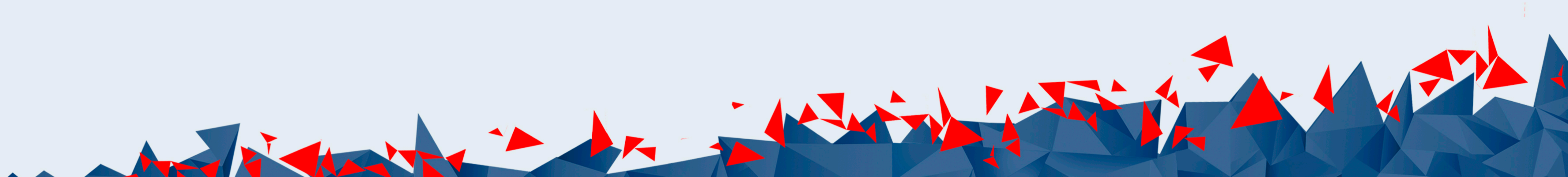




THE FUTURE OF **DEMOCRACY** IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

FLORENCIO “BUTCH” ABAD
30 June 2020



The Phenomenon of **Democratic Deficit**

- Democratic reversals unfold incrementally and don't necessarily lead to full-fledged autocracy.
- The main perpetrators of crimes against democracy are not military adventurers, armed revolutionaries or foreign governments but those elected to lead a democracy.

These are the hallmarks of 21st century democratic recession.



Four observations in Southeast Asia

- 1 COVID-19 creates opportunities for **deepening authoritarianism**
- 2 Authoritarianism is **already pervasive** in the SEA region
- 3 Authoritarian regimes have **exploited COVID-19** and its consequences
- 4 **Authoritarian regimes in SEA have more successes** in responding to COVID-19



Country ↕	Cases ↕	Cases Last 24hr ↕	Deaths ↕	Tests ↕	Recovered ↕	Cases per Million ↕	Population ▼
World	10,173,722	169,079	502,589	-	4,861,715	417	7,700,000,000
China	84,757	14	4,641	-	79,577	58	1,439,324,000
USA	2,549,629	39,306	125,808	29,207,820	663,562	3,143	331,003,000
Indonesia	55,092	1,082	2,805	439,907	21,333	38	264,000,000
Philippines	36,438	983	1,225	647,804	9,182	81	104,900,000
Vietnam	355	0	0	261,004	330	3	95,540,000
Thailand	3,169	7	58	302,822	3,040	43	69,400,000
Myanmar	299	3	6	68,404	211	3	53,370,000
Malaysia	8,637	3	121	462,257	8,294	192	31,200,000
Cambodia	141	0	0	12,378	127	8	16,010,000
Laos	19	0	0	14,161	19	3	6,858,000
Singapore	43,661	202	26	684,359	36,604	2,881	5,612,000
Brunei	141	0	3	28,395	138	322	428,607

Last Updated: June 29, 2020

Source: [Johns Hopkins University](#) and Southeast Asian Health Ministries



Extraordinary Times Require **Extraordinary Responses**

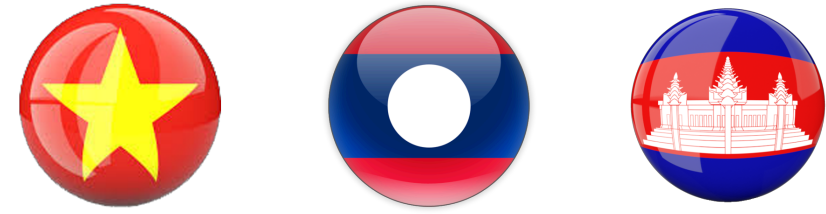


Not all situations are clear-cut and not all information needed is available

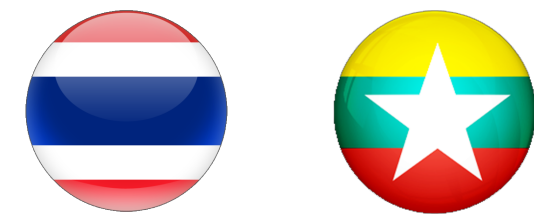


This condition presents an **excuse for excessive State assertiveness** that authoritarian seek





One-party communist autocracy



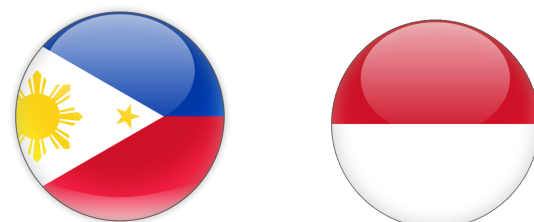
Military-backed government



One-party authoritarian rule



Absolute monarchy



Faltering democracy



Recovering democracy



Fledgling government





**COVID-19 pandemic, as an
accelerant, may aggravate and
accelerate the region's further drift
to authoritarianism.**

Southeast Asia -19 June 2020

The COVID-19 Story in Numbers

As of 19 Jun 2020: Indonesia and the Philippines still bear most of the-death related burden. Indonesia has the highest case-fatality ratio (final figures will be determined when pandemic is over.) The Philippines, however, has the worst incidence of deaths per 100,000 people at this point; that is if calculated to apply to the general population. It is the only country whose death-per-100,000 figure is higher than one, which shows severity.

The region has 126,506 cumulative cases (52,700 active), 70,089 recoveries, 3,717 deaths.

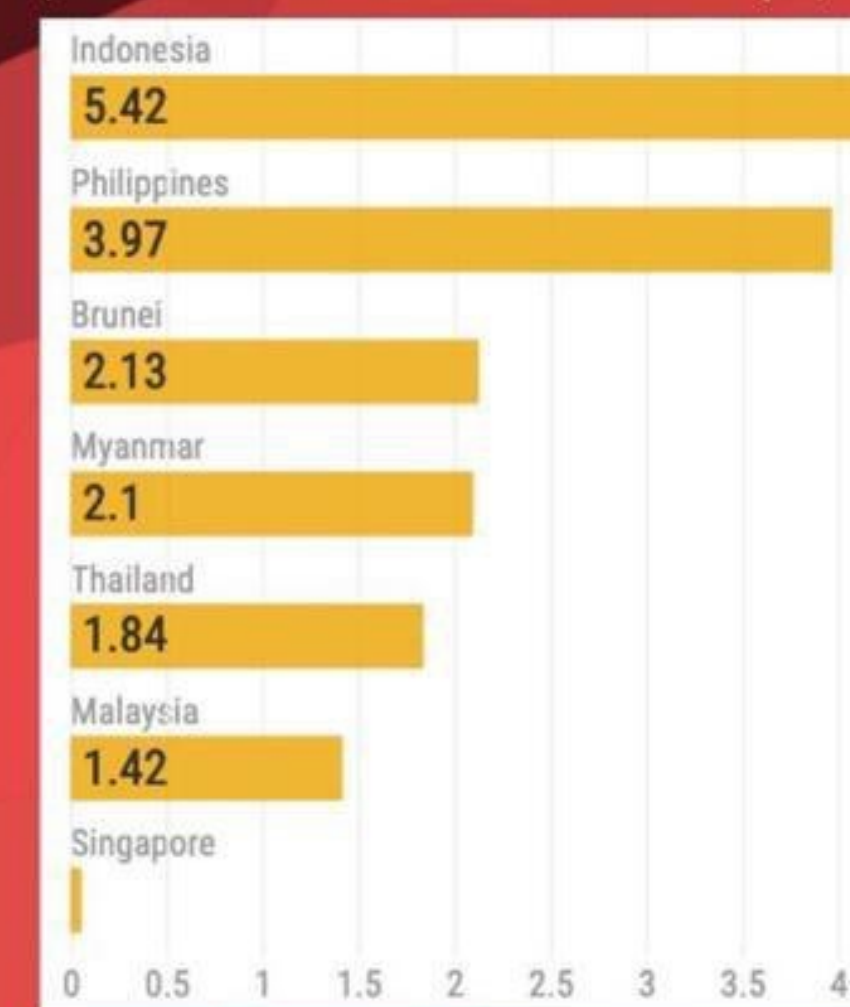
Countries with the most deaths (cumulative)

INDONESIA 2,373
64% OF REGIONAL TOTAL

PHILIPPINES 1,130
30% OF REGIONAL TOTAL

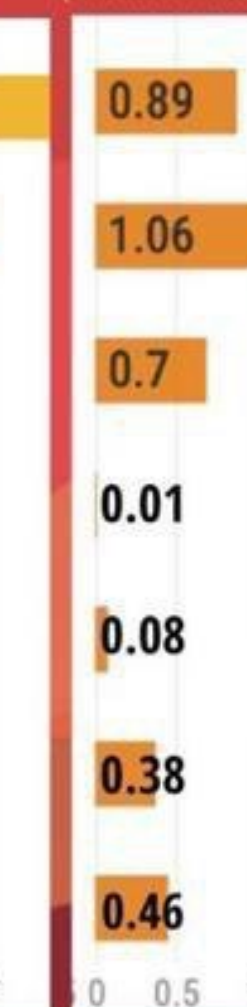
Case-fatality ratio

(deaths divided nr of confirmed cases as of 19 Jun)



Deaths per 100,000 people

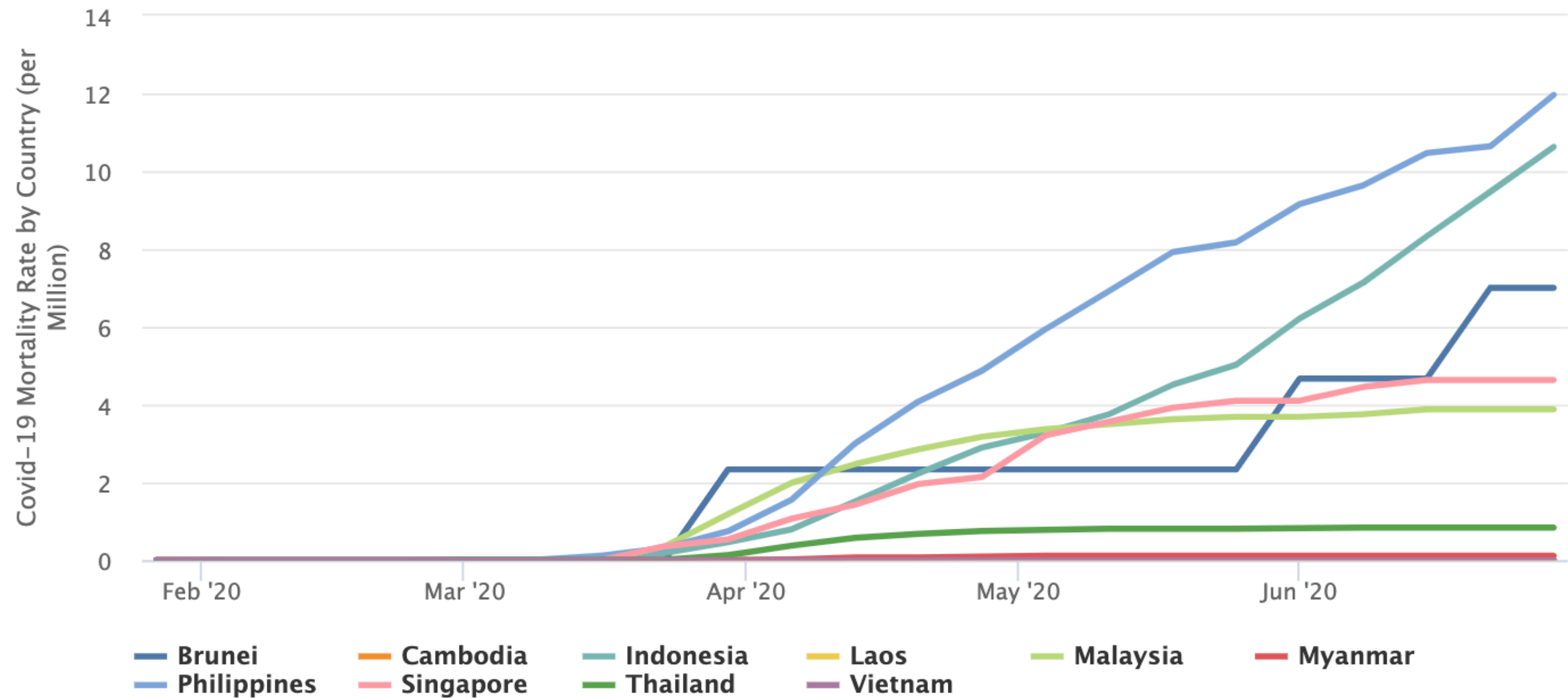
(calculated across general population)



Daily update: <https://bit.ly/COVID-19NumbersinSEA>



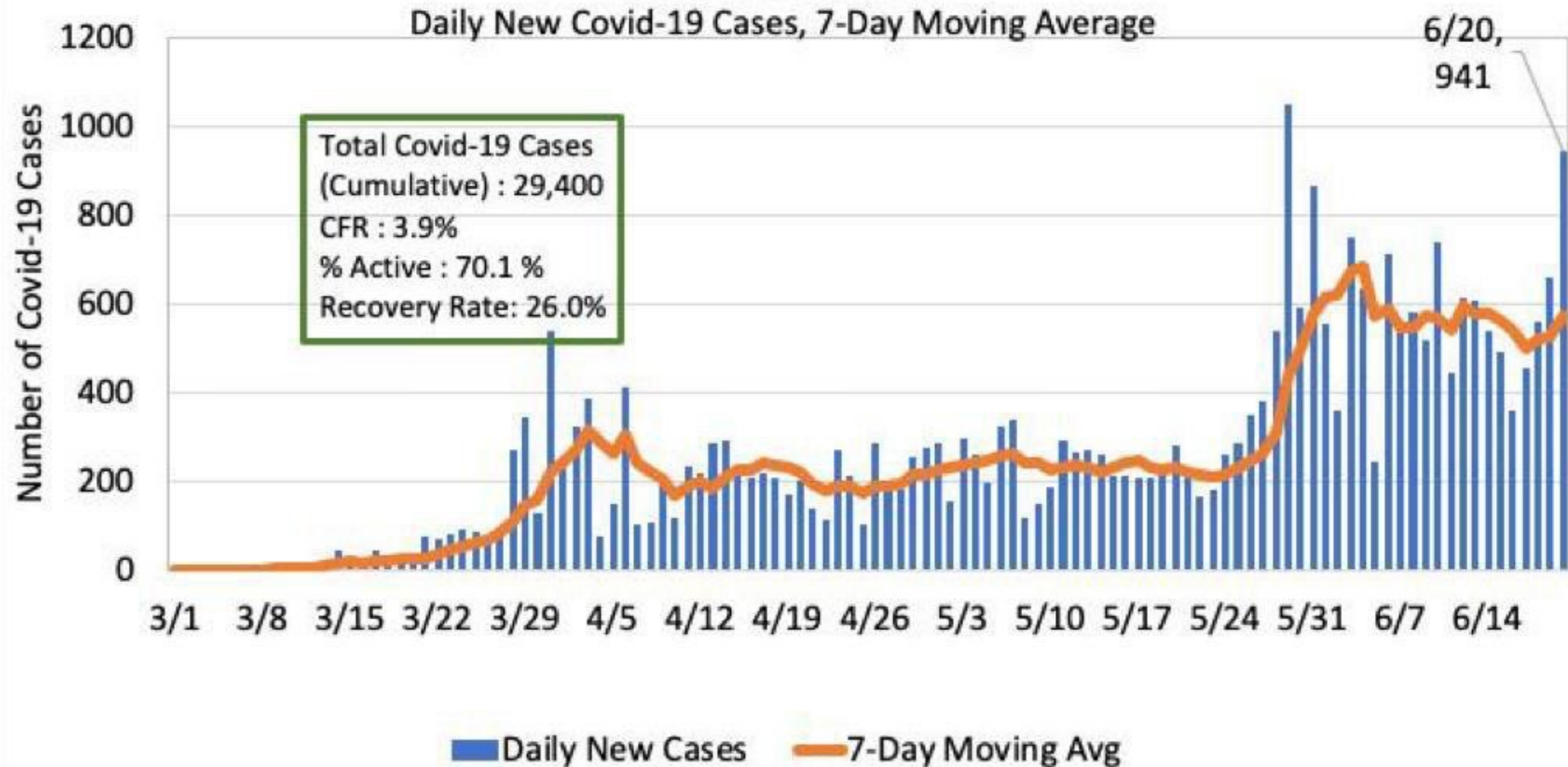
Covid-19 Mortality Rate by Country in Southeast Asia



CSIS Southeast Asia Program | Source: Johns Hopkins University



Philippines
as of June 20, 2020



Successful determinants in **managing a crisis**

➤ In SEA, lessons from the SARS pandemic

➤ Trust in government and leadership

➤ Strong leadership

➤ Capable state

Not whether a country is authoritarian or democratic



Conclusion

- The prevalence of authoritarianism in SEA may not abate; on the contrary, COVID-19 present **an opportunity for its expansion and consolidation.**
- While not due to authoritarianism, the relative success of SEA in containing the pandemic still gives the appearance of the **efficacy of centralized and iron-fisted rule** in responding to a crisis.



Challenge to **liberal democrats**

- **Be aware and vigilant of these developments**, particularly pushing back on attempt by autocrats to exploit the crisis
- **Develop innovative and effective approaches** that highlight the advantages of democratic norms and process in managing a crisis, as seen from the successes of democratic states
- **Address the deeper structural roots**, like inequality, political exclusion and cultural alienation that drive the desperate and marginalized to embrace extreme options





Thank you.

