

26 May 2005

Indonesia: post-tsunami assistance risks neglecting reintegration needs of conflict-induced IDPs

Almost half a year after the tsunami hit the shores of Aceh and North Sumatra province, killing more than 200,000 people and displacing over 500,000, assistance is now slowly shifting from a humanitarian to a rehabilitation and reconstruction phase. The massive humanitarian operation launched by the international community helped the Indonesian authorities assist the affected population with their immediate needs and prevented a further deterioration of their living conditions. With the focus now on people and areas affected by the tsunami, there is a risk that the material and protection needs of returnees and communities affected by the long-running armed conflict in Aceh and living in remote areas will remain inadequately addressed. An estimated 120,000 to 150,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) were forced from their homes between May 2003 and December 2004 by a major military operation against separatist rebels of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). Although the majority had already returned and only a few thousand remained displaced prior to the tsunami, nearly all the displaced had experienced a severe loss of livelihood upon return and had since to struggle to survive under very difficult conditions. The GAM rebels and the government have in the last months made encouraging moves towards a negotiated settlement and are to meet again for a fourth round of talks at the end of May. The government has, however, refused to suspend its military operation and fighting is still reported in the province.

With the exception of Aceh and West Papua, where the government is fighting another separatist struggle, most of the country's former hot spots have been in a post-conflict recovery phase for over two years now. Since 2003 a large number of people have returned home or opted to settle elsewhere; for them the priority now is rebuilding their livelihoods, reconciling with old neighbours or integrating in new environments, and accessing land. Between 342,000 and 600,000 IDPs, however, remain unable to return, either because of ongoing conflicts or because of continued hostility from the ethnic/religious groups that forced them out. Considered as "vulnerable people" since the lifting of their IDP status in January 2004, many of these remaining IDPs are also still waiting for assistance to return or to resettle elsewhere. By declaring the IDP problem solved, the government is running the risk of jeopardising the transition from emergency assistance to economic recovery and undermining the reconciliation efforts undertaken in the past years. Only when this transition is successful can the empowerment, relocation or return of the displaced also be a success and their displacement end.

Background and main causes of displacement

In the wake of the financial crisis that hit Indonesia in 1998 and the fall of the Suharto regime the same year, religious and ethnic violence started to spread throughout the country. Against a backdrop of economic recession, widespread political discontent fuelled separatist aspirations. The resulting unrest saw more than 1.4 million people displaced between 1999 and 2002. The collapse of the Suharto regime triggered a process of political transition and democratic opening up that led to the election of President Abdurrahman Wahid in 1999, President Megawati Sukarnoputri in July 2001 and President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in October 2004.

The root causes of displacement in Indonesia come from transmigration programmes undertaken under Suharto's rule with the stated aim of reducing demographic disparities between different regions. Supported by international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the relocation of large groups of people, often from Java to less populated areas, led to growing ethnic imbalance and land disputes (Eric Toussaint, 18 October 2004). These deepening tensions broke out into open conflicts when the political vacuum created by Suharto's fall triggered new local political aspirations and power struggles. At the national level, the army – traditionally a key political player – sought to assert itself during the political upheaval.

Separatist struggles in Aceh on the north-western tip of the island of Sumatra and in West Papua are conflicts rooted in the impoverishment of the local population and their perceived or real exploitation by local elites closely linked to the central government. However, transmigration programmes have also played a role in both conflicts. In Aceh, tensions between Acehnese and mainly ethnic Javanese migrants resulted in the latter group's displacement to neighbouring North Sumatra province. In West Papua, out of a total popula-

tion of 2 million, 800,000 are settlers who came from Java and Sulawesi. The transfer of such a large population of a different ethnic and also religious background has created strong resentment among the local population.

Since the end of 2002, and with the exception of Aceh, Maluku and West Papua province, Indonesia has experienced relative stability; this has led to significant numbers of people returning in many parts of the country. From an estimated 1.3 million in mid-2002, the total number of displaced fell by more than 50 per cent to around 500,000 at the end of 2003. This significant reduction was mainly the result of more favourable conditions for return and a more effective implementation of the government's IDP policy issued in September 2001. Since 2004, the government has considered its IDP problem largely solved, in spite of the challenges remaining for those who have returned as well as for those who have been unable to do so. Some returns did not take place because of the continued hostility of ethnic/religious groups, others because the promised termination or empowerment grant has not been disbursed yet. According to the Ministry of Social Affairs, 342,000 people remained unassisted at the end of 2004 (Komnas HAM, March 2005). An evaluation of assistance to IDPs conducted during 2004 in Indonesia concluded that the official IDP category was too restrictive and that the number of IDPs could actually be closer to 600,000 (SIDA, 7 August 2004, p. iii)

Effects of the tsunami

The tsunami that hit Aceh and North Sumatra provinces on 26 December 2004 compounded an already catastrophic socio-economic situation, wiping out entire cities and villages along the coastline, killing at least 200,000 people and displacing half a million (Government of Indonesia, April

2005, p. 1). Aceh's physical and social infrastructure, already weakened by 29 years of conflict, suffered considerable damage. Damages and losses caused by the tsunami are estimated to amount to \$4.45 billion, the equivalent of 97 per cent of Aceh's GDP (Bappenas, 20 January 2004, p. iii). Prior to the disaster, an estimated 40 per cent of Aceh's population were already living below the poverty line (Laksamana.net, 29 October 2003). The Asian Development Bank estimated in early January that the disaster could plunge another million Acehnese into poverty (AFP, 13 January 2005).

On a more positive note, the tsunami forced the Indonesian government to open up the province to foreign humanitarian organisations whose presence there had been severely restricted since the beginning of a major military offensive launched in May 2003. This has allowed for a massive international humanitarian and reconstruction effort to be deployed in the province, although under the strict supervision of the military, in particular outside of Banda Aceh and Meulaboh. Three months after the humanitarian operations started, the government announced on 22 March 2005 that the shift from emergency assistance to rehabilitation and reconstruction would see only a few international organisations – those whose work is “vital to the rebuilding of the province” – being granted the right to continue to operate in the province after 27 April 2005 (GoRI, 22 March 2005). Two months later, the government had still not taken any decision regarding the presence of international NGOs (Indonesia-Relief.org, 10 May 2005).

The tsunami also incited both warring parties to scale down their operations and return to the negotiating table. Three rounds of peace talks took place between January and April in Finland and both parties are to meet again at the end of May. In a move that could prove crucial for the success of future negotiations, the rebels announced in February their decision to drop their independence claim in exchange for self-government (Xinhua, 22 February

2005). On 18 May, the government announced the lifting of the state of emergency in the province. While the restoration of civilian rule in the province is widely seen as a positive step, the absence of any reduction in the number of troops is raising doubts that this will translate into any concrete changes on the ground, where fighting has continued unabated since the beginning of the year (Newsday.com, 2 February 2005; AFP, 17 March 2005; Forum-Asia, 5 April 2005, p. 7; AFP, 19 May 2005). Opposed to any political role that GAM could play in the future, and insisting that a military presence will be required even after a peace deal is struck, the government is yet to make the important compromises required to lead to such an agreement (Reuters, 19 May 2005).

Conflict-induced displacement in Aceh

The May 2003 military operation in Aceh had put an end to a short-lived peace agreement signed in December 2002 between the government and the GAM rebels. The agreement had raised high expectations that it could put an end to a 29-year-old conflict, which had caused some 12,000 deaths and displaced some half a million people over the previous decade. However, these hopes were dashed by the offensive, which sent the province into yet another spiral of violence, destruction and displacement, only too familiar to most Acehnese.

One year into the military operation, it was estimated that 125,000 people had been forced from their homes by the fighting and forced relocation strategies employed by the army to separate the insurgents from the civilian population (JRS, 17 April 2004). During 2004, a significant decrease in the IDP figures was reported and only a few thousands were reported to be living in the official IDP camps. The decrease continued throughout the year and only days before the

tsunami hit Aceh, the International Office for Migration (IOM) reported a total of 1,800 IDPs, all of them living in camps (IOM, 20 December 2004).

It is, however, likely that these official figures failed to capture the full scope of the displacement caused by the military operation. Fear of being interrogated by the military in the camps and of losing their property and livestock prompted many displaced to avoid joining the lists of officially displaced. Instead they sought refuge in the forests, unregistered camps and with relatives (JRS, 1 August 2003/PCC-Aceh, 12 June 2003). Others fled the province to Malaysia or to neighbouring North Sumatra, although the numerous checkpoints established on the main roads between Aceh and North Sumatra since May 2003 made it reportedly extremely difficult for people to leave the conflict-affected province (Eva-Lotta Hedman, January 2004). North Sumatra province has been a flight destination for many people fleeing the Aceh conflict since 1999. Currently there are over 100,000 IDPs spread over the province with the largest concentration – more than 60,000 – living in Langkat district (OCHA, 9 April 2004, p.43).

Displaced and impoverished

In its fight against GAM, the military used a strategy of forced displacement aimed at separating the rebels from the rest of the population, allegedly "for their own safety" (AFP, 4 June 2003). Many displaced were suddenly told to evacuate and were moved in large trucks to official camps. There were reports of camps lacking drinking water and sanitation, and suffering from food shortages, insufficient medical services and outbreaks of contagious diseases (Eye on Aceh, April 2004; JRS, 17 April 2004).

Prior to the offensive in May 2003, livelihood assessments in the province had shown that years of conflict had disrupted the livelihoods of all civilians in Aceh, with the displaced par-

ticularly affected (UN Inter-Agency Mission, 15 January 2003; WFP Livelihood Survey, June 2002). The military operation further aggravated the living conditions of an already fragile population, disrupting food supplies, electricity, water, schooling and access to healthcare for hundreds of thousands.

While the government's integrated operation provided for accommodation, health care and food assistance to the displaced, at least those who sought refuge in the official camps, insufficient assistance was made available for the rehabilitation and recovery of the displaced upon return to their homes. Most of them were able to return after relatively short stays in the camps, but often they found little left of their homes and property (Eye on Aceh, April 2004, p.10; ICG, 23 July 2003, p.5).

A survey conducted during 2004 by IOM and the government revealed alarming drops in revenues and livelihood opportunities among ex-IDPs following their return. While an average of 91 per cent of the displaced had an income prior to their displacement, this proportion fell to 40 per cent after displacement. The two main factors behind this dramatic drop in income were loss of means of livelihood and lack of security for engaging in productive activities. High levels of food insecurity were also recorded among ex-IDPs with only 62 per cent eating three meals a day. Returnees living in Aceh Utara, Pidie and Aceh Barat Daya districts were particularly affected (IOM-GoRI, September 2004, pp. 16-17).

Military operation results in widespread rights abuses

The imposition of martial law at the beginning of the offensive was accompanied by a wide range of repressive measures, limiting civil liberties while giving the military a free

hand in applying counter-terrorist tactics. Reports of violence and abuses against civilians have emerged from various sources, including government sources.

In a report published two months before the tsunami, Amnesty International asserted that it had found “ample evidence of a disturbing pattern of grave abuses of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights” in Aceh. While both sides were found responsible for human rights violations, the Indonesian security forces were said to bear the primary responsibility for the abuses (AI, October 2004, p.1).

Acehnese refugees in Malaysia interviewed by Human Rights Watch described violations that included extra-judicial executions, forced disappearances, arbitrary arrest and detentions, forced relocations of civilians and limits on their freedom of movement (HRW, December 2003, p.5). In March 2004, the National Human Rights Commission reported that it had found indications of widespread human rights violations against civilians perpetrated by both sides, including torture, rape and kidnapping (Jakarta Post, 10 March 2004; Kompas, 29 August 2003). One month later, the government acknowledged that the war in Aceh had led to numerous violations committed by the military (Jakarta Post, 6 May 2004).

More than 2,000 rebels have been reportedly killed since the beginning of the military offensive (Washington Post, 28 January 2005). According to NGO sources, many of those killed actually were civilians caught in the conflict (John Roosa, 11 January 2005; USDOS, 28 February 2005, sect.1 a.).

Fighting still reported in Aceh

It is against this backdrop that the tsunami devastated the coastal areas of the province on 26 December 2004. With the world’s attention suddenly focused on Aceh and faced with an emergency well beyond its capacity to deal

with, the government could not keep the province sealed off any longer and had to allow entry to foreign aid workers and even foreign military forces. While the government had opted for a one-dimensional military response to “crush” the GAM rebels during the previous eighteen months, it came under pressure to re-open peace talks with the rebels, which it did shortly after the disaster.

However, ignoring the unilateral ceasefire declared by the GAM rebels in the days following the tsunami, the military refused to scale down its counter-insurgency operations (AFP 17 March 2005). Between January and May, the military claimed to have killed several hundred rebels (DPA, 19 May 2005). At the third round of talks held in Helsinki in mid-April, the government again turned down GAM’s offer for a ceasefire, preferring instead to reinforce its military presence in the province (AFP, 14 April 2005).

The dual role – humanitarian and military – assigned to the Indonesian army in the wake of the tsunami and the restrictions imposed on foreign aid workers’ humanitarian access is raising concern that aid might not be reaching all those in need and that distribution of aid has sometimes been guided by military concerns rather than humanitarian ones (HRF, 10 February 2005, p. 3; INFID, 11 March 2005, p. 3).

Already prior to the tsunami, humanitarian access to areas known as GAM strongholds – or “black areas” – was reportedly extremely poor (AI, 20 January 2005, p. 2). The restrictions imposed on the humanitarian community’s access to areas outside the main cities of Banda Aceh and Meulaboh since the beginning of the year has reportedly not led to any significant hampering of the delivery of aid. A month after the tsunami, foreign journalists in Aceh were reportedly strongly encouraged to focus on

disaster-hit regions and to avoid covering the conflict-affected areas, making any independent assessment of these areas very difficult (RSF, 27 January 2005).

Past experiences have shown that it is difficult for assistance to remain neutral when one warring party is involved to the degree the Indonesian military are involved in the distribution of aid in the wake of the tsunami. In these polarised environments distribution of humanitarian aid is often used as a tool to assert control over a population in need. The military have been reported to ask seeing ID cards before handing out aid and soldiers have reportedly continued to intimidate local NGO workers (John Roosa, 11 January 2005; The Australian, 12 January 2005; HRF, 10 February 2005, p.4).

Need for political solution to the conflict

The massive assistance effort, which saw the deployment of 8,000 Indonesian and 1,800 foreign volunteers backed by pledges of billions of dollars, managed to cover the immediate needs of the affected population and prevent further deterioration of their living conditions (WFP, 25 March 2005). After three months of emergency assistance provided by the national authorities with the help of the international community, the assistance began shifting towards a rehabilitation and reconstruction phase. At the end of April, the Master Plan developed by the Ministry of National Development Planning (BAPPENAS) was adopted to serve as a guide to rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in the areas affected by the tsunami during the next five years. The priority of the rehabilitation phase, which will last until the end of 2006, will be to restore basic social services. During the reconstruction phase, planned from 2006 to 2009, the aim will be to rebuild the region's economy, infrastructure and social institutions (Government of Indonesia, 2 May 2005).

In a positive move that was likely to receive the approval of most IDPs, the government decided to stop the construction of relocation camps and to start building permanent houses near the original homes of the displaced (ACT, 31 March 2005). This would enable the displaced to more actively participate in the rehabilitation of their lives instead of waiting in relocation sites. A multi-agency survey carried out three months after the disaster showed that a majority of Acehnese would prefer to be given semi-permanent or permanent houses, instead of staying in government-provided barracks (IOM, 6 May 2005).

Critics of the programme say that while it is comprehensive and wide-ranging, the programme fails to address important issues such as the unemployment problem or a social security programme to help the most vulnerable (Jakarta Post, 1 April 2005). With more than half of the population now living below the poverty line, it would seem urgent to prioritise the creation of jobs while also addressing the causes of the lack of economic opportunities. A survey carried out by IOM in March revealed that only 4 per cent of Acehnese interviewed said they had received assistance to re-establish a livelihood and almost all listed employment as their top priority (IOM, 6 May 2005).

Reconstruction efforts are likely to remain insufficient if they are not accompanied by political measures addressing the root causes of the 29-years old conflict. The good will shown publicly by both the government and the GAM rebels since the beginning of the year is encouraging, but so far these positive steps have not been matched by actions on the ground, where fighting and abuses have been reported to continue. The tsunami has provided both parties with a unique opportunity to start on a fresh basis and to explore new political solutions. In addition to providing for the humanitarian and material needs of Acehnese people, the international

community should also ensure that their protection needs will be addressed in the future. Achieving this will require unimpeded access for independent observers to all areas of the province in order to monitor the human rights situation. This will be the only way to hold both parties accountable to the promises made within the framework of any future agreement.

Return still problematic in many regions of Indonesia

In addition to Aceh, two other provinces in Indonesia were hit by conflict and displacement during 2004. In Maluku, renewed violence displaced some 10,000 people in April 2004 and in West Papua province, where the government faces another separatist struggle, it was reported that counter-insurgency operations conducted between August and October 2004 against rebels of the Free Papua Movement (OPM) could have forced as many as 20,000 people to flee into the forests (DPRIN, 17 November 2004; Dateline, 16 March 2005). Lack of humanitarian access for aid workers and independent observers means that little is known about the fate of these displaced, but local sources reported that the displaced were short of food and medicine and that they were afraid to return to their villages (Elsham News Service, 21 December 2004/AI, 6 December 2004).

Elsewhere in Indonesia, the relative calm and stability observed in the country's former hot spots has allowed for major returns and the lifting of the IDP status for many displaced after the reception of termination or empowerment grants from the government. However, many have not received the promised assistance, either because of a lack of funds or because of misuse of that money (Jakarta Post, 20 August 2004). Others have used the termination grant to return but still face difficulties to restart a livelihood or to regain their property and houses occupied by others in their absence.

In most regions, complex issues which are vital to ensure the sustainability of returns and resettlements, remain to be addressed. These include land and property rights, housing, access to education, reconciliation between communities, protection and security and the availability of economic opportunities (OCHA & Bakornas, July 2003).

Areas where return has been possible since 2003 include Central Sulawesi, North Maluku, and to a lesser extent Maluku Province and Central Kalimantan, where local hostility to the return of displaced Madurese is still an obstacle. The estimated 28,000 East Timorese refugees living in West Timor and unwilling to return home have since the beginning of 2003 lost their refugee status and have been offered Indonesian citizenship as well as the same resettlement options as IDPs. In early 2005, 16,000 people were still living in camps near the border, while 12,000 had been resettled in other areas of the province (Writenet, February 2005, p. 22).

In Central Sulawesi the signing of the Malino peace agreement at the end of 2001 put an end to three years of conflict between Christian and Muslim communities that displaced some 150,000 people. The trend there is positive, with reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts well under way. However, return has been slower than expected. This is mainly due to the persistence of tensions and occasional eruptions of violence in the province. Over twenty people died in communal violence during 2004 (U.S. DOS, 28 February 2005, sect. 1. a). The situation is contained by the presence of security forces, but many fear that violence may flare up again when they pull out. The society is still polarised between Christians and Muslims and few envisage a return to mixed communities. As of March 2005, an estimated 21,000 people were still waiting for the empowerment grant from the government (UNOHC, 31 March 2005).

Return and resettlement has been ongoing in North Maluku in the last three years and the focus of assistance is now on durable solutions and economic empowerment. It is estimated that only 13,000 people remain displaced in the province, mainly spread across Halmahera and Tidore islands (CARDI, 16 March 2005). Another 13,000 people from North Maluku still live in camps in North Sulawesi, but they are no longer considered as IDPs by the government and it is likely that they will not return. The majority of IDPs do not desire to return and it has been recommended that priority be given to the resolution of land ownership problems and economic development to allow them to locally resettle (OCHA, 30 June 2004). A study focusing on the relationship between the displaced and their hosts recommended that camps should be closed and that schemes to empower the poorest IDPs be developed (Duncan, C., 2005, p. 42). From a mixed population prior to the eruption of violence, North Maluku is now becoming a more religiously divided province. Muslims are settling in Muslim communities while Christians are staying with Christians.

In April 2004, renewed violence between Christians and Muslims in the capital of Maluku province, Ambon claimed the lives of 38 people and caused the displacement of some 10,000 (ICG, 17 May 2004, p.7). Since then, tension has remained high in the capital, where invisible demarcation lines have been drawn between the two religious communities, exacerbating already existing obstacles to return. In March 2005, 19 people were injured during an upsurge of sectarian violence (AP, 22 March 2005).

Of the estimated 30,000 households still displaced in June 2004, it has been reported that more than half had received assistance to return or relocate by the end of 2004, leaving an estimated 60,000 individuals unassisted as of early 2005 (Government of Maluku province, 4 June 2004; Maluku IDP Coalition, 9 December 2004). Lack of coordination, limited funding

and corruption has reportedly constrained the provision of the return packages to all IDPs (Jakarta Post 19 July 2004; Jakarta Post, 20 August 2004; JRS 23 August 2004). For those who have received the assistance and returned, it was reported that they still faced significant challenges including land ownership disputes, hostility of local communities and the lack of rehabilitation of social services in their area of return. For those living in relocation sites, lack of job opportunities and shortage of land were reported as common problems. Overall, the humanitarian needs of the remaining IDPs and returnees are being met and the most pressing needs are for durable solutions and economic empowerment.

In East Java, some 100,000 Madurese displaced from Central Kalimantan due to ethnic tensions in 2001 are waiting for safety and security guarantees before returning home. Between 30,000 and 57,000 people managed to return to Central Kalimantan during 2004 (OCHA, March 2005; U.S. DOS 28 February 2005, sect. 5; ECHO, 22 December 2004, p. 2). The absence of a clear government policy on the return of the Madurese to central Kalimantan and the continued hostility of the provincial government to their return make it difficult to envisage any large-scale return in the near future (OCHA, 9 April 2004, p.14; WB, February 2005, p. 45). In the meantime, the Madurese have to struggle to make ends meet on Madura island, an overcrowded island with limited resources. A UN assessment mission conducted in June 2004 concluded that virtually all IDPs on Madura wished to return and that they cited lack of funds as the main obstacle. Further, living conditions in camps and private housing were described as below acceptable standards (OCHA, 30 June 2004; ECHO, 22 December 2004, p. 2). It is estimated that 90 per cent of the displaced are unemployed (WB, February 2005, p.11). The lack of an integrated approach in a region where the

local population is as much deprived and in need of assistance as the IDPs is reported to have created serious tensions between the two groups.

The majority of the remaining IDPs in Indonesia are those who resulted from cross-provincial movements and cannot or do not want to return because of the continued hostility of the ethnic/religious groups that forced them to flee or because the conflict is still ongoing in their area of origin. It will be important to ensure that they are properly resettled or that they are assisted in integrating into the new environments where many have now lived for years. IDPs in North Sumatra, East Nusa Tenggara (West Timor) and East Java (Madura island) all need alternative solutions to a return that is often not possible in the near future. Others in Maluku province are willing to return but require better information on their entitlements and more assistance.

Many IDPs still waiting for assistance

The Indonesian government has generally acknowledged its responsibility for IDPs and shown commitment to assisting them at the various stages of displacement. Often confronted by challenges beyond its capacities, the government has also relied on the help of the international community to deal with the displacement crisis. The United Nations and international NGOs have helped the Indonesian government assist the displaced since the conflicts erupted in 1999. From 2001 to 2004, the international community's support for the handling of the IDP crisis reached \$81 million, the majority of which was channelled through three successive UN appeals (SIDA, 7 August 2004, p. 9). The UN Humanitarian Coordinator, supported by OCHA, is the focal point for assistance to the IDPs and the government's direct interlocutor on IDP matters.

In September 2001, the government formulated a national policy to address the problem of internal displacement in the country, suggesting that it could be solved by the end of 2002. Two years later, the deadline set for IDPs to choose between the three options contained in the national IDP policy had been enforced in most provinces. Since the lifting of IDP status in early January 2004, the displaced are no longer considered as IDPs but only as "poor" or "vulnerable people" and any funding for them is to be drawn from the provincial or district budgets (OCHA & Bakornas, July 2003, p.27).

While the ending of assistance might be justified for some groups of displaced who have been assisted to return and managed to restart a decent life, others are still waiting to be able to return to their homes after years of displacement and have not yet received the promised assistance. The implementation of the IDP policy has been fraught with obstacles and problems.

The IDP definition used by the government has seemed to include only people who are still displaced, while excluding those who *have been* displaced. Thus, once returned or resettled, the displaced are considered as having no further needs (SIDA, 7 August 2004, p. iv). However, incomplete or insufficient assistance has been reported in many provinces of the country with returned or resettled populations still facing important humanitarian challenges. In Aceh, assistance provided to the displaced upon return was considered by half of the returnees as insufficient to help them recover from their displacement (IOM-GoRI, September 2004, p. 18). In North Maluku, it was reported that the most serious problem faced by the returnees was that not everybody had received the housing package, even when entitled to (SIDA, 7 August 2004, p. 13). In some cases, people have returned to their villages but have been unable to regain their land and property occupied by others.

Coordination problems between sectoral agencies tasked to assist IDPs and insufficient participation of the IDPs themselves in the resettlement process have been reported to result in poorly planned resettlement sites, situated far away from employment opportunities and often lacking essential services such as health and education (Sweeting, Conway & Hameed, September 2004; Elmquist, Michael, December 2001). Madurese IDPs in West Kalimantan were given houses and land in one of the several relocation sites outside the capital Pontianak. However, they did not receive ID cards because they were considered as temporary “settlers” and the government did not want them to be able to buy the land. When IDP assistance was stopped in May 2003 and the displaced had to turn to services of the social security net, they could not access these services because they did not possess identity cards (SIDA, 7 August 2004, p. 88).

A lack of coordination between provinces has also been reported as a serious problem. The decentralisation programme under way throughout Indonesia since 2000 and the absence of implementing guidelines issued with the national IDP policy in 2001 often resulted in considerable discrepancies between provinces in the assistance provided to the displaced. This has reportedly led to confusion among IDPs about their entitlements and coordination problems between provinces. The lifting of the IDP status has given more autonomy to the provinces in dealing with the IDP problem and will thus require the provinces to better coordinate between themselves to manage the return of cross-province IDPs.

At the same time, more autonomy and devolution of responsibility to the provincial level can provide an opportunity to better integrate civil society groups and the IDPs themselves in the process. In addition, it offers an opportunity to include the rehabilitation of the returnees in long-term schemes that include and benefit the local population. This will avoid creating jealousies that undermine the reconciliation and

confidence-building phase needed to avoid further eruptions of violence.

By declaring the IDP crisis solved and overlooking the needs of some groups of displaced, the government runs the risk of jeopardising the transition from emergency assistance to economic recovery and undermining the reconciliation efforts undertaken in the past years. Only when this transition is successful can the empowerment, relocation or return of the displaced also be a success and their displacement end.

The tsunami has created a situation where an enormous amount of money and resources have been channeled towards one particular category of IDPs (the tsunami-affected) within one particular IDP situation. The problem is that such a limited focus runs the risk of diverting the attention away from other IDP situations in Indonesia where continued support from the government and from the international community is still needed. By declaring the IDP problem over, the government has since 2004 been sending a wrong signal to donors. The low level of support enjoyed by the 2004 Consolidated Appeal (30 per cent) has curtailed support to the rehabilitation and reconciliation efforts underway in many areas of return. It is important that the extraordinary support enjoyed by people displaced by the tsunami in Aceh does not come at the expense of other IDPs elsewhere in the country, but rather serves as a standard for other IDP situations.

Note: This is a summary of the Global IDP Project's country profile of the situation of internal displacement in Indonesia. The full country profile is available online [here](#).

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Note: All documents used in this profile summary are directly accessible on the [List of Sources](#) page of the Indonesia country page.

About the Global IDP Project

The Global IDP Project, established by the Norwegian Refugee Council in 1996, is the leading international body monitoring internal displacement worldwide.

Through its work, the Geneva-based Project contributes to protecting and assisting the 25 million people around the globe, who have been displaced within their own country as a result of conflicts or human rights violations.

At the request of the United Nations, the Global IDP Project runs an online database providing comprehensive and frequently updated information and analysis on internal displacement in some 50 countries.

It also carries out training activities to enhance the capacity of local actors to respond to the needs of internally displaced people. In addition, the Project actively advocates for durable solutions to the plight of the internally displaced in line with international standards.

For more information, visit the Global IDP Project website and the database at www.idpproject.org.

Media contact:

Jens-Hagen Eschenbächer

Database / Communication Coordinator

Tel.: +41 (0)22 799 07 03

Email: jens.eschenbaecher@nrc.ch

Global IDP Project

Norwegian Refugee Council

Chemin de Balexert 7-9

1219 Geneva, Switzerland

www.idpproject.org

Tel: +41 22 799 0700

Fax: +41 22 799 0701