies Association of Australia Executive Committee and Treasurer of the Association of Mainland Southeast Asia Scholars.

Twitter: @KearrinSims

Vietnam

Dr Huong Le Thu
Australian Strategic Policy Institute

Huong Le Thu is a senior analyst at ASPI, Defence and Strategy Program. Prior to this, she worked at the Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs (ANU), Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (Singapore), and Institute of International Relations (Taiwan). Her research interests include multilateral security in Asia and foreign policy in post-socialist countries. She has held research fellowships at the University of Malaya and the ASEAN Secretariat. She is an alumna of the DKI Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (Honolulu) and a recipient of the US State Department Fellowship for East Asian Security and IISS ShangriLa Dialogue Southeast Asian Fellow.

Twitter: @le2huong
Malaysia

Dr Sebastian Dettman
Singapore Management University

Sebastian Dettman is an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Sciences at Singapore Management University. He researches politics in Southeast Asia, particularly Malaysia and Indonesia, focusing on political parties, electoral competition, and democratization. He completed his PhD in the Department of Government at Cornell University in 2018, and a Masters in Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Michigan in 2012. Prior to SMU, he was a 2018-19 Postdoctoral Fellow in Contemporary Asia at the Shorenstein Center at Stanford University. His research has been published in Electoral Studies, Journal of Contemporary Asia, and South East Asia Research.

Twitter: @sebdettman

Myanmar

Dr Susan Banki
University of Sydney

Susan Banki’s research interests lie in the political, institutional, and legal contexts that explain the roots of and solutions to international human rights violations. In particular, she is interested in the ways that questions of sovereignty, citizenship/membership and humanitarian principles have shaped our understanding of and reactions to various transnational phenomena, such as the international human rights regime, international migration and the provision of international aid. She is currently investigating the local, regional and international mechanisms (and the interactions between them) that serve as potential levers for change.

Twitter: @susanbanki
Philippines

Dr Jean Franco
University of the Philippines, Diliman

Jean Encinas-Franco is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines, Diliman. Her publications cover issues on gender and the politics of international migration from the Philippines. Her dissertation explores the politics of labor out-migration in the Philippines and the discursive representation of overseas Filipino workers as “modern-day heroes”. Prior to this, she worked for 15 years at the Senate of the Philippine. Currently, she is editing a volume for the Philippine Migration Research Network and the Philippine Social Science Council assessing 50 years of state-sponsored labor migration from the Philippines.

Twitter: @francojean825

Indonesia

Dr Risa Toha
Yale-NUS, Singapore

Risa Toha is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Yale-National University of Singapore. She completed her PhD at the University of California, Los Angeles. Prior to joining Yale-NUS, she was a postdoctoral Indonesia Fellow at the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government in Cambridge, MA, and a Visiting Assistant Professor at Wheaton College, IL. Her current research lies at the intersection of ethnic politics, political violence, elections, and new democracies. Her book, Rioting for Representation, examines the rise and subsequent decline of ethnocommunal rioting during Indonesia’s transition to democracy, is under contract with Cambridge University Press.
Closing remarks

Dr Thomas Power
University of Sydney

Tom Power is a lecturer in the Department of Indonesian Studies at the University of Sydney, and undertook his doctoral studies at the Australian National University. His research focuses on democratisation and party politics in Indonesia. He is the co-editor of *From Stagnation to Regression: Indonesian democracy after twenty years* (ISEAS Publishing, forthcoming).

Twitter: @tpjpower
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