

Aceh Conflict Monitoring Update

1st – 31st October 2005

World Bank/DSF



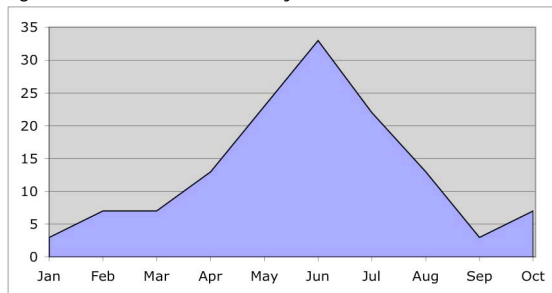
As part of the support program to the peace process, the Conflict and Community Development Program, within the World Bank Jakarta, is using a newspaper conflict mapping methodology to record and categorize all incidents of conflict in Aceh as reported in two provincial newspapers (Serambi and Aceh Kita). The Program publishes monthly updates and analysis of the data, complimented by fieldwork where possible, in both English and Indonesian.¹

Compared to August and September, the data for October shows less positive trends. An increase to seven GAM-GoI related incidents occurred, four of which were in the last week of the month. This brings total post-MoU incidents to 13, which have been spread across eight districts and 11 *kecamatan*. Vigilante incidents declined in October but still remain relatively high. In contrast, local level conflict increased substantially to 30 incidents. Explanations include, changing editorial policy of newspapers, the effects of a security vacuum, and possibly the opening of socio-political space for contestation at the local level.

GAM-GoI incidents increase in October

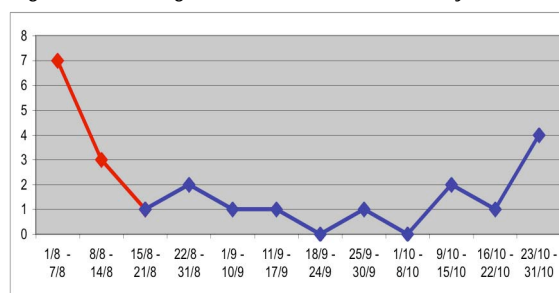
Incidents of GAM-GoI conflict more than doubled from a 2005 low of three in September to seven in October.² This remains low, compared to earlier months of this year (Figure 1), but on a week-by-week basis, it is the highest experienced since the signing of the MoU on August 15th (Figure 2). More than half of these incidents were in the last week of October. It will be important to see whether this escalation continues into November, or whether it is just a temporary upsurge.

Figure 1: GAM-GoI incidents by month



Source: Newspaper dataset

Figure 2: Post-August 15th GAM-GoI incidents by week



Source: Newspaper dataset

¹ There are limitations to using newspapers to map conflict: newspapers, particularly those published at the provincial level, do not pick-up all incidents and there may be bias in reporting certain incidents. Generally, newspapers are reliable for recording incidents of violence and actors involvement; they are less reliable for mapping resolution actors and small local non-violent conflict incidents. For more information see: Patrick Barron and Joanne Sharpe (2005). "Counting Conflict: Using Newspaper Reports to Understand Violence in Indonesia", *Indonesian Social Development Paper* No. 7. Jakarta: World Bank. This report as well as the monthly monitoring updates are available online at: www.conflictanddevelopment.org The dataset is available for those interested. Please contact Samuel Clark at: sclark@wboj.or.id

² In last month's Update we reported two incidents of GAM-GoI related conflict in September. However, on the 14th October Aceh Kita reported an incident of *kontak senjata* (firefight) in Aceh Timur on 30th September. Reportedly TNI troops fired on villagers of Kuala Simpang Ulim who were returning to their village 10 months after the tsunami. The military claims that they were shooting in self-defence from a GAM attack. This was refuted by Tjut Kafami, GAM spokesman for Peureulak, on the grounds that GAM had already surrendered their weapons.

Post-MoU incidents vary geographically but less so substantively

Since the signing of the MoU 13 incidents of GAM-GoI conflict have been spread across eight districts and 11 *kecamatan* (Table 1). The only *kecamatan* to experience more than one incident is Pante Ceremen, Aceh Barat. The forms of GAM-GoI conflict also vary; seven incidents of shootings, three of extortion, and one each of harassment and “flag-flying” have occurred.

Table 1: Post-August 15th impacts of GAM-GoI incidents by district³

District	Incidents	Deaths	Injuries
Aceh Utara	4	2	0
Aceh Timur	2	0	4
Aceh Barat	2	1	1
Nagan Raya	1	1	0
Bireuen	1	0	1
Aceh Barat Daya	1	0	0
Aceh Besar	1	0	0
Lhokseumawe	1	0	0
Total	13	4	6

Source: Newspaper dataset

In October, incidents were recorded in five different *kabupaten*:

▪ *Nagan Raya, Kecamatan Darul Makmur, 12th October*

Serambi Indonesia and Aceh Kita both reported a shooting by members of the police that resulted in the death of one GAM member. It was reported that police fired on the victim as he was trying to escape along with three colleagues following an aborted attempt to take a car. GAM’s Senior Representative claims that the GAM members were not involved in criminal activity but were simply borrowing the vehicle. GAM expressed regret over the shooting incident.

▪ *Aceh Timur, Kecamatan Peudawa, 14th October*

Aceh Kita reported that TNI forces in Peudawa shot at four GAM members. One member was seriously injured and subsequently transferred to Medan. According to the newspaper, GAM Senior Representative, Irwandi Yusuf, called for a transparent investigation into the incident. The Head of AMM, Pieter Feith, was reported to have requested that TNI investigate the incident and ensure that appropriate disciplinary action be taken. TNI Senior Representative, Bambang Darmono, was still considering if the incident required military disciplinary action or a criminal investigation.

▪ *Aceh Barat Daya, Kecamatan Blang Pidie, 18th October*

Aceh Kita reported an incident of GAM flag-flying in Blang Pidie, soon after TNI troops had left the area. According to GAM’s representative in the AMM, a former GAM member named Amri who had previously surrendered to TNI troops carried out the incident. AMM Team Leader in Blang Pidie, Leon Bruin, suggested that incidents such as this could disturb the peace process.

▪ *Aceh Utara, Kecamatan Nisam, 24th October*

Aceh Kita reported that 18 members of the Anti-Separatist group Benteng Rakyat Antiseperatis (*Berantas*) fled their homes in *Kecamatan* Nisam. This, the TNI stated, was in response to the

³ The “Buildings Damaged” column has been removed from this table. No damage has been recorded in the past three months.

kidnapping of one *Berantas* member by a former GAM member. In response, Irwandi Yusuf, stated that this was a private matter between a former GAM and *Berantas* member, and hinted that the incident was justified in response to the GAM member's house being burnt down by *Berantas* during Martial Law period.

▪ *Aceh Utara, Kecamatan Syamtalira Bayu, 29th October*

Aceh Kita reported that police arrested a former GAM member for taking hostage and torturing a TNI member. The incident took place the day before the arrest when the TNI member visited a village to collect a debt. Euge Maemen, a member of AMM in Aceh Utara, was quoted as saying that it was appropriate for the case to come under police investigation as it was a criminal act. GAM's Senior Representative in AMM, Irwandi Yusuf, expressed disappointment with this decision.

▪ *Aceh Utara, Kecamatan Muara Batu, 30th October*

GAM reportedly stopped a 37 year-old male from *Kecamatan* Muara Batu who was accused of exploiting citizens whilst pretending to be a GAM member. Following a request from GAM to the AMM in Aceh Utara, police were reported to have investigated the incident.

▪ *Lhokseumawe, Kecamatan Muara Dua, 30th October*

In a similar incident to that in Aceh Utara on the same day, Aceh Kita reported that police stopped two former GAM members for various illegal acts against shop owners in Pasar Cunda, Lhokseumawe. Yusuf, one of the accused, claimed that they were not blackmailing shop owners but, rather, collecting funds to assist orphans from the conflict.

Vigilante incidents decline on September but remain high

In the month of October six incidents of vigilante/gang-type incidents were recorded. This is a decline on September, the equal highest for the year, but rates remain high. Since the signing of the MoU more vigilante incidents than GAM-GoI incidents have been recorded (16 compared to 13). Similarly, the impacts have been higher (compare Table 1 above and 2).

As for September, two deadly incidents resulted from vigilante violence where the assailants and their motives were unidentified. Again these incidents occurred in Aceh Utara and Bireuen. Two smaller incidents were also recorded, as well as one incident of a *Brimob* beating a student in Lhokseumawe.

Table 2: Post-August 15th impacts of vigilante incidents by district

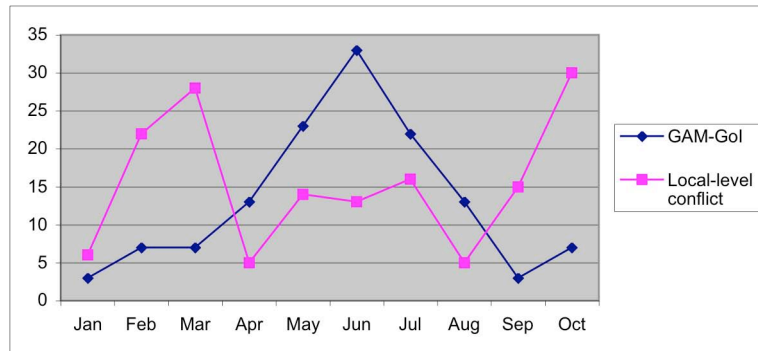
District	Incidents	Deaths	Injuries
Bireuen	3	4	0
Aceh Utara	3	2	1
Pidie	2	0	1
Lhokseumawe	3	0	3
Aceh Barat	1	0	1
Langsa	1	0	1
Aceh Selatan	1	0	0
Aceh Timur	1	0	0
Gayo Lues	1	0	0
TOTAL	16	6	7

Source: Newspaper dataset

Local level conflict continues to rise and seems to be replacing GAM-GoI

As Figure 3 indicates, local level conflicts rose to 30 incidents in October. This is the highest number of reported incidents this year. Four main forms of local level conflict, that is non-GAM-GoI conflict incidents, are occurring or, rather, are being reported. These are administrative corruption incidents, resource conflicts, vigilante incidents, and public protest and dissatisfaction with public services.

Figure 4: GAM-GoI and Local-level conflict incidents by month



One explanation for this significant rise in local-level conflict as GAM-GoI related conflict decreases could be a change in the editorial policy or choices of our two sources. It is possible that Serambi and Aceh Kita have shifted their focus away from reporting on GAM-GoI related conflict, which has been consistently on the decline, and towards other forms of conflict that attract public attention. Certainly this may be the case at Serambi, which only reported one of the seven GAM-GoI incidents noted above.⁴

Another explanation is that the reduction of police and the military is creating a security vacuum. This would certainly explain the vigilante incidents which make up six of the 30 local level incidents in October. Alternatively, the peace agreement may be creating more socio-political space for competition at the local level. Given the majority of these local level conflicts involve dissatisfaction with and the contestation of administrative services, this increase in local level conflict may not necessarily be an unhealthy development.

⁴ Certainly in other parts of Indonesia editorial policy has a significant impact on the types of conflict reported. For a discussion of newspaper basis in the reporting of conflict see Chapter 4: The Media Representation of Conflict, in Barron and Sharpe (2005), "Counting Conflict: Using Newspaper Reports to Understand Violence in Indonesia", *Indonesian Social Development Paper* No. 7. Jakarta: World Bank."