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Aceh Under Martial Law: Conflict, Violence and Displacement

A collection of papers developed in conjunction with a one-day workshop held on the 20th May 2004 at St. Antony's College, Oxford

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Glossary

ABRI	*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*, Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia. Renamed TNI *(Tentara Nasional Indonesia)* in the post-Suharto period
AGAM	*Angkatan Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*, Forces of the Free Aceh Movement, military wing of GAM. Renamed TNA (*Tentara Negara Aceh)* with the Stavanger Declaration in 2002
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASNLF	Aceh Sumatra National Liberation Front
BAKORNAS PBP	*Badan Koordinasi Nasional Penanganan Bencana dan Pengungsi,* National Coordinating Agency for Management and the Handling of Disaster and Internally Displaced Persons
'Brimob'	paramilitary mobile police brigade units
bupati	administrative head of rural district
camat	administrative head of subdistrict
COHA	Cessation of Hostilities Agreement
DOM	*Daerah Operasi Militer*, Military Operations Zone. Designation for Aceh during the counter-insurgency operations from May 1990 to August 1998
GAM	*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*, Free Aceh Movement Group. Political movement leading Aceh's struggle for independence. Founded in 1976
GoI	Government of Indonesia
HDC	Henri Dunant Center. Geneva-based organisation facilitating the failed peace process in 2000-2003. Later renamed: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
IDPs	internally displaced persons
JSC	Joint Security Committee. A tripartite committee of representatives for the Government of Indonesia, GAM, and international organizations to guard the peace agreement.
Kontras	*Komisi Untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Tindak Kekerasan,* The Commission for Disappearances and Victims of Violence. Indonesian national human rights organisation
Kopassus	*Komando Pasukan Khusus*, Army Special Forces
Kostrad	*Komando Strategis Angkatan Darat,* Army Strategic Reserve Command

LBH	*Lembaga Bantuan Hukum* – Legal Aid Foundation. Indonesian national human rights organisation
Meunasah	small mosque usually found in villages
NAD	*Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam.* The official name for Aceh province introduced with the Special Autonomy Law of 2001
Operasi Terpadu	Integrated Operation (encompassing four operations – including security recovery operations and humanitarian operations) officially launched 19 May 2003
PCC	People's Crisis Center
panglima	Military Commander (GAM)
pengungsi	refugees, the same term is also used to refer to IDPs in Bahasa Indonesia
Pesantren	Islamic religious boarding schools
santri	students
SIRA	*Sentral Informasi Referendum Aceh,* Aceh Referendum Information Center
SMUR	*Solidaritas Mahasiswa untuk Rakyat,* Student Solidarity for the People
suku	designation for ethnic group affiliation in Aceh
TNA	*Tentara Negara Aceh* or Army of the State of Aceh. Current name of the military wing of GAM
TNI	*Tentara Nasional Indonesia.* The Indonesian Armed Forces
ulama	Islamic religious scholars

Introduction

This document presents a collection of papers developed in conjunction with a one-day workshop held on the 20th May 2004 and organised by the Refugee Studies Centre in collaboration with the Asian Studies Centre, St. Antony's College. The workshop focused analysis and debate on the conflict, violence and displacement under martial law in Aceh. Scheduled to coincide with the formal lifting of martial law on 19 May 2004, the workshop brought together academics and practitioners and, thus, a wide range of perspectives and expertise. Obstacles and opportunities for the long-term resolution of this protracted conflict were also explored during the day.

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Map of ACEH, Indonesia

Source: ABC News Online

A State of Emergency, A Strategy of War: Internal Displacement, Forced Relocation, and Involuntary Return in Aceh

Eva-Lotta E. Hedman

On 18 May 2003, at midnight, the Indonesian government under President Megawati Sukarnoputri declared a state of military emergency and martial law in Aceh. Sanctioned by Presidential Decree 23/2003, the largest military campaign since the invasion of East Timor in 1975 was launched on 19 May, with hundreds of Indonesian soldiers parachuting into Aceh on the first day of martial law, and a massive increase in the overall deployment of government troops in the province. In the wake of this, initially highly publicized and formalized, militarist turn of events, Aceh was, in a sense, 'disappeared' into an environment of secrecy and impunity. In addition to grave and widespread human rights violations, including arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, sexual violence, and extra-judicial execution, martial law also featured forced evacuations and involuntary relocation of displaced populations into camps at the hands of the military.

The official downgrading of martial law and military emergency to a state of 'civil emergency' on 19 May 2004, it is widely agreed, did little to improve conditions on the ground in Aceh where military operations continued. And while the Asian tsunami of 26 December 2004, which had its most devastating impact along the western and northwestern coasts of Aceh, prompted the Indonesian government to allow (limited) access for outsiders to the province again, as well as to cease (much) military activity, Jakarta refrained from formally lifting the state of emergency even during the height of this unprecedented humanitarian crisis. Only on 18 May 2005, the anniversary of the declarations of the military (2003) and the civil (2004) emergencies, did President-elect Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono issue Regulation 38/2005, which introduced a new formal framework for so-called 'civil order' and 'adjusted' security operations to replace a state of emergency in Aceh.

It remains to be seen whether this recent shift in Jakarta, in public and formal terms will have a discernible impact on everyday life in Aceh. Clearly, the continued reluctance to reduce government troop levels and to end military activities cannot but cast doubts upon the prospects for demilitarization of politics and society in Aceh. Indeed, the government has stopped short of declaring a ceasefire despite entering into a new round of talks with the leadership of GAM (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka,* Free Aceh Movement), the armed separatist organization, in January 2005. Thus, as lived experience, a state of emergency has lingered on in many parts of Aceh, compounded by the impact of the tsunami in places, for sure, but also of a different, and prior, (dis)order altogether.[1]

Forced displacement of local populations has emerged as an integral aspect of such a state. While conflict and violence in the pre-martial law era also produced flows of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, forced displacement took on added significance with the public declaration of a military emergency and the official launch of *Operasi Terpadu* ('Integrated Operation') on 19 May 2003. This was the first time the Indonesian government publicly announced plans for the mass evacuation of civilian population to form part of counter-insurgency operations in Aceh.[2] As part of the so-called 'humanitarian component' of this massive military crackdown, forced displacement and involuntary relocation thus became officially enshrined in government discourse and military strategy alike.

Prior to martial law, in the early post-Suharto period (1999-2001), an estimated 200,000 people were displaced due to intensified conflict and violence in Aceh (U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR), 2001). According to one report, "the majority of the IDPs

took flight at the rumor or news of killings, disappearances, or arson in neighboring villages" (Buiza and Risser 2003, p.35). There were also numerous accounts of civilians fleeing their homes and villages due to so-called 'sweeping' operations (including roadblocks, house-to-house searches etc.) by the Indonesian military and police during this period (e.g., Amnesty International (AI) 2000; Human Rights Watch (HRW) 2000). There were further indications to suggest that involuntary movement and relocation also featured as a *de facto* tactic of war in Aceh at this time, with IDPs pushed into, variously, the large refugee-camp situations reportedly favored by separatist guerrillas seeking to publicize the conflict, and the mass returns to 'secured' villages under auspices of government troops (HRW 2000).

Observers have also noted distinct patterns and dynamics of forced displacement during this period. On the one hand, the majority Acehnese population in East, North, and West Aceh, who largely remained within the province, typically sought refuge with relatives and in the community (e.g., in public schools, markets or mosques). On the other hand, a large flow of IDPs, mainly Javanese of (former) transmigrant families living in south/central Aceh since the 1960s, instead fled, sometimes with military escort, to North Sumatra, especially to Medan (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) 2003; Buiza and Risser 2003, pp.31-36). At the same time, an exodus of Acehnese from the province sought refuge in other parts of Indonesia or beyond, especially across the Malacca Straits, in Malaysia, only to face considerable risk of arrest, detention and even return to Aceh.[3]

Against this backdrop, and in the wider Indonesian context of an estimated one million people internally displaced due to conflict and violence between 1999-2002, it is perhaps unsurprising that the government in Jakarta focused deliberate attention on the issue of internal displacement in its preparations for martial law. Already, before the declaration of martial law, for example, national government projections of the number of anticipated IDPs due to the impending military campaign in Aceh ranged from 100,000 to 200,000 people. As part of the so-called 'humanitarian component' of this war effort, moreover, early plans for temporary shelters and basic food stuffs were announced for West Aceh, East Aceh, North Aceh, Pidie and Bireun (International Crisis Group (ICG) 2003a, p.5). Once martial law was announced, a reported US$ 48 million (Rp.400 billion) was allocated for this humanitarian component of the military campaign, "including for camps to be prepared for people *deliberately* displaced to protect them from hostilities" (ICG 2003b, p.4, emphasis added).

In the context of murkier operations already well underway by a military mobilizing for full-scale war in Aceh, such public projections of mass displacement by top-ranking civilian government officials in Jakarta thus put local populations on high flight alert (e.g., *Jakarta Post* 17 May 2003; Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) 2003a). In the early phase of martial law, there were numerous reports by local journalists describing mass displacement of civilians, including entire villages, and, within two months of the declared state of military emergency, official government sources put the sum total of IDPs in Aceh at 40,000. By August 2003, the International Office for Migration (IOM) identified a total of thirty-eight camp locations, with a combined population of displaced persons at 24,730. It further estimated some 80,000 returnees from the camps at this time, thus counting a 'grand total' of 104,730 IDPs since the beginning of martial law (IOM 2003). At about the same time, the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) office in Kuala Lumpur recorded a marked surge in registered arrivals of Acehnese asylum seekers in Malaysia, with May showing the highest one-month total of the year. By the end of October 2003, the UNHCR reported a total of 3,757 new such cases, compared with 633 for the entire previous year (HRW 2003a, p.10). Almost a year into martial law, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated that there were more than 100,000

IDPs in North Sumatra, the neighboring province to which Acehnese have been fleeing from conflict and violence in large numbers since 1999 (OCHA 2004).

While difficult to verify, and while allowing for a great deal of fluctuation over time, one recent estimate claims a sum total of 120-150,000 IDPs in Aceh since the declaration of martial law in May 2003 until December 2004 (Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)/Global IDP Project May 2005). This figure, which is considerably higher than official counts based on the IDP registration lists collected by the Indonesian authorities, would seem to make allowance for the displaced who, perhaps out of fear for their safety and property, sought refuge with relatives, in unregistered camps, and/or in the forest (JRS 2003b; People's Crisis Centre (PCC) 2003). Overall, the number of internally displaced persons in Aceh peaked in the early phase of the military emergency, continued to rise and fall in cycles of forced displacement and involuntary return in places, but decreased over time, with official Indonesian government sources counting 6,946 IDPs in June 2004, and the International Office for Migration (IOM 2004) reporting some 1,800 IDPs, all of whom remained in camps, by late December, only days before the Asian tsunami.[4]

In addition to the large-scale internal displacement of the early post-Suharto period, the formulation of the Indonesian government's IDP strategy in Aceh also took place within a wider international context where the 'global war on terror' increasingly redefined the practice of so-called 'humanitarian interventions' that had evolved in the aftermath of the Cold War. As noted by many observers, the American-led invasion of Iraq was a much-cited point of reference for the Indonesian military campaign in Aceh, which also, for example, featured so-called 'embedded journalists.' Surely, it was not lost on the government in Jakarta that Indonesia, the single largest majority Muslim nation-state in the world, and one with democratic institutions of governance in place to boot (*pace* Aceh, and Papua), had a critical role to play in rolling back Islamist influences, whether real or imagined, in this Asian theatre of the 'global war on terror.' In this regard, the parachute stunt that announced the onset of martial law in Aceh, allegedly home to the most piously and historically rebellious of Muslim populations in Indonesia, signaled to the world that Jakarta was 'serious about terrorism,' in all its myriad manifestations.

Against this backdrop, it is perhaps as unsurprising that the government in Jakarta declared a 'humanitarian component' to include planned mass evacuations of civilians with the declaration of martial law in Aceh, as it is that Indonesian security forces failed to meet the obligations to protect such populations in accordance with principles established under international human rights and humanitarian law. Indeed, whether in its conception or execution, there is evidence to suggest that displacement of civilian populations in Aceh under martial law was in breach of international customary law. According to the Geneva Conventions, "displacement of the civilian population shall not be ordered for reasons related to the conflict unless the security of the civilians involved or imperative military reasons so demand" (Protocol II, Article 17).

A quick glance at the 'public transcript' on planned evacuations in Aceh during martial law, however, cannot but raise serious doubts as to the primary objective of such displacement in the minds of ranking Indonesian civilian and military officials alike. For example, the secretary to Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, then the coordinating minister for political and security affairs, offered the following commentary on the planned evacuations: "First we will ask the women and children to leave their houses. Then, we will ask unarmed men to do the same. The rest who stay behind must be those with arms."[5] The commander of the Armed Forces of Indonesia at the time, General Endriartono Sutriarto, provided further testimony as to the 'first priority' of the planned evacuations: "Our first priority is to separate GAM from the people, because we don't want any people to get hurt. If we have to move

them to win this war, we will, but that's a last resort."[6] Finally, once martial law was implemented, Colonel Ditya Sudarsono, spokesman for the martial law administrator, publicly stated that if civilians in Aceh refused to cooperate with government troops in vacating homes "as part of security operations to distinguish them from GAM rebels… that means that they are protecting GAM and that makes them GAM members or its supporters [sic]."[7]

The manner in which planned evacuations were carried out by Indonesian security forces also left much to be desired. That is, there were reports of TNI (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia,* the Armed Forces of Indonesia) soldiers or 'Brimob' (paramilitary mobile police brigade units) troops arriving in villages, issuing orders of immediate evacuation, without allowing for any pre-departure preparations. Similarly, evacuated villagers have told of military visitations to their homes with orders for them to leave "or they would be considered members of GAM" (AI 2004, p.11).

Reports on conditions in the camps to which many IDPs were brought by military escort further point to violations of international humanitarian law under the martial law regime in Aceh. As stated by the Geneva Convention, in the event of displacement, "all possible measures shall be taken in order that the civilian population may be received under satisfactory conditions of shelter, hygiene, health, safety and nutrition" (Protocol II, Article 17). According to several reports, however, there was insufficient provision for drinking water and sanitation in the camps, as well as a lack of food supplies and medical services (e.g., Eye on Aceh 2004; JRS 2003c; JRS 2004).

There is also concern that the Indonesian authorities have failed to uphold their duty and responsibility to assist IDPs in Aceh with their voluntary and safe return or resettlement elsewhere, as outlined in the U.N. Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (Principle 15). Reports have indicated that the forced return to villages feared unsafe was not uncommon for IDPs who had been relocated to official camps by the Indonesian military (AI 2004; JRS 2004). This practice, in evident violation of international humanitarian law, contributed to the further displacement of civilian populations during martial law in Aceh. In some cases, one report noted, entire camps were closed down by the authorities, thus forcing IDPs "into new displacement outside camps without [any] support from the government" (JRS 2004). There was also a widespread pattern of IDPs returning to their homes only to find evidence of looting and other damage to property, in some cases including the torching of entire houses and the disappearance of livestock (ICG 2003b; JRS 2004). One estimate indicated that, by April 2004, some 26,000 houses had been torched, not including school buildings (IOM 2004).

Despite the Ministry of Social Welfare's declared program to provide funds to facilitate the return of registered camp IDPs, moreover, reports have pointed to numerous cases where returnees have received little to nothing of such official assistance in Aceh (NRC/Global IDP Project 2005). Of course, the government practice of providing monies to returnees has had wider implications, as such assistance have required IDPs, in other parts of Indonesia too, to sign away any further displacement-related claims or, arguably, rights before cashing in on such a deal. Thus, precisely at the moment when they have received formal recognition, as 'IDPs,' they have been effectively displaced from official Indonesian government records and thus also virtually 'disappeared' as 'people of concern' to national '*pengungsi'* (refugee/IDP) agencies and international refugee organizations alike.

Finally, the restrictions imposed upon the freedom of movement under martial law were further violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. According to the Guiding Principles, internally displaced persons have "the right to seek safety in another part

of the country [and…] to leave their country" (Principle 15). As noted in numerous accounts, however, the practices associated with checkpoints, roadblocks and so-called 'sweeping' operations by the Indonesian military and para-military police under martial law posed severe threats to such rights. The "layers of checkpoints" along the internal border between Aceh and North Sumatra, for example, required "those seeking refuge in the neighboring province… to submit travel documents and their identity cards."[8]

In short, martial law signaled a new round of armed conflict in Aceh during which internal, indeed forced, displacement of civilian populations emerged as a deliberate strategy of war. As a result, the Indonesian authorities have failed, on several grounds, to ensure adequate provisions for the protection and safety of IDPs during martial law, whether at the point of evacuation, encampment, or return. As indicated above, such failures cannot merely be put down to lack of discipline, training or resources on the part of implementing military or para-military forces. Instead, the so-called 'Integrated Operation' launched with the declaration of martial law and military emergency featured the deliberate and systematic relocation of civilian populations into camps without putting into place mechanisms to ensure the protection and safety of internally displaced persons and their property. Indeed, the so-called 'humanitarian component' of this Integrated Operation was invoked by the Indonesian authorities as evidence that international humanitarian assistance, which may have contributed to identifying and strengthening such mechanisms, would not be required during martial law in Aceh. In the changing security context after 9/11, the government in Jakarta thus embarked upon a strategy of war, which, in part, relied upon practices not unlike 'hamleting,' or the forcible relocation of entire populations into designated 'villages' or camps, familiar from another dark era of counter-insurgency campaigns in Southeast Asia.

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[1] On the notion of 'disorder' in Aceh, see especially Robinson 1998.

[2] While the declaration of martial law ushered in the largest military campaign since the invasion of East Timor in 1976, it was hardly the first such operation in Aceh. The period 1989-1998 counted Jaring Merah Operation I-VIII, commonly known as DOM *(Daerah Operasi Militer)*, followed by Wibawa Operation I-II (1998-1999), Sadar Rencong Operation I-III (1999-2000), Cinta Meunasah Operation I-III (2000-2001), and Law and Order Rehabilitation Operation I-II (2001-2002).

[3] Note that Malaysia is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention; Acehnese face detention, and even, in violation of international law prohibiting *refoulement*, return. There is also evidence that, within Indonesia, especially in Jakarta and Bandung, Acehnese have been singled out for special registration and surveillance by local government officials acting on instructions from Jakarta (*Jakarta Post* 16 June 2003; *Kompas* 24 June 2003).

[4] At this writing, there is an estimated 700,000 IDPs in ninety-five locations in Aceh, at least 100,000 of whom are thought to be children.

[5] Lieutenant General Sudi Silalahi, Secretary to Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (cited in Sukma 2004, p.26). Indonesia's Minister of Social Affairs reportedly also declared: "We are waiting for an order from the military administration. Should they want to comb a certain area, we will move people from their homes" (cited in Human Rights Watch 2003d).

[6] General Endriartono Sutarto, the commander of Indonesia's armed forces, also publicly stated that hundreds of thousands of Acehnese may be forced from their homes and interned in camps.

[7] Statement made to reporters on 3 June 2003 (cited in Human Rights Watch 2003d).

[8] International Council of Voluntary Associations 5 September 2003, cited in NRC/Global IDP Project, 2005p.43.

Modes of Displacement During Martial Law

Ali Aulia Ramly

Introduction

The Government of Indonesia declared Martial Law status in Aceh on 19 May 2003, shortly after the break up of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA). During Martial Law, the government launched the 'Integrated Operation' (*Operasi Terpadu*), including 'security recovery and humanitarian operations.' While the security operation aimed to 'crush' the armed separatist Free Aceh Movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* – GAM), the humanitarian operation was designed to deal with the displacement and casualties caused by the conflict.

More than 123,000 peoples were displaced during the implementation of Martial Law. There were peoples who were ordered to leave their villages, part of the strategy used by the security authority to separate civilians and GAM. Others fled from their villages due to the threats to their lives. Some only had to stay in camps for a short period while some had to live for long periods in such refugee camps.

The dynamic of displacement during Martial Law was different compared to the period of early democratisation in Indonesia (1999-2002). This paper aims to provide a better understanding of the dynamics of displacement, which, in turn, also reflected something of the broader patterns of the conflict. The information used for this paper was collected mainly from direct interviews and observations in the field, as well as from local newspapers. Whenever possible, the accuracy of newspaper reports were cross-checked with local humanitarian workers, as local media remained under tight scrutiny from Martial Law authorities.

The demography of Aceh

To review the dynamics of displacement in relation to the conflict, this paper starts with a brief description of the demography of Aceh province (*Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam*). In general, the conflict in Aceh tends to be seen as a vertical conflict between the state (represented in particular by the TNI, the Indonesian Armed Forces) and the rebel movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* – GAM). What often remains overlooked is the extent to which the ongoing armed conflict has raised tension and conflict among some ethnic groups in Aceh.

Aceh consists of several ethnic groups. The Acehnese can be found in the coastal areas, mainly on the eastern and northern coasts of Aceh in Greater Aceh, Pidie, Bireun, North Aceh and East Aceh districts as well as in West and South Aceh. The Gayonese and Alas people live in the highlands in Central Aceh, stretching to the western borders of North Sumatra. The Gayonese and Alas trace their roots to the Karo and Dairi, ethnic groups residing in North Sumatra. The Kluet, who also have ties to the Karo, can be found mainly in the hinterlands of South Aceh. Also in South Aceh, the Aneuk Jamee, with a close relation to the Minang of West Sumatra, live on the coast with the Acehnese. The number of Javanese migrants is also high, particularly before the eruption of the current conflict in 1999. Many Javanese came to Aceh as part of a transmigration programme during the Suharto's era (1966-1998).

In a similar attempt at mapping ethnic and geographic variations across Aceh, one author has identified three parts of the province (upper, central, and lower) as characterized by notable socio-cultural differences (Nurhasim et al 2003). In this vein, the upper part, for example, is described as an open area due to its proximity to the coast. Here, people have

been shaped by many influences as this region was the old route for international trade. More generally, there appears to be a correlation between the concentration of Acehnese among the population, the presence of GAM, and the popular support enjoyed by GAM in this northern, coastal part of Aceh.

Table 1. GAM Area

Area	GAM Personnel	Arms	Popular Support for GAM
Greater Aceh	275	170	20 %
Pidie	2,385	427	22 %
North Aceh	1,316	889	30 %
East Aceh	827	344	29 %
Central Aceh	86	79	0.1 %
West Aceh	222	113	13 %
South Aceh	89	57	20 %

Taken from Nurhasim, et al. 2003.
Original source of this table is Media Indonesia, 23 April 2003.

Displacement during Martial Law

During the implementation of Martial Law, more than 123,000 people in sixteen districts were displaced. They sought refuge in internally displaced persons' (IDP) camps prepared by the Martial Law authorities. There are two main modes of displacement during Martial Law: evacuation by the Indonesian security forces or more spontaneous movement by people fleeing, or fearing, conflict and violence.

Table 2. District and number of IDPs

District	Total Households	Total IDPs
Banda Aceh City	156	779
Greater Aceh	586	2,929
Pidie	818	3,472
Bireun	4,081	20,333
North Aceh	4,395	20,894
East Aceh	3,687	15,225
Langsa City	71	248
Tamiang	1,272	6,056
Central Aceh	941	3,543
Aceh Jaya	2,964	11,290

West Aceh	1,728	8,046
Nagan Raya	293	1,031
Aceh Barat Daya	191	1,247
South Aceh	7,088	26,999
West Aceh	191	1,247
Singkil	271	1,159
Aceh Tenggara	79	368
Total	**28,812**	**124,866**

Source: Satkorlak NAD, data as of 13 February 2004.[1]

Evacuation

In the beginning of Martial Law, the military often ordered villagers to leave their villages so that the military could go after suspected GAM bases. The process was part of the TNI's anti-guerilla strategy against GAM, aiming to separate the civilian population from GAM fighters.

Displacement caused by military orders occurred especially in GAM stronghold areas. By mid-June, more than 15,000 persons from Juli sub-district, Bireun, were ordered to an IDP camp at Cot Gapu at a time when the military were conducting high profile attacks against the base of Darwis Jeunib, GAM Military Commander of the Batee Ilek area. A week later, people from Laweung village, in Muara Tiga sub-district, Pidie, were evacuated to Keunire camp. By the end of June, villagers from Seumirah, Alue Papeun and Alue Dua in Nisam subdistrict, North Aceh, were suddenly told to evacuate themselves to Cot Murong. The army sent in fifteen large trucks and ten smaller pickups to transport 4,500 people from these villages. The security forces also moved 119 *santri* (students) from Raudhatul Ulum, a *pesantren,* or Islamic religious boarding school, in Kuala Batee sub-district to the Persada Field camp in Blang Pidie sub-district, Aceh Barat Daya.[2] Having captured the principal of this school as a suspected GAM supporter, Indonesian soldiers then moved the students away, allegedly to protect the *pesantren* from guerrilla revenge attacks. In August 2003, security authorities moved 460 people from Siron Blang and Siron Krueng villages, both GAM strongholds in Greater Aceh.

The military strategy of evacuating people caused the number of people displaced by the conflict to shift constantly as some people were allowed to go home while others were ordered to leave their villages. A main characteristic of this strategy was that it made for relatively short periods of displacement. For example, the peoples of Siron Blang and Siron Krueng (Greater Aceh) could return to their villages after one week in the IDP camp. People from Sawang (North Aceh), Tiro (Pidie), and Juli (Bireun) spent about two to five weeks in the camps.

In Aceh Jaya and West Aceh, the TNI also evacuated villagers, particularly between June and August 2003. In Kaway XVI and Meurebo sub-districts (West Aceh) more than 6,000 people from several villages were moved to Alue Penyareng camp. In Aceh Jaya, 6,600 people from Panga, Sampoinet, and Krueng Sabee were moved to Kuala Mersi camp. Most of the IDPs in Aceh Jaya and West Aceh could return within two weeks although some 2,000 other people in Aceh Jaya and about 1,000 in West Aceh had to stay in the camps for more than three months. However, even when people left the camps, some reports showed that

many were not able to return to their villages, as the returnees still had grave concerns about security.

Flight and fear

While the majority of people in Greater Aceh, Pidie, Bireun, and North Aceh were moved by the military to camps, most of the displacements in Nagan Raya and South Aceh were made spontaneously in response to intimidation and threats to life.

In the first week of June 2003, some 5,800 peoples from thirteen villages in Samadua sub-districts, South Aceh, sought refuge with other villages and families. In addition, 1,300 persons in this region had been displaced a week before the declaration of Martial Law and the launching of a massive military campaign in Aceh by the Indonesian government. Unidentified armed groups burnt their houses and intimidated the local people, who are mostly of Aneuk Jamee descent and live in rural areas. By mid-June 2003, the number of IDPs in South Aceh had reached some 12,000, with additional displaced people from Sawang (1,314), Tapak Tuan (362), Pasie Raja (1,818), Kluet Tengah (386), Kluet Timur (485), Bakongan (740), Trumon (691), and Labuan Haji Timur (606). In early August 2003, more than 2,300 people from eleven villages in Trumon sought refuge at four IDP sites. By early September 2003, there were a total of 5,340 IDPs in West and East Trumon sub-districts.

The main reason for all of these displacements was intimidation from GAM. The IDPs were also afraid of being caught in the middle of armed clashes between government and rebel forces. In Nagan Raya, for example, 800 people from four villages ran for their lives and sought refuge in Ujung Fatehah camp in June 2003, when GAM kidnapped and killed a villager. Most of the people targeted by GAM in this vein were Javanese transmigrants. From mid-2001 to December 2002, they were also displaced when GAM ordered them to leave the villages. In early August 2003, 400 people from Baharu, Blang Pidie sub-district, Aceh Barat Daya, sought refuge in a camp. They were afraid of the armed clashes between the security forces and GAM, as well as of threats from GAM, which did not allow them to conduct their regular neighbourhood watch.

There were many other instances of displacements due to fear of armed conflict elsewhere, such as in Tamiang, East Aceh and Bireun. In early June, a total of 4,356 persons from Seruway sub-district (Tamiang) spread into Sungai Yu and Seruway camps. Some of the IDPs had been displaced after their houses were burnt by unidentified persons in early May, while the rest were afraid of the armed clashes. More than 600 people from Buket Seulamak village, Bireum Bayun sub-district (East Aceh), sought refuge to avoid terror in early June 2003. In September 2003, 725 peoples from *Hutan Tanaman Industri* (Plantation, HTI) from Simpang Jernih, East Aceh, also left their village because they did not feel secure. Unlike elsewhere, IDPs from HTI moved to their families' houses rather than to camps and, as a result, the government only learned about their displacement much later, in December 2003. By the end of June 2003, 517 people from Tanjong Mulia village-Makmur sub-district fled to Blang Asan, Peusangan sub-district (Bireun) on their own initiative. They were afraid of the armed clashes taking place in their village.

Interestingly, the *keuchik* (village head) tended to be especially vulnerable to displacement due to fear. Reports showed that 57 *keuchik* from rural areas in Meuredu, Murah Dua, Jangka, Peusangan, Makmur (in Pidie and Bireun) moved to stay in other villages of sub-district cities instead of in their own villages. In West Aceh, 124 *keuchik* from five sub-districts moved to Meulaboh city (capital city of West Aceh). The reasons were similar, either

avoiding ‘taxation’ by GAM or escaping a situation wherein neutrality no longer seemed possible as each party to the conflict suspected an allegiance to the other.

While the people who are moved to the camps by the military tend to stay in the camps for short periods, IDPs who leave their villages because of fear tend to stay longer. At the time of writing, the IDPs in Nagan Raya have been refugees since June 2003. Only a few were able to return to their village in February 2004, soon after the military built a post in that village. The IDPs from Tapak Tuan and Pasie Raja sub-districts in South Aceh still remained in the camp three months after having been forced to flee their villages in September 2003. They did not want to return because they could not work, as the security situation did not allow them to work.

Assistance and protection

Displacements were expected by the Indonesian government as it authorized the declaration of Martial Law. Indeed, the authorities had prepared nineteen camps in eleven districts for people deliberately displaced, ostensibly to ‘protect them from hostilities.’ A total of Rp. 180 billion (c. US$ 21 million) have been allocated for dealing with IDP problems, further allocations were also to be drawn from Rp. 400 billion (some US$ 48 million) towards the ‘Humanitarian Operation.’ The preparations were varied, and some have been woefully inadequate while a few were above international standard. Journalists have covered the plight of thousands of displaced persons who found themselves in camps in Cot Gapu (Bireun), Birem Bayeun (North Aceh), Ujung Fatehah (Nagan Raya), and Lhok Bengkoang (South Aceh), with inadequate drinking water, sanitation, and shelter. When people fell ill, medical services in the area were not able to respond to the need. In Alue Penyareng camp (West Aceh), IDPs stayed in an abandoned housing compound. The camp coordinator in Alue Penyareng encouraged the involvement of the IDPs in managing their camp, while in other camps the participation of IDPs was often denied.

In most cases of displacement, the authorities would arrange so that an entire group displaced from a single village flocked into one camp. The reasons for this were to ease the distribution of assistance and control over the displaced. This approach, however, broke the traditional mechanism for people facing difficulties during displacement. Over the preceding years, people would chose to either seek refuge in the camps or to join their families in other villages. The rule imposed by the authorities during Martial Law did not allow people any choice. The rules which limit the movement of the people once they are in a camp meant that people were not allowed to find temporary work to support their families, nor to see to their land and cattle.

The displaced did not only face difficulties when they were in the camps. In most cases, people returned to their homes only to find everything had gone: their livestock, their televisions, their furniture. It remains unclear who took their belongings.

Limitations put in force affecting the work of humanitarian workers, as expressed through the Presidential Decision No. 43/2003, might have contributed to the suffering of the people. Through that Presidential Decision, any activities by Indonesian or foreign NGOs that might run counter to the aims of the Martial Law administration were banned. All humanitarian assistance had to be coordinated by the Coordinating Minister for People’s Welfare. As a result, international organizations chose to decrease their work in Aceh, or even moved all their activities to North Sumatra.

Comparison: Displacement in 1999-2002 and during COHA

During 1999-2002, armed clashes and fighting, destruction and burning of public buildings as well as homes and other livelihood structures were common in Aceh. All of these led to mass displacements. The particular characteristics of the displacement in 1999 to 2002 within Aceh were that these tended to be short-term and localized but recurring, marked by a sudden increase of IDPs whenever clashes occured and a sudden decrease of IDPs when the fighting has subsided. Over this period of three years, people from some villages might have been displaced two or three times. The IDPs sought refuge in mosques, schools, universities and other public buildings close to their homes during displacement, particularly alongside the two main roads running along the north and east coasts, and along the south and west coasts. Some chose to stay with their families in other villages. In most cases, people anticipated the threats to their lives when military/police and GAM were fighting around their areas and moved to other villages.

The highest number of displacements occurred between May 1999 and April 2000, when some 160,000-180,000 people were displaced.[3] The five main areas of displacement within Aceh were North Aceh, East Aceh, Central Aceh, West Aceh, and Aceh Pidie.

During the 1999-2000 crisis, the average length of stay of IDPs in the various sites varied from a minimum of six to a maximum of 43 days. In 2001, people from some villages had to stay away from their homes for up to six months, due to the destruction of their houses and loss of their assets (animals and crops). Until the end of 2002, people from villages such as Alu Ie Mirah, East Aceh, had remained in the IDP sites for almost two years.

There is a different story for the IDPs from Central Aceh. Subsequent to the conflict in Bandar sub-districts in mid 2001, many Acehnese from Central Aceh fled from their lands and stayed with their families in Pidie and Bireun. Some sought refuge in North Aceh. The Gayonese and a number of Javanese have also left their lands and spread into other areas in Central Aceh, mainly in Takengon, the capital city of Central Aceh. Loss of property, the poor security situation and horizontal conflicts do not allow them to return.

Since 1999, thousands of Javanese transmigrants fled Aceh, mostly to the neighbouring province of North Sumatra. The biggest number of such displacements occurred in 2001. Javanese from many parts of Aceh returned to Java or went to other provinces. According to the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, in September 2002 there were about 177, 598 IDPs outside Aceh. They mostly sought refuge in North Sumatra (122,265 persons), Central Java, East Java, Riau, West Java, and Jambi.[4] Only a small number of Javanese sought refuge within Aceh.

The peaceful situation during COHA (December 2002-April 2003) allowed some people to return home, although it did not stop new displacements occurring also. An estimated 1,700 people from Bagok, East Aceh and Simpang Kramat-North Aceh had to leave their homes on the very same day as the signing of COHA. A similar situation happened in Kaway XVI (West Aceh), Arongan (Aceh Jaya), as well as Samadua and Sawang (South Aceh). People became concerned about their safety as the instalment of new military or police posts provoked armed clashes between GAM and the TNI/Brimob. People had to run for their lives, and requested the government to dismiss or move the posts. Similarly armed clashes forced more than 2,000 people to flee Juli sub-district and to seek refuge in Bireun for a week in March. However, several NGO activists were concerned that GAM were forcing people to flee their homes in order to put pressure on the Joint Security Committee (JSC) to demobilise military posts in this area.

Conclusions

The ongoing conflict under Martial Law evoked a new kind of displacement: evacuation of villagers to camps. While the military authorities may have a right to carry out such evacuations, they are required to do so in accordance with international humanitarian laws. Accordingly, such measures should be resorted to only as a last resort and with adequate provisions in place for proper evacuation procedures. In particular, the rights of the IDPs just be respected, and obligations to provide protection fulfilled.

This paper has highlighted the modes of recent displacements in Aceh, and, in particular, variations across different parts of the province upper, central, and lower Aceh. A brief review of the demographic situation in Aceh also suggested that regional differences may also shape the type of conflict – between the Indonesian security forces and GAM, as well as among ethnic groups in Aceh.

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[1] Weekly statistics table distributed by International Organization for Migration (IOM) Banda Aceh to United Nations agencies and NGOs in Aceh. Present table reformulated taking only the figures for District, Households, and Total IDPs.

[2] Aceh Barat Daya is a newly established district, previously part of South Aceh.

[3] Rough estimation provided by OXFAM-GB and quoted in UN Appeal 2002. Other data provided by the Head of Bureau of Nation's Unity and People's Protection, Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam Province, 9 April 2003 mentioned that in 1999 alone, an estimated 200,000 persons were forced to seek refuge in mosques, public buildings and IDP camps following an intensification of the conflict. By the end of the year, most IDPs had returned and only a few hundred remained displaced. Koalisi NGO HAM (Coalition of Human Rights NGO in Aceh) mentioned in its 1999 report that from February to December 1999, a cumulative number of 300,000 people had been displaced.

[4] Data from the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, on September 2002.

The Rootedness of Rebellion: Aceh in the Grip of the Past

Tim Kell

> In Aceh, the almost forgotten stalemate between the government and the [rebel] forces again attracted attention from the outside world when the local newspaper, *Peristiwa*, carried the headline, "A Flood of Blood Washes the Land of Rencong", in early March. The newspaper reported that almost one hundred villagers in Great Aceh *kabupaten* had been slaughtered by an army battalion in two incidents at the end of February …. The first incident had occurred on 26 February, when an angry platoon of the West Sumatran 142nd battalion had indiscriminately shot dead some twenty-five peasants at Cot Jeumpa … This was followed by another atrocity in a nearby village, Pulot, two days later when the same battalion massacred sixty-four fishermen, ranging in age from eleven to one hundred years, and wounded five others. It was also reported that in the two massacres the soldiers entered the two villages and gathered all male members of the families either from their houses or at their work and then slaughtered them without questioning … The fact was that the massacre was an act of revenge for a [rebel] ambush against a unit of the 142nd battalion a few days earlier near the two villages, in which fifteen Minangkabau soldiers were killed. Resenting the harassment, another unit of the same battalion … had gathered all the men in the villages and murdered them. Considering the cruelty of the Minangkabau and Batak units operating in Aceh, there is little reason to doubt that the massacre had occurred. Many members of the West Sumatran units had been involved in almost all kinds of atrocity, from rape, blackmail, robbery, gambling, and torture to killing.

This depressingly familiar account invites us to play a guessing game as to the year in which these events occurred. Might it have been 2002, or perhaps 1991, or even 1977? The answer is in fact 1955, and for the bracketed word 'rebel' substitute not 'Free Aceh Movement (GAM),' but 'Darul Islam.'

Unsurprisingly, a lot has changed in Indonesia and Aceh in the nearly forty years between the appalling events described above by Sjamsuddin (1985) and the publication in 1995 of my study, *The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion, 1989-1992*. Further, in the ten years since I completed the work, a great deal more has changed. Then, Suharto's New Order regime seemed secure, and the transition to democracy that occurred five years later hardly imaginable. With the arrival of democracy, however, one started to imagine all sorts of things – not least that the atrocities so familiar in Aceh might finally come to a halt, and a permanent settlement be found to end the long-standing and justified grievances of its people. Surely this was what democracy was all about? This idea did not seem so fantastic in the light of the freeing of East Timor in 1999 – another development that had been unimaginable only five years before. Of course, there were crucial differences in the Aceh situation, and independence from Indonesia would not necessarily be the outcome. Despite the Indonesian army's scorched earth policy in response to the 'loss' of East Timor, there was still hope that democracy would bring with it a resolution to the situation in Aceh.

How wrong these assumptions were. There has been yet more quite striking change in the Aceh situation since 1998-1999, including the advent of sustained talks between GAM and the Indonesian government – something that would not have been seen in the last GAM-led period of rebellion in the early 1990s. However, the overall picture has been one of repetition of past patterns and practices – and, indeed, mistakes – and the continued upholding

of old sets of principles. Now, though, events are on a grander and more lethal scale than ever before.

While it is undoubtedly the case that "[t]oday the extreme alienation that underpins the GAM insurgency is largely a reaction to the policies and behavior of the Suharto regime," (Aspinall and Crouch 2003, p.5) it is also the case that those policies and the associated behaviour – and the make up of the Acehnese reaction – are not attributable solely to the ways of the New Order. Rather, there are common threads in what we have seen happening in Aceh before, during, and since that period. In that sense, Aceh might be said to be 'in the grip of the past.' Of course, to give history its due is to state the obvious, but, arguably, the degree to which the past exerts its grip on the present is variable – and in Aceh that grip is a very tight one indeed, with far-reaching implications in terms of human rights and, overall, the political and economic future of its people.

In this paper, I examine some of the historical continuities that exert a grip on the Aceh 'question' – threads that originate at the international level, and at Indonesian and Acehnese levels.

The international *status quo*

The most enduring (and the key) determinant of the 'national question' in Aceh and Indonesia is not in the gift of the contending sides (nor indeed of their intermediaries) to change. It is, of course, the prevailing international doctrine of state sovereignty, and of the inviolability of the borders inherited by independent states from their colonial predecessors. In spite of the emergence of new approaches – associated with globalisation and belief in universal human rights – that serve to undermine this doctrine, it provides the framework (and a firmly rooted one) in which the contending sides must operate, and within which ideas of self-determination are confined (Aspinall 2002a, pp.6-9). Proponents of Acehnese independence seek to harness the principle of state sovereignty to their cause, (Aspinall 2002a, pp.12-17) but, with international acceptance of Indonesian sovereignty over the former colonial territories of the Dutch East Indies (including Aceh) – and with "the international consensus [continuing] to deny a generalized right of secession" (Aspinall 2002a, p.7) – it is Indonesia that has the upper hand in the international arena.

It is the existence and durability of these principles that gives the lie to comparisons between Aceh and East Timor, which, unlike Aceh, was never considered internationally to be properly part of the sovereign state of Indonesia.[1] It also helps explain why Aceh, and the suffering visited upon its people, is so little known about in places like the UK – again, unlike East Timor. Experience elsewhere in the world shows that secession is not beyond the realms of possibility, but where this has happened it has "almost always [been] with the consent of the states involved" (Aspinall 2002a, p.7). Events since May 2003 have shown, in no uncertain terms, that Indonesia is not about to provide such consent for Aceh.

Indonesian nationalism

The lasting grip of Indonesian nationalism on Aceh is apparent from the military 'invasion' launched in May 2003 with the blessing of President Megawati Sukarnoputri, and from subsequent events. Since the implementation of martial law, we have seen the introduction of background screening (or *litsus*, 'special screening') and associated loyalty testing of civil servants; the introduction of new 'Red and White' identity cards for the entire population; mass, forced participation in the taking of oaths of loyalty to the Indonesian state; and forced

displaying of the Indonesian flag (International Crisis Group 2003b, pp.2-4; Sukma 2004, p.28).

Such extreme manifestations of nationalist ideology ('extreme' not least because of their obvious unpopularity among a population whose hostility to the Indonesian state had been clear to see in the preceding few years), and the underlying and unyielding belief that Aceh belongs in the Indonesian fold, come as no surprise when we peruse the post-independence history of Indonesia. Adherence to this ideology, and to the territorial integrity of the Indonesian state, is an unbreakable thread (only broken in the case of East Timor because of the lack of international legality and legitimacy to Indonesia's claim on the territory). The army may be (and always has been) the most belligerent arbiter of the state's integrity, but most elements of the post-independence polity likewise have been unshakeable in their nationalist belief. Just as in the 1950s "[a]ll currents of Indonesian opinion were united in demanding that the last remnant of Holland's East Indies empire [West Irian] be ceded to the new Republic" (and the Indonesian Communist Party [PKI] was as wedded as any other force to the radical nationalist stance) (Mortimer 1974, p.176), so too have we now seen a democratically elected post-New Order government presiding over the military's "biggest offensive since the invasion of East Timor in 1975" (Sukma 2004, p.22) – in the name of preventing the secession of another element of that 'empire' (Aceh). What is more, the observation that "the legitimacy of the … operation [launched in May 2003] is enhanced by strong support from the parliament, all political leaders, *and the non-Acehnese Indonesian public at large*," (Sukma 2004, p.23, emphasis added)[2] further underlines the grip that Indonesian nationalist thinking continues to have on the Aceh question.

Indonesian military (TNI) interests

Military protectiveness of Indonesian national unity and territorial integrity is a thread that runs through from the beginning of independence to the present day. But it is more than nationalist ideology that has motivated the military – and that has exerted a grip on the situation in Aceh. I refer here to the Indonesian army's substantial interest in economic and other pecuniary activity – another thread that we see running through from the 'Old Order' (the Sukarno regime of 1945-1967) to the present.

The army's interest in supplementing what it receives in official budgetary allocations has existed since the 1950s, when inadequate government funding left it ill equipped to carry out its functions. Consequently, some commanders, 'especially in the Outer Islands', resorted 'to unorthodox sources of supply [such as smuggling] in order to maintain the functioning of their units and the loyalty of their troops' (Crouch 1978, p.38). Of course, it was not just the institutional interests of the army that were served: economic activities that were born of necessity also gave opportunities for personal benefit – so much so, in fact, that "some army officers wanted to continue the emergency arrangements [brought on by the regional military rebellions of the late 1950s]" (Crouch 1978, p.38). More generally, by the late 1950s the military was thoroughly enmeshed in the nation's economic affairs (as a result of the introduction of martial law in 1957), giving army officers a vested interest in the *status quo* (Crouch 1978, pp.38-41).

This description of the situation fifty years ago could equally apply to the army's interests during the New Order and today. During the period of heightened military presence in the mid-1990s, soldiers in Aceh apparently had wide scope for personal enrichment through 'mafia'-type activities. This resulted in an "extraordinary reluctance" on the part of the armed forces "to leave Aceh," even though the imperative for military operations against GAM had passed at the beginning of the decade (Robinson 1998, pp.137-138).

In the post-New Order period, the army has continued to have this vested interest in conflict in Aceh. With government providing only 25 per cent of their budgetary needs, the army and police "are compelled to engage in a great variety of legal and illegal activities", to meet both institutional and personal needs – and the opportunities for enrichment are greater in a situation and atmosphere of unrest and lawlessness. Moreover, conflict in Aceh serves the broader purpose of "proving" the need for the army's nationwide territorial structure and presence, which is essential to the maintenance of its economic interests nationally – not to mention its political prominence (International Crisis Group 2001a, pp. ii and 12-14).

The grip of the past in today's Aceh is also apparent in the army's seemingly unchanging approach to counter-insurgency operations in the province. We have seen how in the 1950s "the response of the government troops to rebel actions tended to be clumsy and brutal … [with] the inevitable effect of increasing sympathy and support for the rebels"(Christie 1996, pp.147-148 cited in Robinson 1998, pp.139-140). The pattern of brutality and alienation has continued ever since – albeit with a change in military doctrine and practice (and consequently in the intensity of violence) after 1989 (Robinson 1998, pp.140 and 153-154). Indeed, if one facet of that change was the appointment of commanders with the kind of training and experience in counter-insurgency and intelligence that would deliver operations of the "peculiar savagery" seen in Aceh in the early 1990s (Robinson 1998, pp.150-154), we now see a perpetuation of this approach with the assignment to Aceh of senior officers – and other troops – responsible for atrocities committed in East Timor in 1999 (Human Rights Watch 2003b; 2003c). The post-New Order depredations of the TNI presided over and perpetrated by these soldiers are well documented (Human Rights Watch 2003a; 2004b), and, in their horrible repetitiveness and familiarity, offer little hope for the future.

Autonomy and the economy

The ultimate political goal of Jakarta's military opponents in Aceh has changed over time, from a new dispensation within the Indonesian state in the 1950s to a complete separation from it since the 1970s. However, the degree to which Aceh might exercise autonomy while remaining part of Indonesia is an issue that has endured ever since the early days of independence. Arguably, this is now a more acute issue than ever, precisely because the stakes are higher with GAM seeking full independence.

Indonesia's rulers have never been terribly well disposed to the idea of an autonomous Aceh. Though some degree of it was granted at the end of the 1950s, we should not forget that at the beginning of that decade Jakarta had incorporated Aceh into the province of North Sumatra – and that it took an armed rebellion for provincial status to be won back in 1957. The "special region" status that was granted two years later was significant, but, insofar as it "accorded … autonomy in the areas of religion, customary law, and education" (Kell 1995, p.11), it is not to be regarded as a huge departure from the preference for centralised control. Indeed, the rebellion aimed at accommodation within Indonesia, rather than separation from it. In addition, the solutions found in the late 1950s suited those vying for power at the national level at the time: President Sukarno because a restoration of security in the regions was needed to curb the power of the army (whose main source of authority was martial law), and the army leaders because they needed to be able to turn their attention to checking the rise of the PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia, Indonesian Communist Party) (Sjamsuddin 1985, pp.286-288). Moreover, in the latter years of the Old Order, secular developmental ideas gained ground in Aceh, standing the central government in good stead in the region (Sjamsuddin 1985, pp.324-325).

The impulse for centralised control of the Indonesian state reached its apogee under the New Order, which saw the demise of Aceh's 'special region' status to the extent that this came to '[exist] on paper only" (Sjamsuddin 1984, p.126 cited in Kell 1995, p.31). Aceh was not to escape the measures introduced by Jakarta to curb "centrifugal tendencies" around the archipelago and greatly tighten central control of regional politics and administration (Kell 1995, p.32). For Aceh, this process was undoubtedly helped along by the fossil fuel bonanza of the 1970s. Indeed, it is noteworthy that the 1960s and early 1970s saw a period of "remarkable quietness [in] the province", explicable in part "by the fact that in those years Aceh was of no great interest economically, and so was largely left alone by the center" (Robinson 1998, p.139). This ended when liquid natural gas production began in the mid-1970s, making the province "a site of economic and political contention" (Robinson 1998, p.139) that required the close attentions (and control) of the central authorities.

While the imperative of centralised control runs through (and has affected Aceh) from the very early days of the Indonesian state (indeed, the above explanation of what drives that urge may also be applied to the relatively benign approach of the Sukarno regime towards Acehnese autonomy), the economic developments of the 1970s mark a qualitative change in Jakarta's approach to maintaining central control of Aceh. We now see the fall-out from this in Jakarta's efforts to entice the Acehnese away from GAM with the 'bait' of legislation conferring 'special autonomy', signed into law by President Megawati in August 2001. However generous the provisions on the division of economic spoils between Aceh and the central exchequer, those who are tasked with implementing the new dispensation, the existing regional politicians and administrators, are so hopelessly compromised in the eyes of the Acehnese (in part on account of pervasive corruption) that this latest manifestation of 'special status' for Aceh is doomed *not* to win the people's hearts and minds.[3] Such an outcome is further impeded by the impossibility (under national laws) of having region-based political parties contest elections in the province (Aspinall and Crouch 2003, pp.24-26; International Crisis Group 2001b)[4]– and, of course, by the perverse effects of the military's approach to resolving the Aceh question.

Thus, the present situation is one in which any effort on the part of Jakarta to redress Acehnese grievances remains entangled in a pervasive web of legacies – from Indonesia's past generally, and to some extent from the New Order in particular. In this web, potential gains are lost on account of a persistent range of inequities and iniquities that arise from the nature and behaviour of Indonesian political and state institutions and structures. If ever there was a case of "the institutions of the state [being] the state's worst enemy" (Kingsbury and Aveling 2003, p.6), this is it.

The Free Aceh Movement (GAM)

This paper is concerned mainly with the historical continuities (and impediments to far-reaching change) on the Indonesian 'side' of the contest for Aceh. However, continuities and impediments similarly emanate from the other side, i.e., the Acheh-Sumatra National Liberation Front (ASNLF)/GAM.[5] Indeed, it could be said that the grip of the past from the GAM perspective is even stronger than that exerted by Indonesia. Whereas the elements of the 'hold' that the latter has on Aceh are traceable mainly to the beginning of the post-World War Two order and the advent of Indonesian independence, GAM reaches even further back, to the 19th century (and earlier), in seeking to legitimise its claim on Aceh. Yet, paradoxically, this claim is of much more recent vintage, having emerged during the New Order period, thirty years after Indonesian independence. Indeed, GAM's leader himself was something of a latecomer to the notion of Aceh's separation: two decades before his 'Declaration of

Independence of Acheh Sumatra' on 4 December 1976, Hasan di Tiro, then associated with the Darul Islam movement, was among those of Aceh's leaders who continued to show "considerable commitment to a united Indonesia" (Aspinall 2002a, p.14).

In spite of its more recent pedigree, the grip of the past that emanates from GAM has become tighter, and more serious in its consequences, as the separatist rebellion in Aceh has evolved. As the guerrilla movement has grown in strength and popularity, and in turn provoked the ire of the Indonesian military, so too has the GAM version of history grown in importance – if nothing else, because of the obstacles it throws in the way of a solution to the Aceh imbroglio. And it is all the worse in its consequences when in contention with principles that exert an equally strong grip from the opposing side. As Aspinall neatly observes, "[t]he suffering of the Acehnese population in the years since 1998 … bears testimony to the devastation which may be wrought when two of sovereignty's offspring – the principles of national self-determination [GAM] and the territorial integrity of nation-states [Indonesia] – come into conflict." (2002a, p.24).

A further potential impact of the view of the past propagated by GAM is that no room will be left for Acehnese civil society groups that are willing to seek a 'half-way house' solution with Indonesia. Indeed, it has been said that "GAM members in Aceh seem to regard themselves as the only legitimate voice of the Acehnese and have used violence and intimidation against groups that do not support them." (International Crisis Group 2002, p.11)[6] This hardly comes as a surprise when one considers that, until very recently, "the constitutional and political structures adopted" by a GAM-led independent Aceh would "be those of the nineteenth century sultanate", with Hasan di Tiro "the legal sovereign" (Aspinall 2002a, p.15). In view of GAM's efforts to internationalise the Aceh conflict in recent years, and to garner the support of foreign powers for its cause, it is remarkable that it was only with the organisation's July 2002 Stavanger Declaration that it "formally articulated the movement's vision of an independent Aceh as a democracy rather than as a return to the sultanate" (Schulze 2004, p.10).[7]

Prospects for the future

Writing ten years ago, I concluded that in the early 1990s "[t]he root causes of the latest rebellion … remained unresolved, suggesting that in the future the Acehnese would again have no option but to seek redress of their regionalist grievances by force of arms"(Kell 1995, p.85). In spite of all that has happened in the meantime, not least the brokering of talks between the implacable enemies that are the Indonesian government and GAM, today I would draw the same conclusion. The Acehnese are still in need of proper redress, and this has not come (and is not coming) because of the factors from the past that hold the situation in their grip. These factors emanate from without and within Aceh, and, insofar as they remain entrenched, mean that triggers for rebellion in the territory stay firmly rooted.

One crucial change, however, is in the *objective* of Acehnese rebellion. Whereas in 1994 I was careful to write "regionalist grievances" because the extent of support for independence among the Acehnese was far from clear (Kell 1995, p.71), today the Indonesian state is beyond the pale for most people in the province – thanks to its own actions, most famously the appalling abuses of its military. Seemingly unable or unwilling to shake off the grip of the past, Indonesia is repeating its most egregious (recent) mistakes[8] … so much so that in repeating my conclusion, I would now say that the Acehnese are no longer merely 'regionalist' in outlook, but 'separatist.'[9]

[1] Interestingly, for GAM the East Timor 'blueprint' is premised on the use of human rights concerns to spark international intervention and support for Acehnese self-determination (Schulze 2004, pp. 41-42) – whereas, as Aspinall shows, we are not about to see state sovereignty lose its 'supremacy' to human rights in the ordering of international relations (2002a, p. 24).

[2] Sukma likewise observes that "[t]he Megawati government has been under constant pressure from the military, political elites, *and the public* to take firmer measures in dealing with the problem" (2004, p. 2); and that at the same time that the military were preparing for the May 2003 "crackdown," "demands *and non-Acehnese public support* that the government take resolute and firm action against GAM grew stronger" (2004, p. viii) (emphases added).

[3] It is debatable whether official corruption in Aceh is a 'constant' from the beginning of Indonesian independence or is more particularly a legacy of the New Order, marked as that period was by boom conditions in the province conducive to such unscrupulousness and by the appalling example set by Indonesia's then-leader, Suharto.

[4] As noted in Kell 1995, this approach to regional parties was also a feature of the New Order: 'Electoral politics in Indonesia provide no outlet for genuine oppositional political forces, be they *regional*, national, or religious in nature' (p. 43, emphasis added).

[5] The spelling 'Acheh' rather than the more familiar 'Aceh' is often formally used by ASNLF/GAM.

[6] Civil society groups are in danger of being squeezed between GAM and the Indonesian military, which is not known for its tolerance of non-state bodies, particularly in areas of conflict. This may be seen as another legacy of the past that exerts its grip in Aceh.

[7] The declaration merely states 'That the State of Acheh practices the system of democracy.'

[8] The ability of those in power in Indonesia to address these issues is thrown into question when one considers the self-delusion of the army and other authorities during their occupation of East Timor (see Moore 2001). It is not inconceivable that a similar capacity for self-deception would encourage a mistaken belief in the efficacy of Indonesia's current policies in Aceh – with frightening consequences for those on the receiving end of the authorities' exercise of power.

[9] This is evidenced not least by the massive popular support shown in late 1999 for holding a referendum on independence (Aspinall and Crouch 2003, pp. 7-8).

Gerakan Aceh Merdeka: Freedom Fighters or Terrorists?[1]

Kirsten E. Schulze

The Free Aceh Movement or *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (GAM) portrays its struggle against the Indonesian state as a legitimate war of national liberation seeking to free the Acehnese people from the yoke of Indonesian-Javanese domination, repression and neo-colonial exploitation. In the eyes of the Indonesian government, GAM guerrillas have increasingly been seen not just as rebels but as criminals and even terrorists who have systematically targeted the Indonesian education system, the local government structure, and health services in Aceh as well as being responsible for some 300 kidnappings over the past year.

This paper will look at GAM as a movement and as an organisation. It will discuss its political aims and ideology, its leadership and organisational structure, its strategy, the way it finances its struggle, and last but not least its support base. It will show that neither the term freedom fighters nor terrorists is an adequate way of characterising GAM as both only touch upon aspects of GAM. It will further demonstrate that GAM has evolved since its establishment in 1976 and particularly since 1999. It added a distinct political element to its strategy with the negotiations from 2000-2003. In fact, 'internationalisation' and the negotiations became the focus of GAM's strategy. At the same time, with GAM's post-1998 expansion, the nature of the movement on the ground in Aceh has changed. GAM today is no longer a 'vanguard' organisation of ideologues and idealists comprising doctors, engineers, academics, businessmen, and small farmers but a movement that is now attracting mainly poorly educated and unemployed young men as well as thugs, petty thieves, and criminals.

The ideology and political goals of GAM

In October 1976, GAM was established as the Aceh Sumatra National Liberation Front (ASNLF) by Hasan di Tiro, descendant of a prominent Acehnese *ulama* family (religious scholars) and grandson of Teungku Chik di Tiro, hero of the anti-colonial struggle against the Dutch. GAM's ideology is one of national liberation aimed at freeing Aceh from "all political control of the foreign regime of Jakarta." GAM sees its struggle as the continuation of the anti-colonial uprising that erupted in response to the 1873 Dutch invasion and subsequent occupation of the sovereign Sultanate of Aceh. GAM maintains that Aceh did not voluntary join the Republic of Indonesia in 1945, but was illegally incorporated. GAM's stated aims are to secure "the survival of the people of Aceh Sumatra as a nation; the survival of their political, social, cultural and religious heritage which are being destroyed by the Javanese colonialists" and to reopen "the question of decolonisation of the Dutch East Indies alias "Indonesia."[2]

GAM's version of Acehnese nationalism is ethnic, defined through blood ties, religion and *suku* (ethnic group) affiliation. It is articulated through the Acehnese language, culture and history. However, while the province of Aceh is home to nine *suku* – Aceh, Alas, Gayo, Singkil, Tamiang, Kluet, Anek Jamee, Bulolehee and Simeuleue – GAM's nationalism is only based on *suku* Aceh.

As Aceh is 98 per cent Muslim, Islam has always been an integral part of GAM's ideology but mainly as a reflection of Acehnese identity and culture rather than Islamist political aspirations. However, it must be pointed out that GAM has allowed for different emphases on Islam within its ranks. In the 1970s, 1980s, and to a lesser extent the 1990s, GAM's vision of an independent Aceh was articulated as the revival of the Sultanate of Aceh,

"re-establishing the historic Islamic State" (Hasan di Tiro 1982, p.136). With the 21 July 2002 Stavanger Declaration this was changed to the establishment of a democratic system. The GAM leadership in Sweden has made few if any references to Islam throughout this whole period. However, at the village level, GAM has relied especially heavily on the mosque network and often presented its struggle in Islamist terms, "involving the condemnation of the impious behaviour of the rulers, promises of restitution of *Syariah* law and an Islamic base to an independent Aceh" (Aspinall 2002b, p.22).

GAM's leadership and organisational structure

From 1976 until 1979, GAM's leaders and fighters were all in Aceh, mainly in and around the regencies of Pidie and North Aceh where GAM had its main support base. Since 1979, the movement's top leadership has been in exile, and thus separated from its fighters and support base in Aceh. GAM's founding father, *wali negara* (head of state) and president Hasan di Tiro; prime minister and defence minister (operational) Malik Mahmud; foreign minister and health minister Zaini Abdullah; and information minister Bakhtiar Abdullah reside in the Stockholm suburb of Norsborg, Sweden. The organisation's education minister Musanna Abdul Wahab is based in the United States and its defence minister (procurement) Zakaria Zaman operates out of Thailand. In July 2002, at a meeting in Stavanger, Norway, GAM's leadership in Sweden became the State of Aceh government in exile.

GAM's mid-level leadership, troops, and members are in Aceh. Modelling itself on the historical governance structures of an era when Aceh was an independent Sultanate, GAM divides Aceh into seventeen administrative regions or *wilayah*. Each *wilayah* is 'governed' by a governor and 'policed' by an *ulee bentara* (police chief). GAM's civilian functions include the collection of 'taxes' as well as the issuing of birth and marriage certificates.

However, as most decisions on the ground are dictated by the realities of the conflict and thus military imperatives, it is the *panglima wilayah* or regional military commander who holds the real power. The Forces of the Free Aceh Movement or *Angkatan Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (AGAM), renamed Army of the State of Aceh or *Tentara Negara Aceh* (TNA) with the Stavanger Declaration are under the TNA commander-in-chief or *panglima* TNA, a position currently held by Muzzakir Manaf. Under his command are the seventeen *panglima wilayah* at regional level, who in turn are responsible for four *panglima daerah* at district level. Below the *panglima daerah* are the *panglima sagoë* at sub-district level. The troops under the latter's command are believed to be organised in cell-structure. It is at this level where the TNA's command structure is highly factionalised and the troops are the most undisciplined. In fact it has not been uncommon for actions carried out either for hardline ideological reasons or for the economic gain of individuals, cells, or factions to be at odds with directives of the top leadership.

Contact between the exiled leadership and the GAM guerrillas in Aceh is maintained by telephone. According to Peureulak (East Aceh) spokesman/regional commander Ishak Daud, GAM in the field regularly reports to the GAM leaders in Sweden: "Every day our commander, Muzakir Manaf, makes contact with GAM's political wing in Sweden. And the instruction is clear." [3]

While the TNA's chain of command appears to be linear from Sweden to the *panglima* TNA to the troops in the field, the fact that GAM has an exiled leadership, which is in overall command of the operations on the ground, has allowed for the emergence of a by-pass mechanism, creating a somewhat triangular relationship. This means that the leadership in Sweden, mainly in the form of Malik Mahmud, is not only communicating with the

panglima TNA-negara but at the same time with the seventeen *panglima TNA-wilayah* and vice versa. This direct contact with the field has not only kept leaders in Sweden up to date with the situation on the ground, but has also ensured that a strike against the *panglima TNA-negara* does not cut Sweden off from Aceh. This mechanism proved its usefulness with the death of *panglima AGAM* Abdullah Syafi'i on 22 January 2002. As then GAM Minister of State Malik Mahmud pointed out:

> Abdullah Syafi'i was a great loss but it won't influence our military capacity because we are in constant and direct contact with the area commanders. So we give direct orders to the area commanders not via Abdullah Syafi'i. His death won't disrupt operations. Because all commanders are different I used to get reports directly from them and also from Abdullah Syafi'i. So it was triangular contact so if there was a problem in the field and they couldn't inform Abdullah Syafi'i, we could.[4]

While undoubtedly a necessary safety device, this structure has also blurred the chain of command, which has negatively impacted upon coordination, discipline, and control. This has been further complicated by the fact that the leadership in Sweden only issues general directives or parameters to the *panglima* AGAM/TNA. According to Tiro Central Command field commander, Amri bin Abdul Wahab, orders are given by Malik Mahmud to the *panglima* AGAM/TNA, then discussed with the *panglima wilayah*, who in turn discusses them with the field commanders (*komandan lapangan*) and operational commanders (*komandan operasi*). The actual decisions on strategy and tactics are made at the field commander level.[5]

GAM's strategy

When GAM was established in 1976 it comprised only seventy guerrilla fighters. It has since grown considerably, claiming an active guerrilla army of 30,000 and a reserve of almost the whole population of Aceh.

> The number of locally trained is about 30,000 including a few hundred women. It's not our policy to commit them to too much. We have thousands of young boys, which are our reserve. The spirit is there but they are underage. So we give them a little bit of training and keep them for the future. (Malik Mahmud, GAM Minister of State, February 2002)[6]

Of these 30,000, according to di Tiro an estimated 5,000 GAM guerrillas were trained in Libya between 1986 and 1989.[7] The number offered by Malik Mahmud is somewhat lower at around 1,500 Acehnese.[8] Observers believe that 700-800 had gone to Libya (International Crisis Group 2001a, p.3), while Indonesian military intelligence claims that 583 members of GAM are 'Libyan graduates.' GAM's overall membership increased from the original seventy in 1976 to several hundred in the late 1980s. In 1999-2000, GAM increased again to an estimated 3,000, and during the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) to an estimated 5,500. In May 2004, this estimate was revised upward to 8,000.[9]

The fighting capacity of GAM is a lot smaller than its membership suggests. In 2001, most observers estimated that AGAM/TNA has between 1,000 and 1,500 modern firearms, a few grenade launchers, even fewer rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and perhaps one or two 60mm mortars (International Crisis Group 2001a, p.7). According to Indonesian military intelligence, GAM increased its arsenal during the COHA to 2,134 weapons.[10] These weapons are unevenly spread over GAM's territory, showing the heaviest arms concentration in the traditional GAM areas of Pidie, North Aceh and East Aceh.

GAM's weapons are a mixture of home-made and traditional weapons (termed *rakitan*) and standard firearms. Standard firearms are obtained both from domestic and foreign sources. Domestically, arms are either captured, stolen or purchased from the Indonesian military (TNI) and the police (International Crisis Group 2001a, p.8). Internationally, weapons are widely available from Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand.

Like other insurgents, GAM's strategy is one of guerrilla warfare making use of its superior knowledge of the terrain and the population to counter-balance its lack of real military capacity. The aim of GAM's strategy is to make Aceh ungovernable in order to make Indonesia pay the highest price possible for the retention of this territory. As one GAM operational commander explained: "When they advance, we retreat; when they leave, we return. When they grow tired or weak or careless, we attack."[11] Further, as another guerrilla fighter added: "We don't have to win the war, we only have to stop them from winning."[12]

GAM's operations have focused on five distinct targets in Aceh:

1. The Indonesian political structures

GAM aims at paralysing the local government structure. This is achieved through the intimidation of civil servants at all levels and the recruitment of as many as possible into GAM's parallel civilian government. In this context, civil servants, members of the regional parliaments, and village heads have been intimidated, kidnapped or shot. Particular attention has been on those politicians who support autonomy or Jakarta or who have criticised GAM.[13]

GAM believes it has been quite successful in achieving its aims. In February 2002, GAM Minister of State Malik Mahmud explained that:

> In two years [since the end of DOM (*Daerah Operasi Militer)*] we took over 60-80 per cent of the administration of the Indonesian government in Aceh. We make use of Indonesian officials. We know they have a job with Indonesia but now we are in power in Aceh and we want them to change so what you see is positive. They just change sides and now work for *Negara Aceh*.[14]

Similarly, in April 2003, Tiro field commander Amri bin Abdul Wahab saw the parallel government as one of the most important elements of GAM's strategy:

> The crucial element is how to establish a GAM government so we can exercise control and society does not have to deal with the Indonesian structure. That strengthens our relationship with society and we can spread our ideology.[15]

He estimated that about seventy per cent of Acehnese society used GAM's civil government offices as opposed to Indonesian ones.

2. The state education system

GAM has also systematically targeted the state education system. This has included the burning of schools as well as the intimidation and killings of teachers. Between 1998 and 2002 some sixty teachers were killed (*The Jakarta Post*, 13 September 2002) and 200 others physically assaulted (*The Jakarta Post*, 16 September 2002). Human rights activists in Aceh believe these numbers are even higher. According to the Human Rights Forum (PB HAM), in 2002 alone fifty teachers were confirmed murdered. Between the beginning of 1989 and June 2002, 527 schools, eighty-nine official houses for teachers, and thirty-three official houses for principals were burnt down (*Kompas*, 19 June 2002). In May-June 2002 alone twenty-seven schools were destroyed. In the first two days of the military emergency in May 2003 an estimated 185 schools went up in flames (*The Jakarta Post*, 21 May 2003). By the next day

the number had risen to 248 (*The Jakarta Post*, 22 May 2003) and by the first week of June to 448 (*Media Indonesia*, 5 June 2003), a number which has since risen to over 600. (Coordinating Ministry for Security and Political Affairs Statement, 15 August 2003).

While there remains considerable scepticism as to whether GAM was responsible for all of these burnings, it is clear that GAM was responsible for some of them. The underlying motivations are primarily ideological. According to GAM, the Indonesian education system actively destroys Acehnese history and culture while promoting "the glorification of Javanese history."[16] Already in the late 1970s, di Tiro recorded in his diary that "for the last 35 years they have used our schools and the mass media to destroy every aspect of our nationality, culture, polity and national consciousness."(Hasan di Tiro 1982, p.29) One way of countering this was the tailoring of school curricula in GAM strongholds to include a local view of history (*The Jakarta Post*, 29 October 2002). Another way was the burning of the schools so "that they were not used to turn Acehnese children into Indonesians" (International Crisis Group 2003b).

3. The economy

Closely connected with the dismantling of Indonesia's political and educational structures has been the targeting of those sectors of the economy from which Indonesia and particularly the security forces benefit. GAM's focus here has been on the domestic and foreign corporations in the Lhokseumawe industrial complex whose workers have been living under the threat of intimidation, kidnapping or death since the early days of GAM. In the late 1970s GAM actions aimed at closing "down foreign oil companies … to prevent them from further stealing our oil and gas" (Hasan di Tiro 1982, p.78).

Just over a month later, in early December 1977, three foreign contractors for Bechtel, an American and two Koreans, who were involved in the construction of the Arun natural gas fields 'Field Cluster III' came under attack. The American was shot dead by what di Tiro described as "stray bullets in the fighting between our forces and the Indonesian colonialist troops" (Hasan di Tiro 1982, pp.125-126) and what Bechtel's doctor recorded as an armed attack on the unarmed civilians.

More recently, GAM targeted the vulnerable oil and gas production facilities and pipelines operated by ExxonMobil Oil Indonesia (EMOI) in Aceh. In March 2001, EMOI was forced to close production from the four onshore gas fields it operates and to evacuate workers. GAM is also believed to have been responsible for firing at aircraft transporting ExxonMobil workers, hijacking the company's vehicles, as well as stopping and burning buses and planting landmines along roads to blow them up (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 April 2001).

Bill Cummings, EMOI Public Affairs Manager in Jakarta, described the security situation as follows:

> Between May 1999 and the onshore shutdown in March 2001, acts of vandalism increased and over 50 vehicles were hijacked from public roads. In 2000, two chartered airplanes carrying ExxonMobil workers were hit by ground fire. In one case in March 2000, a gunman on the back of a motorcycle fired at the plane as it was taxi-ing to the terminal in Point A, the Arun Field control centre, wounding two passengers. Through a news story in a local newspaper a few days later, GAM claimed responsibility for the attack. Also in 2000, there was an increase in small arms fire directed at the facilities. GAM occasionally acknowledged responsibility to local reporters for some of the attacks but we have no first-hand knowledge of who was responsible. In the weeks leading up to the on-shore shut-down in 2001, our personnel

were targeted. There were several incidents where unknown gunmen fired on our chartered buses and vans carrying workers. In a couple of cases buses were emptied of occupants and burned.[17]

GAM's grievance with foreign companies like Bechtel, Mobil and now ExxonMobil is twofold: first, they are seen as exploiting Aceh's resources and second, they are perceived as collaborating with the Indonesian military because the latter has been securing their premises. This has allowed GAM to regard these corporations as legitimate targets. As GAM spokesman Isnander al-Pasè explained in April 2003:

> ExxonMobil is a legitimate target in war. Why? Because it helps the opponent's military and now Exxon is housing a military base within its complex. And the people living next to Exxon tell us that they do not get anything from Exxon while Exxon takes our oil.[18]

4. The Javanese

One of the most controversial objectives of GAM's guerrilla strategy has been the systematic attempt to cleanse Aceh of all Javanese presence as GAM equates Indonesia with Javanese neo-colonialism. While GAM has repeatedly denied that it specifically targets Javanese, the evidence on the ground is to the contrary. In mid-1990, GAM went on an offensive against Javanese settlers and transmigrants in North Aceh (Barber 2000, p.32). According to Amnesty International reports at the time the pattern of GAM violence changed from targeting the security forces only to also attacking non-combatants. By the end of June 1990 some thirty civilians had been killed and thousands of Javanese transmigrants had been intimidated into leaving their homes (Amnesty International 1993, p.5).

This scenario repeated itself after the end of DOM. On 9 September 1999, *The Jakarta Post* reported that thousands of Javanese transmigrants were fleeing North Aceh following harassment by GAM including terrorisation, extortion, and arson. Ahead of GAM's anniversary on 4 December 1999 more Javanese settlers and transmigrants began to flee Aceh amidst fears of violence (Barber 2000, p.101). The Central Java transmigration office said that since July that year 1,006 had returned with their families from Aceh. Between 2000 and 2002 an estimated 50,000 migrants were terrorised into leaving their homes in North, East, and Central Aceh. Many of these had been in Aceh for generations, especially those in Central Aceh who were brought there during the Dutch period to work on the coffee plantations. Others came as part of Suharto's transmigration program in the 1980s and 1990s.

GAM sees the Javanese migrants as colonial settlers who are demographically shoring up Jakarta's claim to Aceh as well as potential collaborators with the Indonesian security forces. In fact, in April 2001, following Presidential Instruction 4/2001 which initiated a security recovery operation, AGAM field commanders called upon the Javanese transmigrants to leave (*Waspada*, 23 April 2001): "[T]hese people can be forced to become military informers. The military can even turn them into militiamen" (*The Jakarta Post*, 24 April 2001). Two months later, in June 2001, violence in the ethnically mixed Aceh-Gayo-Javanese areas of Central Aceh reached unprecedented levels with clashes between GAM and local village defence groups or *kelompok sipil bersenjata* killing an estimated sixty-five people, of whom fifty were Javanese, over a two-week period, and resulting in the burning of an estimated 1,000 houses. The level of violence is further reflected in OXFAM's June 2001 data on internally displaced persons, which set the numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) for Central Aceh at 10,361, of which 5,758 alone came from the ethnically mixed sub-district of Bandar.[19]

5. The Indonesian security forces

Since its establishment GAM has targeted both the Indonesian military and police, as 'occupation forces.' While between 1976 and 1979 GAM's attacks were sporadic and not particularly effective, in 1989, after GAM's return from Libya, they had become better organised, more systematic and forced the Indonesian security forces on the defensive (Barber 2000, p.32).

After 1998, GAM attacks against the security forces rose again. According to police figures, fifty-three policemen were killed from July to December 1999, and many more were injured. Police Spokesman Inspector-General Didi Widayadi stated that the casualties for the period of 12 March until 12 April 2001 included thirty-three military personnel and thirty-six police killed as well as 128 military personnel and 132 police injured (*The Indonesian Observer*, 25 April 2001). According to the TNI, between June 2000 and April 2001, some fifty soldiers were killed, while 206 were injured and eight were listed as missing (*The Jakarta Post*, 3 September 2002).

Hasan di Tiro described GAM's tactics in the late 1970s as ranging from "attacking the enemy posts that are obnoxious to us," (1982, p.162) ambushing troops, planting bombs and launching grenades near military installations, to executing off-duty security personnel, and disrupting 'enemy communication lines' as well as intercepting and destroying Indonesian military vehicles (1982, p.114). While GAM's capacity has since increased, its tactics have changed little. As Amni bin Marzuki and Kamaruzzaman, GAM negotiators, explained in December 2001:

> We mainly resort to ambush and hit-and-run. We can't fight a frontal war. They have better equipment and more ammunition… From a military perspective there is no way for us to defeat them and for them to defeat us. We want to tie down as many of their troops as possible in Aceh. We want them to spend more money on this operation. We want to exhaust them financially.[20]

GAM's strategy has also included a political element, which until 2000 was far less effective than its military component. This changed with the start of the negotiating process in January 2000. GAM saw the peace process as central to its political strategy of pursuing internationalisation to achieve independence. Thus the dialog was used to gain international legitimacy and to obtain outside support for its struggle. From the beginning, GAM's participation in the dialog was less motivated by what GAM could receive from Indonesia than by what it could receive from the international community. As Hasan di Tiro explained in February 2002:

> We don't expect to get anything from Indonesia. But we hope to get something from the US and UN. I depend on the UN and the US and EU…. We will get everything. I am not interested in the Indonesians – I am not interested in them – absolutely not.[21]

Internationalisation became the key element of GAM's negotiating strategy, which senior GAM negotiator Sofyan Ibrahim Tiba described as follows:

> It is based on three pillars: First, the Acehnese people, second, the Indonesians, and third the international community. …Regarding the third – we give information to the international community about the situation here. Also the dialog is part of this. Everything needs to be conducted outside of Aceh and Indonesia![22]

After the Tokyo talks collapsed on 18 May 2003, the official GAM statement released by Malik Mahmud expressed its "deepest gratitude to the international community…for their

tireless efforts towards realising peace in Aceh" and appealed "to the United Nations for its immediate involvement in the resolution of the Aceh conflict"[23]

Financing the struggle

In November 2003, Malik Mahmud claimed that GAM had spent more than $10 million on weapons for the struggle (*Tempo*, 17 November 2003). The question that immediately arises is where does this money come from? GAM has three main sources of revenue: First, 'taxation'; second, foreign donations; and third, criminal activity – drug trafficking and kidnapping for ransom.

With respect to the first source of revenue, GAM levies an Aceh State tax, or *pajak nanggroë*, on all elements of society. According to senior GAM negotiator Sofyan Ibrahim Tiba, *pajak nanggroë* has been collected since GAM was established by di Tiro and it is based on Islam:

> In Islam if there is a struggle there is *infaq*[financial contribution]. But now that Aceh is no longer struggling for an Islamic State it is called *pajak nanggroë*. It was changed from *infaq* to *pajak nanggroë* with the Humanitarian Pause in 2000.[24]

GAM believes it has the right to tax all parts of Acehnese society and AGAM/TNA Pasè commander Sofyan Dawod does not think the majority of the population minds:

> The Indonesian government has the right to tax and so does GAM. But the Acehnese do not object to our taxes while they do object to paying taxes to Indonesia because that money is then used to send troops and kill them while we use the tax to defend them.[25]

According to Dawod, the level of taxation depends on the project or the salary. There are two bases for taxation, first taxation of the profit (which he claims is around 2.5 per cent), and, second taxation of the value of the project. Additional contributions are sought for holidays which Dawod claims are used for Acehnese orphans. For instance, ExxonMobil was asked for a special 'holiday allowance' of Rp. 250 million for the Muslim holiday of *Idul Adha*. According to Dawod, farmers and teachers do not pay taxes "but we do ask for a voluntary contribution of one day's earning per month. We also ask for donations from Aceh's wealthy to help society, to cover state functions and expenses, and also to buy weapons." [26]

In particular, GAM has 'taxed' merchants in Aceh Besar, many of whom are ethnic Chinese, contractors in the Lhokseumawe industrial area, Javanese migrants in the coffee plantations of Central Aceh, and civil servants. The Chinese are seen as 'soft targets' as they are comparatively wealthy and will go to lengths to stay out of the conflict while contractors, civil servants, and the Javanese are seen as 'legitimate targets' since they either work for the Indonesian regional government or are seen as potential collaborators with the security forces. For instance, in Langsa, East Aceh, taxation started in 1999 after GAM had strengthened its base there. Businesses, teachers and civil servants were asked to pay 10 per cent, often accompanied by intimidation and threat.[27] In Kecamatan Peudada, Bireuen, primary and secondary school teachers were asked for a monthly contribution of Rp. 40,000 while heads of schools pay Rp. 50,000. Similarly in West Aceh, civil servants pay Rp. 50,000 a month.

The hardest-hit area in respect to such 'taxation,' however, has been the Lhokseumawe industrial complex in North Aceh which is home to Indonesian and foreign businesses such as PT Arun, ExxonMobil, PT Asean Aceh Fertiliser, and Iskandar Muda Fertiliser as well as a large number of local and some foreign contractors. According to the

Jakarta Post, GAM generally demands around 10 per cent of the contract value from local contractors (*The Jakarta Post*, 4 February 2003). As one such contractor in Gedung Blangpria near Lhokseumawe described:

> I have been asked several times for money by GAM. From contractors they demand 12 per cent of the contract value. Most people here don't agree with GAM but they are afraid because they have guns. If you are asked for money and you don't give it you will be shot a day later, especially if you are a government employee. Or you get kidnapped and they ask the family for money. Sometimes they ask you specifically to donate money to buy a weapon. It all depends on your economic status.[28]

One foreign contractor related how GAM demanded 5 per cent of his profits. Often these demands came by text message to his mobile phone. He changed his number twice and within two weeks GAM had his new number. Also, GAM seemed to be fully aware of his travel schedule. He never once got a 'tax demand' when he was in Jakarta or overseas. But as soon as he landed in Lhokseumawe GAM would be in touch. He further said that while he was only asked for 5 per cent, his local third-party contractors were being issued with demands of up to 20 per cent. And whereas he enjoyed the privilege of staying in the protected compound in the industrial complex and thus the luxury of not paying 'taxes,' his local staff did not. Moreover, GAM seemed to know exactly on which day salaries were paid, the amount of the salary, and which third parties had been awarded contracts.[29] In fact, several local contractors spoke about a GAM list and once a contractor had made it onto the list, there was no escaping payment short of leaving Aceh forever.

Villages in the vicinity of the Lhokseumawe industrial complex have also been harder hit by GAM's village tax, presumably under the assumption that they benefit through either employment or developmental assistance. After the signing of the COHA, for example, every village in this area was asked for Rp. 35 million to buy weapons (*Far East Economic Review*, 30 January 2003). By comparison, other villages in GAM's traditional stronghold areas were asked for Rp. 10 million and those in new, non-traditional areas such as South Aceh were 'taxed' at the rate of Rp. 9 million at the time (*The Jakarta Post*, 4 February 2003).

GAM has also targeted local and foreign NGOs involved in humanitarian assistance to Aceh. In March 2000, GAM was believed to be skimming an estimated 20 per cent off the development funds allocated by Jakarta from most of Aceh's villages (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 16 March 2000). It has also been claimed that, during the early period of the Humanitarian Pause in 2000, GAM was able to siphon off 50-75 per cent from some humanitarian assistance programs.[30] The targeting of humanitarian aid funds repeated itself during the COHA. Local partners of international NGOs were presented with tax demands of 15-30 per cent. In fact, pressure increased to such an extent that the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid (OCHA) felt compelled to complain to the dialog facilitator, the Henry Dunant Center (HDC) in Geneva.

The second important source of funding for GAM is foreign donations, which have come primarily from Acehnese expatriates. The largest amount of this money probably originates from Malaysia. It is estimated that in Kuala Lumpur alone at least 5,000 Acehnese provide GAM with regular donations.[31]

The third source of finance is funds generated from criminal activity, mainly drug trafficking and kidnapping for ransom. GAM has been actively involved in the cultivation and trade of marijuana. An estimated 30 per cent of all marijuana in Southeast Asia is believed to originate from Aceh. It is, however, difficult to say what GAM's share of this trade is, especially given the large number of other players involved, ranging from members of the army and police to local thugs and criminal syndicates from Medan, North Sumatra.

Kidnapping has been another means for raising funds. Here GAM has targeted primarily local legislators, businessmen, or oil workers (*Joyo Indonesian News*, 28 May 2002). For instance, in early 2001, GAM kidnapped a senior executive of PT Arun and demanded US$ 500,000 to release him. In late August 2001 six Indonesian crew members from the 'Ocean Silver' were abducted by GAM, which then demanded US$ 33,000 for their release (*Associated Press*, 29 August 2001). In April 2002, three oil workers contracted to Pertamina were kidnapped. One was released the following day; but GAM demanded a ransom of Rp. 200 million for the remaining two hostages (*Dow Jones Newswires*, 6 May 2002). On 2 July 2002, it was reported that nine crewmen servicing the offshore oil industry were kidnapped from their ship the 'Pelangi Frontier' (*Agence France Presse*, 2 July 2002). In March 2003, when demonstrators in Central Aceh attacked the office of the Joint Security Committee they protested not just against GAM taxation but also demanded that GAM return Rp. 500 million taken for the release of a local businessman (*The Jakarta Post*, 3 March 2003). Kidnappings have increased since the declaration of martial law in May 2003. Within the subsequent twelve months GAM is believed to have been responsible for some 300 kidnappings (*Sinar Harapan*, 12 January 2004).

GAM's support base

Until 1999 GAM confined itself to the areas of Greater Aceh, Pidie, North Aceh, and East Aceh. Since then it has expanded into all districts of Aceh, shoring up its claim that it represents the whole population. However, a closer look at support for GAM reveals that not all parts of Aceh are equally in favour of the movement. In fact, there is a stark contrast between the support for GAM in its traditional territory and in its 'new' territory.

Traditional Territory

GAM has considerable support in its traditional territory (Greater Aceh, Pidie, North Aceh, and East Aceh). It was here that GAM was established and from here that it drew its initial popular and logistical support. At that time GAM members and supporters shared a common background. They were primarily rural, from *suku* Aceh, and most were motivated by loyalty to the di Tiro family and disillusionment with Jakarta. Many of the early GAM members also shared previous fighting experience in the Darul Islam rebellion from 1953 until 1959. GAM's support base started to grow in the 1980s, especially in North Aceh. Here the population was living in an area that was undergoing rapid urbanisation and industrialisation placing them at the frontier of both modernity and economic inequality. New members joined GAM because of the shared identity but also because Aceh's vast resources were being exploited in front of their eyes while they themselves remained poor. The new recruits included merchants and farmers whose existence was economically threatened, but above all GAM drew from 'the ranks of unemployed young men, primarily from rural areas, with limited educational backgrounds.'(Barber 2000, p.31)

In the 1990s, Indonesian counter-insurgency operations – commonly referred to as DOM (*Daerah Operasi Militer*) – created the next GAM generation which was, above all, motivated by revenge or the desire to fight against the brutal treatment of the population by the security forces. DOM was characterised by heavy-handed military reprisals against villages believed to provide logistical help or sanctuary to the insurgents (Amnesty International 1993, p.3). Amnesty International described the Indonesian military strategy as "shock therapy" and others described it as a systematic "campaign of terror designed to strike fear in the population and make them withdraw their support from GAM" (Kell, 1995, p.74):

> In an effort to undercut the civilian support base of the guerrilla resistance, Indonesian forces carried out armed raids and house-to-house searches in suspected rebel areas. The houses of villagers suspected of providing shelter or support to the rebels were burned to the ground. The wives or daughters of some suspected rebels were detained as hostages and some were raped. Anyone suspected of contact with Aceh Merdeka was vulnerable to arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, 'disappearance' or summary execution. (Amnesty International 1993, p.6)

Villagers were placed under tight control and some were relocated. Militias were established to 'provide a "fence of legs" in the sweeping operations of guerrillas strongholds. During the first four years of the operation scores of guerrillas and civilians were killed, tortured and disappeared. Kidnap victims spoke of being forced to bury people shot by the military; women related accounts of sexual assault and rape (Barber 2000, pp.33, 38).

By the end of the DOM period, between 1,258 (Human Rights Watch 2001, p.8) and 2000 (Amnesty International 1993, p.8) people had been killed and 3,439 tortured (Barber 2000, p.47). Human Rights Watch put the number of disappeared at 500 while the Aceh regional Assembly estimated it at between 1,000-5,000 and the NGO Forum Aceh believed the number to be as high as 39,000 (Human Rights Watch 2001, p.8). The Banda Aceh Legal Aid Foundation reports that some 625 cases of rape and torture of women were recorded (as cited by *The Straits Times*, 29 July 1998). An estimated 16,375 children had been orphaned (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 19 November 1998) and 3,000 women widowed. After DOM, some 7,000 cases of human rights violations were documented (*Suara Pembaruan*, 26 November 1999) and according to data gathered by Forum Peduli HAM at least twelve mass graves were investigated (cited in Barber 2000, p.47).

In the 'traditional' GAM areas the cycle of insurgency and counter-insurgency has had a mutually reinforcing effect on GAM's support base. This has resulted in GAM families, where several members of the same family and in some cases three generations have joined the movement. Pasè (North Aceh) GAM commander Sofyan Dawod is one example of this. Sofyan Dawod joined in 1986 when GAM was recruiting for training in Libya. He joined because, according to him, "the situation in Aceh …was already the same as during DOM" and because there already had been victims in his family since 1977. His father, who was a first generation GAM activist, was shot dead by the Indonesian military. Two of his brothers suffered the same fate in the early 1990s.[32]

Similarly, Tiro field commander Amri bin Abdul Wahab, who did not formally join GAM until 1997, came from a GAM family. He had already supported the cause of *Aceh Merdeka* ('Free Aceh') since the mid-1980s and had been involved through his uncle who had been in Libya. Among his friends, there were some who had been shot and when he joined he did so with full support from everyone. Amri's motivation was family inspired but also ideological:

> I realised Dutch colonialism was the worst kind. Countries colonised by the English received institutions and education. But the fact that Aceh has had no development since is not because of the Dutch but because of Indonesian neo-colonialism.[33]

GAM families not only include several generations of males who became guerrilla fighters, they also include several generations of women who have been brutalised by the Indonesian security forces. Mothers, wives, and daughters of GAM members have been detained, humiliated, often raped, and sometimes tortured as a way of obtaining information about their men and as a way of getting their sons, husbands or fathers to surrender. Not surprisingly, after DOM, the first female GAM guerrilla force was established. It is known as *Pasukan*

'Inong bale' and, according to GAM, comprises the 'DOM widows and the daughters of martyrs'(*Agence France Presse*, 2 July 2002).

New Territory

GAM's support in its 'new' territories is significantly lower. It has not grown organically because of shared grievances, but came as a result of deliberate GAM expansion into those areas. GAM found it more difficult to get good quality recruits in the new districts as a nationalism constructed around *suku* Aceh did not hold the same appeal for other *suku*, as these districts had not seen the economic disparities evident in the greater Lhokseumawe area, and as they had been largely spared by Indonesia's counter-insurgency operations. There is evidence that GAM forcibly recruited in these districts by ordering villages to provide one or two volunteers.[34] GAM has also had to rely far more on intimidation in order to maintain its position there. This affected the organisation in two important ways. First, those who were attracted to GAM generally did not join GAM for ideological, but economic reasons. They were unemployed young men, some of them already thugs, who clearly saw the advantages of the GAM label in their quest for easy money.[35] Second, the intimidation and extortion by GAM, further reinforced by the joining of local thugs, alienated much of the population in those areas.

The difference in 'GAM experiences' is best illustrated by looking at Central Aceh and South Aceh, two areas which GAM entered with considerable brutality and two areas where local resistance groups were formed as early as 1999. When GAM moved into Central Aceh it quickly started to target the local coffee farmers. When they proved reluctant to pay GAM's taxes, GAM resorted to intimidation. This intimidation soon took on an ethnic overtone as many of the coffee farmers were of Javanese extraction. They were not, however, as often assumed, transmigrants, but had come at the turn of the 20th century with the Dutch and had since intermarried with the local Gayo population. In order to protect themselves, these Gayo and Javanese formed self-defence groups, which in 2000 started to arm themselves with home-made weapons. In May-June 2001, open conflict between GAM and these self-defence groups erupted.

One of the villages attacked by GAM was Kresek in Kecamatan Bandar. In this village ten houses were burnt and five people were killed on the night of 5 June 2001. One resident recalls this night as follows:

> The neighbouring village had just been burnt. So we were on alert. Then during the night about 100 GAM came. They were divided in 10 groups but not all of them had weapons. We already had the women and children in the mosque. Only the men were here. They came and started to burn down the houses. In one house three generations were killed – the grandfather, the father, and the son.[36]

Another resident added:

> It was between 10 pm and midnight. We were attacked while sleeping. We heard bangs. Some were asleep and some were guarding. They came. They shot and burnt. My two-year old daughter was shot in the head and killed. She was sleeping. They broke in and sprayed my house with bullets. My mother was also hurt. Her leg had to be amputated. My father was killed. The house was burnt. And while they were shooting they shouted 'Javanese neo-colonialists get out of Aceh'. Then on the houses they could not burn because they were made of cement they wrote in blood 'the Javanese people must go home.'[37]

According to Aldar AB, the former district head of Pondok Baru, the Central Acehnese capital of Takengon, another one of the areas hit by the violence:

> People were integrated with the Javanese. We learned a lot from them. [The local economy in] Takengon would not have performed without the Javanese. They work hard. The Javanese turned Pondok Baru into a plantation. And then in 1999 GAM made the Javanese an issue. They told them to go back to Java. Then they burnt their houses and tortured them.[38]

He then added that he thought the violence of May-June 2001 was particularly tragic for him as a Gayo because Gayo culture is open and tolerant. GAM with its actions had besmirched the good name of the Gayo and Central Aceh.[39] Not surprisingly, Central Aceh has not become a strong support base for GAM.

The case of South Aceh is similar in that GAM resorted to a considerable amount of force, and local resistance groups were formed. Unlike Central Aceh, however, South Aceh does not have a large Javanese presence. Some GAM members entered South Aceh as early as 1992. They were from North Aceh, came as traders of areca nuts and settled in the villages of Paya and Mirah near the district of Manggamat where they married local girls. GAM's presence in South Aceh increased dramatically on the back of the referendum issue in 1999 as well as through contacts with local *ulama* (religious scholars). This increase emboldened GAM and threats and intimidation became widespread in Manggamat, Kluet Utara and Pasi Raja. This made itself particularly felt in the run-up to 17 August, Indonesia's independence day. On 14 August GAM issued an order that no red and white (Indonesian) flags were to be raised and after that GAM was faced with several village heads who did not comply. The head of Mukim Meukik at that time, Tengku Ibrahim, was one of them:

> GAM came in August 1999. There were several shootings in the area before then. I was told I had to resign. I didn't. On 25 September I was threatened and then terrorised. I reported this and the police told me to stay at their post. But I wanted to go back to my village. When I was home there was a knock on the door. I thought it was a friend. When I opened no one was there. Then I was shot. My child called the police and they took me to Tapak Tuan. I have not returned to my village until now.[40]

Like Tengku Ibrahim, Bintara Yakub, a former village head in the area of Manggamat, rejected GAM's order and like Tengku Ibrahim he was shot by GAM and subsequently taken to Tapak Tuan. However, he decided to return once he had fully recovered. He states:

> I was brought to Tapak Tuan and did not return for 1.5 years. When I finally went back Manggamat had been turned into a GAM centre. The GAM panglima and the governor were living there. They had brought kidnapped rich people and civil servants there and when the ransom was not paid they executed them. GAM was destroying the community so I met with other village heads in the area and we decided to form a self-defence group. We had about 2,000 people and attacked GAM with long knives and pistols. Then GAM asked for peace after we kidnapped 12 of their men. We returned the hostages and they immediately attacked us. 31 persons were killed by GAM. [41]

The residents of Manggamat in South Aceh told the *Jakarta Post* that they were the victims of a GAM crackdown on 5 June 2001. According to Effendi, the head of Sarah Baru village, "the villagers were intimidated and forced to pay money to GAM. Those who were unable to pay money were tortured to death and their bodies buried."[42]

Conclusion

GAM is regarded as an organisation of freedom fighters by some Acehnese, while it is seen by others as a group of thugs, criminals and terrorists. GAM itself, of course, prefers the label of freedom fighters or a national liberation movement as this affords the organisation legitimacy while at the same time de-legitimising Indonesia. Conversely, Indonesia has described GAM members as security disrupters, rebels, criminals or terrorists. However, as the previous discussion of GAM's ideology, aims, structure, finances, strategy, leadership and support base shows, GAM is not that different from other insurgent groups such as the IRA (Irish Republican Army), ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna / Basque Homeland and Liberty), or the MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front). In fact, like any other insurgent group, GAM is forced to exist in the grey areas. It cannot purchase weapons openly. It is involved in criminal activities by necessity but also by greed. It uses force in order to maintain control in areas where it is challenged and it carries out terrorist acts – politically motivated violence against non-combatants – as part of its overall strategy. GAM has also faced challenges familiar to other insurgents. During the 2000-2003 peace process, GAM had to decide whether its interests were best served by rejecting anything short of its political aims or by negotiating a favourable autonomy agreement, a compromise, even if only *ad interim*. And finally, it has had to contend with criminalisation, which if left unchecked, is one of the biggest threats to any national liberation movement as it alienates the people as well as the international community and closes the door on a political solution.

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[1] This paper draws heavily upon Kirsten E. Schulze, *The Free Aceh Movement (GAM): Anatomy of a Separatist Organization*, Policy Studies 2, (Washington DC: East West Center, 2004) and Kirsten E. Schulze, 'The Struggle for an Independent Aceh: The Ideology, Capacity, and Strategy of GAM,' *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Volume 26, No. 4 (July-August).

[2] See 'Aims of the ASNLF', *www.asnlf.net*.

[3] Ishak Daud interview in *The Jakarta Post*, 9 October 2003.

[4] Interview with Malik Mahmud, GAM Minister of State, Norsborg, 22 February 2002.

[5] Interview with Amri bin Abdul Wahab, GAM Tiro field commander, Banda Aceh, 22 April 2003.

[6] Interview with Malik Mahmud, GAM Minister of State, Norsborg, 22 February 2002.

[7] Interview with Hasan di Tiro, GAM Wali Negara, Norsborg, 22 February 2002.

[8] Interview with Malik Mahmud, GAM Minister of State, Norsborg, 23 February 2002.

[9] Interview with Gen. Endriatono Sutarto, Armed Forces Commander in Chief, TNI headquarters, Cilangkap, 5 May 2004.

[10] Data obtained from SGI Lhokseumawe, April 2003.

[11] As quoted by William Nessen in the *San Francisco Chronicle Magazine*, 2 November 2003.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Press Statement, ASNLF Military Spokesman, 26 January 2002.

[14] Interview with Malik Mahmud, GAM Minister of State, Norsborg , 23 February 2002.

[15] Interview with Amri bin Abdul Wahab, GAM Tiro field commander, Banda Aceh, 22 April 2003.

[16] Interview with Malik Mahmud, GAM Minister of State, Norsborg , 23 February 2002.

[17] Interview with Bill Cummings, Public Affairs Manager, ExxonMobil Oil Indonesia, Jakarta, 19 March 2003.

[18] Interview with Isnander al-Pasè, GAM spokesman, Nisam, North Aceh, 19 April 2003.

[19] Update IDPs, OXFAM, Banda Aceh, June 2001.

[20] Interview with Kamaruzzaman and Amni bin Marzuki, GAM negotiators, Banda Aceh, 25 December 2001.

[21] Interview with Hasan di Tiro, GAM Wali Negara, Norsborg, 22 February 2002.

[22] Interview with Sofyan Ibrahim Tiba, GAM senior negotiator, Banda Aceh, 21 April 2003.

[23] ASNLF, Official Statement on the Failure of the Joint Council Meeting of COHA in Tokyo on May 18, 2003 and the Declaration of War by Indonesia on Aceh, Stockholm, 20 May 2003.

[24] Interview with Sofyan Ibrahim Tiba, GAM senior negotiator, Banda Aceh, 21 April 2003.

[25] Interview with Sofyan Dawod, GAM Pasè commander, Nisam, North Aceh, 19 April 2003.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Interview with Helmi Mahera, Langsa community leader, Jakarta 7 April 2003.

[28] Confidential interview with contractor, Gedung Blangpria, North Aceh, 22 August 2002.

[29] Confidential interview with foreign contractor to ExxonMobil and PT Arun, 17 April 2003.

[30] Interview with humanitarian aid worker, Banda Aceh, 29 June 2001.

[31] Interview with Rizal Sukma, Aceh analyst, CSIS, Jakarta, 24 April 2001.

[32] Interview with Sofyan Dawod, GAM Pasè commander, Nisam, North Aceh, 19 April 2003.

[33] Interview with Amri bin Abdul Wahab, GAM Tiro field commander, Banda Aceh, 22 April 2003.

[34] Confidential interview with second humanitarian aid worker, 29 June 2001.

[35] Confidential interview with first humanitarian aid worker, 25 June 2001.

[36] Interview with resident (1) of Kresek, Kecamatan Bandar, 20 August 2002.

[37] Interview with resident (2), Kresek, Kecamatan Bandar, 20 August 2002.

[38] Interview with Aldar AB, former camat of Pondok Baru, Takengon, 20 August 2002.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Interview with Tengku Ibrahim, former head of Mukim Meukik, Tapak Tuan, 24 February 2001.

[41] Interview with Bintara Yakub, former village head of Manggamat, Tapak Tuan, 24 February 2001.

[42] Ibid.

Breaking the Deadlock: Civil Society Engagement for Conflict Resolution[1]

Aguswandi

With the collapse of the peace process and subsequent declaration of martial law in Aceh on 19 May 2003, the Indonesian government once again chose the military approach in solving the decades-long conflict in Aceh. Under martial law, Aceh was placed under the control of the military, who were given almost unlimited authority to shape and implement policy. It remains unlikely, however, that this most recent round of military operations will succeed in solving the crisis, as the conflict is a political one which requires a political solution.

This paper argues that a solution for the conflict in Aceh cannot be found without the involvement of Acehnese civil society in peace-building efforts, or in the absence of a genuine dialogue between Acehnese and Indonesian representatives. The dialogue should involve the current conflict parties, the Free Aceh Movement Group (GAM) and the Indonesian government, but also include significant involvement by representatives of civil society.

Why Acehnese civil society?

Civil society in Aceh must become an element in the search for a just and positive peace in the struggle to resolve the conflict in Aceh. Civil society groups are interested in transforming the conflict in such ways as to move beyond the simple discourse of national self-determination, and instead focus more on a broader struggle of people's self-determination in both Acehnese and Indonesian society. Together with many groups outside Aceh, civil society groups seek a democratic and peaceful solution to the conflict. In working to create a democratic society in Aceh, they encourage the conflicting parties to pursue their political goals through democratic and non-violent means. Made up of intellectuals, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), students, women's networks, media, and many other sectoral groups, Aceh's emerging civil society has played a significant role in transforming conflict and creating opportunities for building peace. Under the New Order (President Suharto's rule of 1966-1998), Acehnese in both rural and urban areas were greatly suppressed, but soon after the collapse of the New Order regime, people at all levels of society took initiatives to reclaim space for dialogue and popular engagement with regard to the crisis in Aceh. So prominent became their role, that when a local NGO, Walhi Aceh, carried out a poll asking who should represent the Acehnese, most of those elected were leaders of civil society groups.[2] Acehnese civil society groups have been active locally, nationally, and internationally, and have been working to build further networks across these different levels. (See following page for a table showing the range of Civil Society actors and initiatives.)

Civil society initiatives at local, national, and international levels

Level	Social Actors	Demands and Initiatives
Local:		
	- Student and youth movement - Women's groups - NGOs - Victims' groups - Intellectuals, academics - Progressive religious leaders - Artists - Sectoral organization such as farmers/fishermen, traders, drivers.	- Demilitarization: demonstrations, lobbying - Peace process: end to military impunity and accountability for human rights abuses - Political education to create a critical mass. - People's empowerment: community support networks, rights education, skills training, capacity-building workshops, debates, forums, - Justice for victims: human rights documentation, investigation, interviews with victims, legal support
National:		
	- Student - NGOs - Women's groups - Intellectual - Solidarity groups - Acehnese community in Indonesia	- Military and political reform: lobbying, demonstrations, - Accountability - Justice for victims - Democratization
International:		
	- Solidarity groups - Acehnese community abroad - International NGOs	- Justice and Peace - Building capacity of civil society - International pressure

Many organisations were formed to investigate and document cases of human rights abuse due to severe violence in Aceh beginning in the late 1980s and during the DOM period (Daerah Operasi Militer) (1990-1998). Aceh-based human rights groups like CORDOVA (an NGO educating the public on civil society and human rights), Koalisi NGO-HAM (a coalition of human rights NGOs in Aceh), and Kontras Aceh (The Commission for Involuntary Disappearances and Victims of Violence in Aceh) worked with national-level human rights groups such as Kontras and Lembaga Bantuan Hukum (LBH) in compiling chronologies, building databases, and preparing reports on the human rights situation in Aceh. In June 1998

such investigations were followed by persistent advocacy at local, national and international levels, eventually forcing the Indonesian government to declare an end to DOM.

The student movement

Following the end of DOM, student groups quickly emerged as the most active element within Acehnese civil society. During the period of *Reformasi*, a protest movement which began in early 1998, a number of student groups formed, including SMUR (Student Solidarity for the People), FARMIDIA (Muslim Students Front for Reform in Aceh), and KARMA (The Aceh Student Coalition for Reform). These groups were actively engaged in anti-military campaigns, advocacy for victims and internally displaced persons (IDPs), as well as many protest actions, hunger strikes, and general strikes. In March 1999, the student movement also campaigned for a boycott of the elections as an act of protest against the central government decision to continue military operations in Aceh. As a result of the boycott campaign, fewer than 50 per cent of eligible voters turned out to vote on election day.

In terms of political settlement, students were determined to seek a democratic and non-violent solution and began to campaign for a referendum as the best solution to the conflict. The idea of a referendum was first voiced at the All-Aceh Student and Youth Congress, held in February 1999 in Banda Aceh. With the participation of more than 200 groups, including many student and youth groups, several mass organizations and groups of victims of violence, it was decided that an organisation was to be set up to support a referendum, leading to the birth of the Aceh Referendum Information Center (SIRA). The Congress was organized through the building of a vast network of student and youth movement groups throughout the province, and soon students became the most prominent civil group in Aceh.

On 9 November 1999, a coalition of many student activists and youth groups in Aceh held the biggest rally in the history of Aceh. More than a million people participated in this mass rally in the capital of Banda Aceh to demand a referendum in Aceh.[3] It became a landmark event for the civil society movement. Not only was the rally a great success with almost 40 per cent of the population turning out, but it was also a very peaceful demonstration. This demonstration of widespread popular support for a referendum also put pressure on GAM to work toward a political settlement to the conflict. By the end of 1999, the word ‘referendum’ appeared throughout Aceh, painted on the walls of public buildings and along streets in towns and villages alike, thus challenging the independence discourse of GAM.

In addition to consolidating student groups behind the idea of a referendum, the student congress also established a model for students in strengthening other sectors of civil society. For example, student activists working to build support for victims facilitated a congress in 2000 out of which an organization was established called SPKP HAM (Solidarity of Victims of Human Rights Violations in Aceh). Similar congresses were held by women, *ulama* (religious scholars), and other groups. Guiding these initiatives was the belief that the movement had to be a people’s movement, not only a student movement, with the broader participation of the majority of the public.

Mobilizing rural-urban networks

During this time, many students also began to establish posts in the countryside to offer humanitarian assistance, and build support networks between the rural areas and urban

centres. One such group was the People's Crisis Center (PCC) established in 1999. The People's Crisis Center worked to assist and train internally displaced people to rebuild economic livelihoods, health facilities, and education systems, all of which had been eroded by the armed conflict. With the support of PCC workers, internally displaced villagers learned to be responsible for the management of their camps, handling such tasks as maintaining sanitation, distributing food, providing treatment for the sick, and organising makeshift classrooms for children whose education had been interrupted by the fighting. The PCC also encouraged processes of collective decision making which brought about critical changes in social agency within the groups. Women and children, for example, who previously did not participate in meetings at night, were now actively involved in all discussions where decisions were made. Displaced people were also involved in developing economic cooperatives, cultural-religious activities, and media work, thus enabling them to become active members of the civil movement.

Women's groups also played a prominent organizing role in the rural areas. One organisation, Flower Aceh was founded as early as 1989, and played a major role in supporting victims of rape and gender-based violence under DOM. Flower Aceh and other women's organizations, including students, established networks that offered women support and training in such diverse activities as trauma counselling, rebuilding economic livelihoods, family planning, and community awareness campaigns on gender equality and justice.

The most decisive outcome of popular mobilization was the emergence of a new leadership at many levels of Acehnese society, both in the urban and rural areas. Students played the most prominent role in strengthening the various sectors of civil society, and in building networks of urban-rural support. Students also initiated closer collaboration with Indonesian civil society groups in advocating a peaceful, non-military solution to the conflict, through advocacy, counselling, media campaigns, and cultural exhibitions. Work on the ground was also supported by the presence of foreign groups, such as OXFAM, Save the Children, Peace Brigades International, and the Jesuit Refugee Service.

Organising at the international level

Acehnese civil society has been active at the international level as well. Many local human rights groups have worked to build networks with other international organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch in their campaign to end the violence in Aceh. The most prominent group advocating human rights in Aceh at the international level is the International Forum for Aceh (IFA), established in 1998 in the United States by the late Jafar Siddiq Hamzah, founder and chairman of the IFA. In July 1999, IFA and Forum Asia co-sponsored a conference in Bangkok which resulted in one of the first meetings between GAM and the Indonesian government, opening the path for further negotiations between the two sides and the agreement for a Humanitarian Pause[4] the following year. In September 2001, exactly a year after Jafar's death, IFA worked with the American University to hold the Acehnese Brotherly Dialogue, during which the Acehnese Civil Society Task Force was established to coordinate civil society involvement in advancing the peace process.[5] These efforts to encourage dialogue between diverse groups on the ground continued right up until the collapse of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) in May 2003.

Civil society and the peace process

Even before the Humanitarian Pause, several groups in Aceh had been demanding an end to violence by both sides. One such group was Team 21, established in January 2000. An

umbrella group involving NGOs, student groups and religious organizations, Team 21 met with both GAM and Indonesian officials to demand a ceasefire and the establishment of peace zones in Aceh. Indeed, several NGOs were even involved in facilitating the meeting between Bondan Gunawan, the Indonesian Acting State Secretary (under President Abdurrahman Wahid – also known as Gus Dur), and Abdullah Syafii, the GAM leader in Aceh, to explore the possibility of a dialogue. This was the first open contact between an Indonesia government official and a GAM leader.

When representatives of the Henri Dunant Center (HDC)[6] went to Aceh, the initiative for a peace process gained momentum and began to dominate the political climate in Aceh. After several months of closed-door talks, GAM and the Indonesian government agreed to a Humanitarian Pause in June 2000. However, as negotiations progressed, civil society became increasingly marginalized from the process. The process only recognized the official existence of the armed parties to the conflict and, as a result, the civil society movement soon found itself without a clearly defined formal role, and little safeguard for their activities on the ground. This led to local groups being caught in an ambiguous position between the two armed parties, and no real possibility of participating in the peace process as independent, or 'third,' parties. Instead, civil society members who were appointed to sit on the joint committees were positioned either as representatives of either GAM or the Indonesian government, leading to the polarization of non-partisan groups.

These developments coincided with a worsening security situation that saw a serious escalation of violence as the first phase of the Humanitarian Pause was coming to an end by late August and early September 2000. During this period, student activists, humanitarian workers, intellectuals, journalists, and other civil actors increasingly became the new targets of the military. Among the growing numbers of incidents of disappearances, arbitrary arrests, torture, killings, and intimidation against civil society were the assassinations of Safwan Idris and Dayan Dawood, the rectors of Aceh's two universities, the kidnapping and murder of IFA chairman Jafar Siddiq Hamzah, and the kidnapping, torture, and execution of humanitarian workers from RATA (Rehabilitation of Torture Victims in Aceh). The re-launch of military operations also meant a resumption of violence in the rural areas and increased displacement of the population.

Nevertheless, civil society groups continued to foster the dialogue process while remaining critical of it, with many groups trying to create spaces for peace building activities in villages and towns. Such efforts included promoting support for the ceasefire, and for peace education and training, as well as building networks of monitoring. However, Indonesian security forces increasingly undermined such efforts. On 3 May 2002, for instance, a one-day seminar organised by the Aceh Civil Society Task Force (ACSTF), was banned at the eleventh hour by the police. The seminar, entitled "Building a New Commitment in Aceh" aimed to seek ways of bringing Acehnese civil society groups more directly into the peace process.[7] The meeting was to have been addressed by the vice-governor of Aceh, as well as a representative of GAM, and attended by Acehnese, Indonesian, and international NGO representatives. The ACSTF continued its activities focused on building trust and cooperation among diverse groups of Acehnese society throughout the negotiations, involving *ulama*, academics, businessmen and even members of GAM and the Indonesian security forces, until the breakdown of the COHA, and the declaration of Martial Law on 19 May 2003.

The exclusion of civil society groups from the process of peace building denied the importance of engaging the civilian population as equal partners at all levels of the process. As a result, civil society activism on the ground was not channelled into an engagement in political negotiations as an independent party, or alternative voice. In retrospect, this was clearly a lost opportunity. Indeed, at the time, many Acehnese saw the negotiations not just as

a dialogue between two armed groups, but as an opportunity to transform the very social relationships and inequalities that had created the conditions for the conflict. For many ordinary Acehnese, the negotiations were to be the first step towards changing the unjust system into a society based on democratic participation, as well as political, economic, and social justice.

Other factors have also contributed to the undermining of the role of civil society forces in Aceh during the period discussed here. One of these was the weak capacity of civil society groups. This was not only the result of lack of internal capacity but also due to the long period of suppression during which the constant militarization has weakened many critical elements within Acehnese society. Government policies have also had the effect of weakening local civil society, disempowering local communities and creating almost total dependency on official institutions and networks.

Under martial law, the constant military presence resulted in the collapse of civil space. It was not just GAM, but also the civil movement that became the prime target of the present war in Aceh. Students, activists, human rights defenders and community leaders have been intimidated, arrested, kidnapped and killed. Indeed, the very notion of the existence of legitimate dissent has been undermined, with any opponent of the government being classified as a potential rebel, and thus an enemy of the Indonesian state. For example, a few days after martial law was declared, the government named SIRA, Kontras, and SMUR as GAM-sympathisers. Since the declaration of martial law, activists found themselves targets of mass arrests and widespread manhunts in Aceh. To carry out their activities, all non-state actors had to obtain official permission from the same martial law authority which also served as the commander of military operations. The authority also closed Aceh to international humanitarian workers and foreign journalists. Restrictions were also imposed on any local NGO activities.

Another big challenge for this movement in Aceh has been to gain support from within Indonesian civil society. The engagement of both Acehnese and Indonesian civil society has remained an under-explored avenue for building support for the peace process in Aceh. As the conflict has reached a level of greater complexity, more creativity and effort will be required for its resolution. The government under President Megawati Sukarnoputri has showed little evidence of such creativity, resulting in the prioritising of political processes that do not take into account what is important to ordinary people, and in which they have no means of participation. Further engagement with Indonesian civil society thus remains important, not least as the victims of the conflict in Aceh are not only the Acehnese but also the wider Indonesian society. The Acehnese are the visible victims while the Indonesians are the invisible victims of the war in Aceh.

Recommendations

Despite the seemingly insurmountable obstacles to breaking the deadlock there are still measures that can be taken by various actors, domestically and internationally, to improve Aceh's chances for peace:

1. The Indonesian government should immediately end military operation in Aceh and return with GAM to the negotiation table.

Foreign governments, donors and other international supporters of a peace process for Aceh should increase the scope and urgency of current efforts to pressure the Government of Indonesia into ending martial law immediately and actively seeking the mediation of an international third party, as well as Acehnese civil society participation in order to find a

viable non-military solution to the conflict in Aceh. To that end, member states of ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and the EU (European Union), as well as the governments of Japan and the United States, all have a significant role to play in engaging the Indonesian government.

2. The Indonesian government should allow international humanitarian organisations and human right monitors access to Aceh.

The United Nations should continue to pressure the Indonesian government to allow access to Aceh. Various international humanitarian and human rights organisations that have experience working in Aceh have been trying, repeatedly, to regain access to the province after martial law authorities denied them 'Blue Book' renewals in the early stages of the new conflict – without valid versions of these immigration pass papers foreigners cannot remain in the country legally. Few organisations are able to provide their services in the 14-day access slots issued by the authorities. The few individual staff that have been permitted brief visits to the province have been forbidden to travel outside the capital to the areas worst affected by the current conflict. Access to the province should not be restricted to a fixed period of time. Agencies should be able to make their own security evaluations outside the capital.

3. All levels in the international community must ensure that the peace negotiations at the political level run concurrently with peace-building efforts throughout society.

UN agencies, governments, donors, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and NGOs should support capacity-building programs to prepare the local population for the various stages of the peace process and beyond. Logistical, financial, and political support for domestic civil society groups will assist their work in, for example, the reconstruction of economic, education and health systems, or political education and empowerment efforts.

4. International support for reform and democratization in Indonesia should be a policy priority.

The military remains the main obstacle to finding a political settlement in Aceh and Indonesia. The above recommendations should be coupled with ongoing pressure on and assistance to the Indonesian government in the appropriate manner that will support civil society, and weaken the Indonesian military politically (for example, demilitarization and demobilization; human rights investigations; restructuring of judicial mechanisms). Until this happens, local and national civil society will struggle to find a solution for the problems. Not until the Indonesian military is weakened politically, can a solution for this crisis in Aceh and Indonesia be found.

5. ***Civil society, on both the Acehnese and Indonesian sides, should work together to find a solution to the crisis in Aceh.***

This engagement by civil society must run parallel with efforts to facilitate talks between the Indonesian government and GAM. This could be done by developing and maintaining regular contact between, and network building efforts by, NGOs, student groups, intellectuals and activists from Aceh and the rest of Indonesia. Integrated strategies will assist efforts to define what kind of society they would like to build.

[1] A previous version of this paper titled 'Aceh: Civil Society, the Missing Piece of Peace Building' was published in 2004 in *Searching for Peace in Asia Pacific: An Overview of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding*, a volume edited by Annelies Heijmans, Nicola Simmonds, and Hans van de Veen, and published by Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., Boulder, CO.

[2] Walhi Aceh polling, June 1999.

[3] The referendum demanded was a similar type of referendum to that held in East Timor in 1999, in which independence and autonomy were options people could choose.

[4] The Humanitarian Pause was a dialogue approach to peace including a ceasefire trial and consultations seeking to end the armed conflict in Aceh negotiated in Switzerland between the Indonesian government and GAM, facilitated by the Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HDC). The Pause came into effect on 2 June 2000 and was extended several times, in various forms. It was replaced by the 'Peace through Dialogue' agreement on 10 March 2001

[5] Jafar was murdered in Medan, during a visit to Indonesia. His bound body was found along with four other unidentified bodies on 2 September 2000, three months after he returned to Aceh to open the local office of the IFA.

[6] The Henri Dunant Centre, based in Geneva and later renamed the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. See note 3.

[7] *Tapol bulletin* No. 166/167, April/May 2002.

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Annex 1 – Summary Workshop Report

Aceh Under Martial Law: Conflict, Violence and Displacement

A Day of Analysis

Hosted by the Refugee Studies Centre (RSC), Queen Elizabeth House,
University of Oxford in collaboration with the Asian Studies Centre, St Antony's College

20th May 2004, St Antony's College, Oxford
Convenor: Eva-Lotta Hedman, Senior Research Fellow, RSC

Summary Report

Background

On 6 November 2003, the Indonesian government announced that the existing state of emergency and the on-going massive military offensive in Aceh were to be extended for another six months. According to government sources, some 40,000 troops of the Indonesian armed forces (TNI), and additional units of the Mobile Police Brigade (the so-called 'BRIMOB') have been deployed since the first declaration of martial law on 19 May 2003. A reported $200 million has been officially allocated to this military campaign against the separatist Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and its armed wing (AGAM). Communication and travel has also been put under severe restrictions by the military, which has virtually closed off Aceh to non-Indonesian nationals, including media and humanitarian assistance organisations, since June 2003.

Of course, the TNI has made the management of refugee camps and the distribution of relief goods to internally displaced people quite a high-profile component of its military campaign, which has also featured so-called 'embedded journalists.' At the same time, however, TNI campaigns include forced evacuations and so-called 'sweeping' operations by the military, compulsory participation in mass loyalty oaths and rallies, and 'special screening' of civil servants and others. In combination, these campaigns suggest that, in the current climate in Aceh, forced displacement is perhaps best understood as a strategy of war deliberately pursued by the Indonesian armed forces. There are also reports of gross human rights violations, as well as concern that TNI officers already linked to such violations elsewhere in Indonesia and, in particular, East Timor, are currently serving in key posts in Aceh.

Issues

Against the backdrop of some 10,000 civilian casualties during a period of 30 years of protracted conflict, the current situation raises a number of especially grave concerns and important questions. First of all, there is concern that the militarization of the conflict in Aceh has placed an entire population under the discretionary powers of the military, including the

delivery of law and justice, as well as humanitarian assistance and protection for IDPs in the province. To what extent does the Indonesian military fail even on its own terms, and at considerable expense to the national budget? To what extent does this situation violate international law? Second, there is concern that the current militarization of the conflict in Aceh has served to polarize further the situation, in such ways as to undermine the implementation of 'Special Autonomy.' To what extent does such a process of polarization reflect – and reproduce – the political ambitions of certain factions in Jakarta? To what extent may (other factions/interests in) Jakarta contribute to the strengthening of 'civil' and 'political' society in Aceh through a sustained and systematic focus on 'good governance'? Third, there is concern that, despite sympathy for the plight of Acehnese, including IDPs in the province and elsewhere in Indonesia, foreign governments have remained unwilling to engage the current administration in Jakarta on this issue. To what extent does such evident caution reflect – and reproduce – the prerogatives driving the 'international war on terror'? To what extent may Aceh serve as a worrisome 'precedent' of a kind within the region?

Workshop

With these concerns and questions in mind a one-day workshop focused on Aceh was organised by the Refugee Studies Centre in collaboration with the Asian Studies Centre, St Antony's College. Coinciding with the announcement of the cessation of martial law on the 19th May 2004 the workshop brought together academics and practitioners to exchange perspectives and expertise to focus analysis and debate on recent developments in Aceh. Participants explored obstacles and opportunities for the long-term resolution of this protracted conflict. The workshop format allowed for the kind of analytical reflection *and* advocacy orientation that, it is hoped, policy makers might find especially useful.

Aceh Under Martial Law: Conflict, Violence and Displacement

A Day of Analysis

Programme

Thursday 20th May 2004,

9.30 – 9.45	Registration and Coffee
9.45 – 10.00	Welcome Address by Stephen Castles (Director, RSC)
	Workshop Introduction by Eva-Lotta Hedman (RSC)

Session I: Conflict, Violence and Displacement Chair: Stephen Castles

10.00-10.20	The Rootedness of Rebellion: Aceh in the Grip of the Past
	Tim Kell, Refugee Advisor, UK
10.20-10.40	Modes of Displacement during Martial Law
	Ali Aulia, Field Representative, JRS
10.40-11.00	In Dire Straits: Acehnese, Malaysia and the International Refugee Regime
	Eva-Lotta Hedman, Senior Research Fellow, RSC
11.00-11.45	Discussion

Session II: Inside Martial Law Chair: Ali Aulia

11.45-12.30	Anywhere But Fear: Inside Martial Law in Aceh
	Audiovisual recording, JRS Indonesia & Asia-Pacific
12.30-14.00	Lunch

Session III: Dynamics of Conflict and Resolution Chair: Eva-Lotta Hedman

14.00-14.20	The Free Aceh Movement (GAM): Terrorists or Freedom Fighters?
	Kirsten E. Schulze, Senior Lecturer, LSE
14.20-14.40	*Pace* Aceh: Democratization, Decentralization, and Demilitarization in Indonesia
	John T. Sidel, Reader, SOAS
14.40-15.00	Breaking the Deadlock: Civil Society Engagement for Conflict Resolution
	Aguswandi, Researcher, Tapol
15.00-16.00	Closing Discussion

Aceh Under Martial Law: Conflict, Violence and Displacement

A Day of Analysis

Participants

Aguswandi	Tapol – The Indonesian Human Rights Campaign
Ali Aulia	Field Representative, Jesuit Refugee Service
Graham Brown	Research Officer, Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity
Kerry Brown	Head of Indonesia & East Timor Section, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Lucy Carver	International Peace Brigades
Stephen Castles	Director, Refugee Studies Centre
Dawn Chatty	Deputy Director, Refugee Studies Centre
Siddo Deva	Regional Policy Adviser for East Asia, Oxfam
Catriona Drew	Lecturer in Law, School of African and Oriental Studies
Katherine Desormeau	MSc Student, Refugee Studies Centre
Rosemary Foot	Senior Fellow, St Antony's College
Ruth Halstead	Volunteer, International Peace Brigades
Eva-Lotta Hedman	Senior Research Fellow, Refugee Studies Centre
David Howlett	Indonesia Analyst, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Tim Kell	Refugee Advisor, UK
Arnim Langer	Postgraduate, Queen Elizabeth House
Gil Loescher	Senior Fellow, International Institute for Strategic Studies
Maryanne Loughry	Pedro Arupe Tutor, Refugee Studies Centre
Suriel Mofu	Postgraduate, St Cross College
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Zequito de Olivera	Timor-Leste
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Signe Poulsen	Indonesia and Timor-Leste Team, Amnesty International
Mark Rebick	Director, Asian Studies Centre, St Antony's
Graeme Rodgers	Research Fellow, Refugee Studies Centre
Nicola Rounce	Volunteer, International Peace Brigades

Philip Rudge	fmr. Gen. Secretary of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles
Paul Ryder	Research Information Officer, Refugee Studies Centre
Ramli Sa'ud	Minister Councillor, Embassy of Indonesia, UK.
E. Schroeder-Butterfill	Visiting Researcher, St Antony's College
Kirsten E. Schulze	Senior Lecturer, London School of Economics
John T. Sidel	Reader, School of African and Oriental Studies
Claire Smith	Postgraduate, London School of Economics
Liem Soei Liong	Tapol – The Indonesian Human Rights Campaign
Frances Stewart	Director, Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity
Pribadi Sutiono	First Secretary, Embassy of Indonesia, UK
Marianna Volpi	Postgraduate, Queen Elizabeth House
Victoria Wheeler	Researcher, Humanitarian Policy Group, Overseas Development Institute

Annex 2 – Notes on Contributors

Aguswandi, Current Contributor to Tapol The Indonesian Human Rights Campaign. Born to Acehnese parents in Sibreh, in Aceh Besar District, Aguswandi studied constitutional law at Syiah Kuala University in Banda Aceh, where he was elected Secretary General of the University Senate. With the organisation Student Solidarity with the People (*Solidaritas Mahasiwa Untuk Rakyat*, or SMUR), Aguswandi played an active role in a number of key civil society initiatives in Aceh during the transition from the New Order regime (1998-99). Subsequently, he also served as a local coordinator of the Aceh chapter of the Commission for Disappearances and Victims of Violence (*Komisi Untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Tindak Kekerasan*, or Kontras). Aguswandi has also campaigned for human rights, conflict resolution, civil society and development in Aceh at international fora in Southeast Asia, the United States and Europe.

Ali Aulia Ramly, Coordinator of Jesuit Refugee Services in Aceh. A graduate from Faculty of Psychology at University of Indonesia, Ali Aulia has worked in the areas of psychosocial support and child protection issues (UNICEF Emergency Office in West Timor). He has also served as Technical Adviser for Psychosocial Support and Child Trafficking of Children in Conflict Areas (UNICEF Jakarta). In addition to his work in the humanitarian field, Mr Ramly is also a founding member of PULIH, a centre for trauma prevention and rehabilitation in Jakarta.

Eva-Lotta E. Hedman, Senior Research Fellow, Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford. To date, Dr Hedman has focused most of her research and writing on questions of civil society, social movements and democratization in Southeast Asia. She has also developed a particular interest in the political dynamics of forced migration in the region. Related publications include *East Timor in Transition: Human Rights Law Review* (Guest Editor, Special Issue 1999), and 'Reimposition of Martial Law in Aceh,' *Forced Migration Review* (Vol. 19, 2004).

Timothy P. Kell, Community Services Refugee Adviser, Stonham (part of the Home Group housing association), Newcastle upon Tyne. In the past decade, Mr Kell has been working mainly in the field of social welfare support for refugees in the UK. With a BA Hons. in Politics from the University of York, he first went to teach English at a school in Sudan, before spending more than three years in Indonesia in the mid-1980s with the Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO). In 1992, he graduated from the University of Hull with an MA in Southeast Asian Studies. His MA dissertation was published as *The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion, 1989-1992* (Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1995).

Kirsten E. Schulze, Senior Lecturer in International History, London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London. Dr Schulze specializes on conflicts in the Middle East and Indonesia. She is currently a Visiting Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Jakarta, writing a co-authored book on democratisation and conflict in Indonesia. Dr Schulze's publications include 'The Struggle for an Independent Aceh: The Ideology, Capacity, and Strategy of GAM,' *The Anatomy of The Free Aceh Movement,* and 'Laskar Jihad and the Conflict in Ambon,' as well as several books on the Arab-Israeli conflict.