

Aceh Conflict Monitoring Update

1st – 31st January 2007

World Bank/DSF



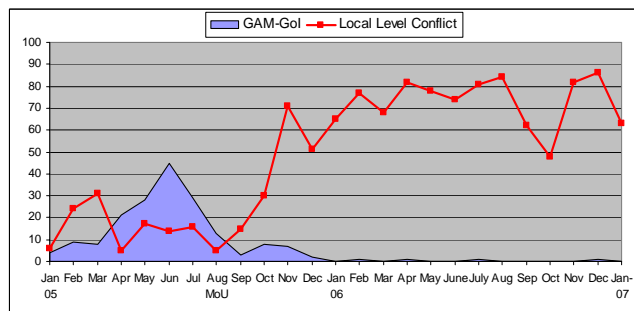
As part of an analytical support program to the peace process, the Conflict and Development Program, within the World Bank Office Indonesia, is using a newspaper conflict mapping methodology to record and categorize all incidents of conflict in Aceh as reported in two provincial newspapers (Serambi and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

Pre-MoU cleavages and tensions persist, and find expression in misunderstandings, beatings over *khalwat* (suspected sexual contact between non-married individuals), and other small scale violent incidents. Several violent incidents this month reflected ongoing tensions between GAM ex-combatants (now part of KPA, the organization for demobilized GAM) and the military, and between the community and the military. Much more effort is needed to bring together the KPA, the security forces and communities to build mutual trust and legitimacy. In contrast to the high level of acceptance of the results of the Governor elections, many of the winners of the *bupati pilkada* are having their victories questioned in court, and several districts are enmeshed in more serious political conflict. How these conflicts are handled will be very important for the peace process in Aceh as well as for the future of Acehnese politics. One risk is that the power struggles between old guard DPRDs and new *bupatis* will lead to mobilization of followers creating chaos on the ground; another is that Golkar-controlled districts and KPA/GAM-controlled ones will become increasingly polarized with respect to each other. Local level conflict levels dropped somewhat, but *khalwat* arrests by vigilantes continued, and were protested or resisted in a number of ways this month.

GAM-GoI and other pre-MoU tensions continue to show through in violent incidents

Following the general pattern of the past year, no direct GAM-GoI conflict incidents were reported in January (see Figure 1).² However, as noted in recent Updates, pre-MoU tensions persist; this month several incidents demonstrated how isolated incidents of local level conflict in fact reflect persistent pre-MoU cleavages in society.

Figure 1: GAM-Gol and local level conflicts by month



- *January 16th, Trumon Timur, Aceh Selatan.* Serambi reported that a fight erupted between two TNI soldiers and a group of four ex-combatants who seemed to be following

¹ There are limitations to using newspapers to map conflict; for more analysis of the methodology 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, is available online at: www.conflictanddevelopment.org. The dataset is available for those interested; please contact Blair Palmer at bpalmer@worldbank.org.

² What we call 'GAM-GoI incidents' are those where members of the two sides clash violently in the course of their duties as armed forces.

them in the market. A police officer tried to stop the fight, but over a dozen more ex-combatants joined in, and the policeman as well as the two soldiers was severely beaten. The original four ex-combatants, aged 21-24, were all in custody by January 24th, and are being charged over the assault. The local KPA head was active in investigating the incident and in meeting with local police and TNI leaders to discuss why it happened – purely a misunderstanding, according to the KPA head.

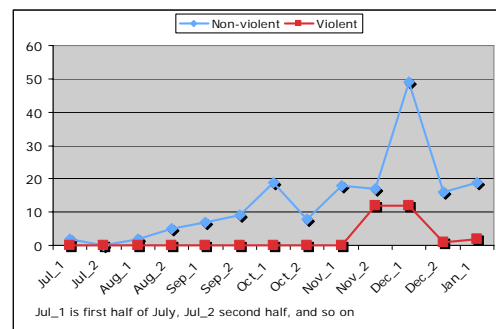
- *December 29th, Lhoksukon, Aceh Utara.*³ A soldier was visiting a woman at her house, when a group of local youths went past, apparently saying something impolite to the soldier regarding *khalwat*. An argument broke out, and the youths mobbed the soldier, hospitalizing him. His wallet and mobile phone were also stolen during the incident. Four youths were later arrested. On January 13th, 60 villagers arrived at the police station demanding their release, after hearing that they were being beaten every night. The police denied these rumors, and allowed the villagers to meet the suspects, after which the demonstrators went home. This incident appears to have been a consequence of both *shari'ah* vigilantism and military-community tensions.
- *January 11th, Langsa.* Five ex-GAM combatants were poisoned in jail. The head of KPA Langsa stated that this was attempted murder of KPA personnel, and demanded that it be investigated. The perpetrators and the motive, however, remain unclear. KPA protested again when three of the victims were returned to jail before they were fully well.

The identities of those involved in these incidents not only show that pre-MoU cleavages are still relevant today; it appears that where these old cleavages map on to current tensions and grudges, escalation is more likely than would have been the case otherwise. The *khalwat* beating described above reflects tensions between the community and the security forces, and appears to be related to a shift in power, with youth no longer treating soldiers with the level of fear and respect they are traditionally used to receiving. The community's lack of trust in the security forces was demonstrated when the villagers came to the police station to investigate rumors of beatings in custody. One positive sign, though, was the role the KPA played in calming tensions after the market beating. Indeed, the KPA continues to play a mitigating role, in addition to occasionally triggering or escalating incidents. Encouraging KPA to use its influence to play a mediating role when tensions arise is important. These incidents also suggest that much more effort is needed to bring together KPA, security forces and communities to build mutual trust and legitimacy. Given the dire economic situation of many lower level former combatants, this should not preclude formally incorporating former combatants into the police and military, a strategy commonly used in other post-conflict contexts.

Aftermath of bupati elections messy, with legal challenges and worse

Figure 2: *Pilkada*-related conflict incidents by fortnight

The aftermath of the December *pilkada* (local elections) saw the level of political conflict drop in January; only 10 political conflicts compared to last month's 32 were recorded. The figures for *pilkada*-related incidents also show a drop-off in January compared to December as a whole (see Figure 2). However, although the *number* of such conflicts has declined, the intensity of the *pilkada*-related conflicts that do occur has increased. In contrast to



Source: UNDP/WB *pilkada* newspaper dataset

³ This event was not reported in time for last month's Update, so we include it here.

the widespread acceptance of the gubernatorial results, the results of the *bupati* results have been contested to varying degrees of intensity in 14 of 19 districts. Table 1 summarizes these disputes and Box 1 presents a summary of the two most serious cases, from Aceh Tengah and Aceh Tenggara.

Table 1: Conflicts over the results of district elections

District	Victor	Status	Problems/conflicts
Aceh Barat	2 nd round: KPA/GAM vs. Independent	n/a	Losing candidates threatens a legal challenge
Aceh Tamiang	2 nd round: PD/PBR vs. PAN/PKS	n/a	Demonstrations over ballot box tampering Allegations of money politics Legal challenge by losing candidates 2 nd round to be delayed until May because of floods
Aceh Barat Daya	2 nd round: PKB/PM vs. PAN	n/a	Demonstrations Candidates protest results and demand repeat election
Lhokseumawe	KPA/GAM	New	None reported
Sabang	KPA/GAM	New	None reported
Pidie	KPA/GAM	New	None reported
Aceh Utara	KPA/GAM	New	None reported
Aceh Jaya	KPA/GAM	New	None reported
Aceh Timur	KPA/GAM	New	Some calls for repeat election because of ballot box tampering. Runner-up challenges winner over a 'false' high school diploma, but police investigation find no evidence.
Simeulue	Golkar*	Incumbent	Demonstrations Legal challenge by losing candidates Results only declared in early February
Nagan Raya	Golkar*	Incumbent	Demonstrations Legal challenge by losing candidates
Bener Meriah	Golkar*	POB	Demonstrations Legal challenge by losing candidates
Gayo Lues	Golkar*	POB	Legal challenge by losing candidates
Aceh Singkil	Golkar	Incumbent	Demonstrations
Langsa	Golkar	POB	Legal challenge by losing candidates
Banda Aceh	PPP/PBR/PD*	Incumbent	Legal action threatened by a community organization
Aceh Besar	PAN/PBR	New	Demonstrations Legal challenge by losing candidates
Aceh Tengah	PPP/PAN/ PBR*	Incumbent	A number of serious problems - see Box 1
Aceh Tenggara	PDIP/PKB*	POB	A number of serious problems - see Box 1

* Denotes a coalition with small parties

'POB' denotes a previous office bearer, such as DPRD member

A number of preliminary observations can be drawn from the conflicts outlined in Table 1. First, in districts where KPA/GAM candidates won, there have been few protests (only in Aceh Timur). Second, in districts where a Golkar candidate won, there have been legal challenges in every case but one (Aceh Singkil). Third, in the two districts where the aftermath of the elections has been most chaotic, Aceh Tengah and Aceh Tenggara (see Box 1), a non-Golkar candidate won, and much of the intensity of the protests seems to be coming from the supporters of the losing Golkar candidate.

Box 1: Chaos in two districts

Aceh Tengah. High levels of tension were apparent in Aceh Tengah leading up to and following the *pilkada* (see the first Aceh Pilkada Dynamics Update). Demonstrations about the results were followed by a legal challenge by losing candidates. Police members were removed from *Panwas*, for allegedly intimidating complainants. On January 1st, the KIP office was burned to the ground. The suspect, a cleaner at the KIP office, admitted he burned down the office after receiving a mobile phone message asking him to do so for Rp. 20 million. The cleaner said he did not know who sent it. All ballot boxes and data were lost. The head of *Panwas* as well as all KIP members have disappeared from the district, apparently having gone into hiding due to pressure and intimidation to hold repeat elections.

Aceh Tenggara. Following the *pilkada*, demonstrations about infractions in the electoral process were held, and a legal challenge was launched. More seriously, KIP Aceh Tenggara refused to submit results of the election to KIP NAD (the provincial KIP), and called for a repeat election. KIP NAD insisted that KIP Aceh Tenggara submit the results first before determining the next steps. This became a standoff, with KIP NAD eventually receiving the election results from the sub-district level KIP officials (PPK). The DPRD Aceh Tenggara sued KIP NAD for Rp. 1 billion for 'intervention', and KIP NAD countersued (the DPRD member who launched the first suit) for Rp. 10 billion. Prominent members of the DPRD called for a repeat election. The Aceh Tenggara District Court delivered a decision requiring a repeat election. The Banda Aceh Provincial Court then said that the District Court's decision followed improper procedures, since they do not have jurisdiction to rule on the matter. A group of political party leaders from Aceh Tenggara told KIP NAD that they do not want a repeat election. Elites from Aceh Tenggara traveled to Jakarta to protest, and now a team from the Department of Internal Affairs in Jakarta has gone to Aceh Tenggara to investigate.

What is particular to these two 'chaotic' districts? In Aceh Tengah the losing Golkar candidate, Mahreje, warned before the election that he would 'react strongly' if he were to lose. He is a powerful figure, with connections to youth groups, nationalist organizations (such as Pemuda Pancasila), and the former anti-separatist front (PETA). The protests have focused on biased *camats* (who were said to support the winning incumbent), government intimidation of candidates, and money politics; these issues have also been raised in other districts where a powerful incumbent has won. But it appears that in many of those other areas, the losing candidates lack the funding, the will, or the street-level support to launch disruptive protests, instead pursuing their grievances through the courts. In Aceh Tenggara only two of the candidates came from political parties. The Golkar incumbent, who lost to the coalition of smaller parties, is said to have many allies spread throughout the legislative and judicative branches of government, and is considered a local strongman. The post-election dispute seems to be mostly at the level of political elites here.

Taken together, the events in these two districts lend support to the notion that the most chaotic situations occur where there is a significant shift in political power, with Golkar losing power or neglecting to gain it, and some group other than KPA/GAM gaining (since where KPA/GAM-affiliated candidates won, there has been little resistance). Unsuccessful Golkar candidates have perhaps invested heavily in an expected success, tend to have substantial networks and resources, and seem generally willing to go to great lengths to resist the results.⁴ Although the Golkar element is common between these two districts, the *form* of the chaos is different; in Aceh Tengah (where the Golkar loser was not the incumbent), the chaos has been mostly street-level, whereas in Aceh Tenggara (where the Golkar loser was the incumbent) it has been mostly at the institutional level.

⁴ The World Bank and UNDP are together conducting further research on these post-*pilkada* disputes; results will be highlighted in these Updates when available.

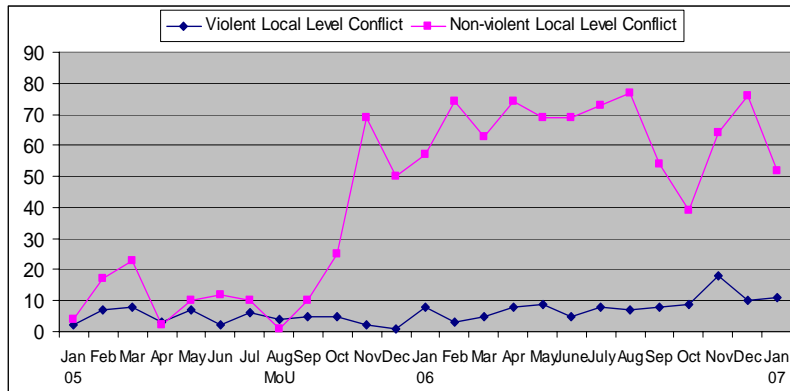
In terms of post-*pilkada* politics and the propensity for violent conflict, one risk is that the power struggles between old guard DPRD members and new *bupatis* will lead to mobilization of followers creating chaos on the ground. There is a particular risk of this in KPA/GAM-won districts. Another risk is that Golkar-controlled districts and KPA/GAM-controlled ones will become increasingly polarized with respect to each other (districts controlled by national parties other than Golkar may also ally with Golkar districts in such a split). Finally, in Aceh Tengah and Aceh Tenggara, the powerful Golkar losers are likely to continue to seek redress through various means, keeping the risk of conflict high in these districts.

Anticipating these risks would require monitoring connections between the political elite and youth/militia groups, and supporting open dialogue between opposed political factions (such as Golkar *bupatis*, old guard DPRD members, and KPA *bupatis*) about peacebuilding. In recognition of the influence that the upper echelons of national parties have over their district-level party members, efforts might be made to involve party headquarters in anticipating and preventing conflict at the district level.

Local level conflict drops but violence doesn't

The January figures for local level conflict show a drop, with 63 conflicts reported, compared to 86 last month.⁵ The drop is probably due to the decline in the number of political conflicts following the *pilkada*. This month, 11 violent incidents were recorded (see Figure 3), a level similar to last month. Of these, the vast majority were vigilante incidents (described below). Besides the arson of the KIP office in Aceh Tengah and the poisoning described earlier, there was also an unsolved murder.

Figure 3: Violent and non-violent local level conflicts by month



Conflicts about aid projects continue

Aid programs were implicated in 15 out of 63 local level conflicts this month (see Figure 4). The primary issues in these aid-related conflicts are the same key issues which continue to be cited by protestors: problems with contractors, the slow speed of aid delivery, and allegations of corruption of aid funds (see Figure 5).

⁵ The December figures have been adjusted to include conflicts occurring in December but reported in January.

Figure 4: Aid-related conflicts by month

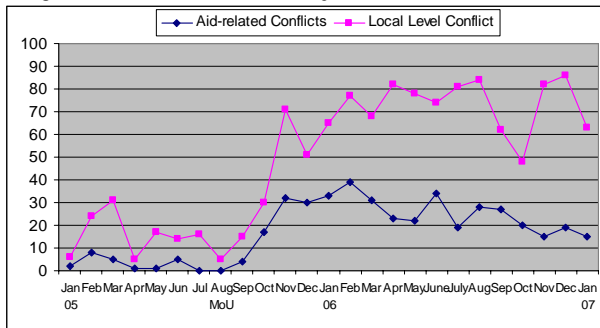
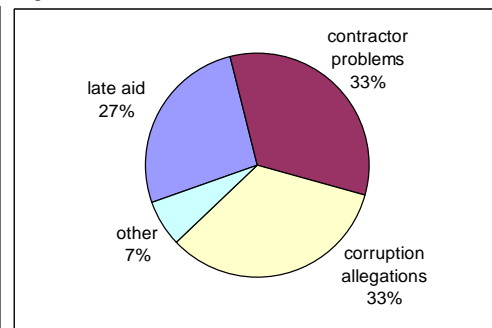


Figure 5: Breakdown of aid-related conflicts for January



Khalwat arrests continue, and reports of resistance increase

This month we recorded seven vigilante incidents, a slight increase over last month. Most of these were *khalwat* arrests by vigilantes.⁶ Although such vigilantes are commonly identified as ‘the community’ in newspaper reports, they often consist of aggressive young men, and these arrests often involve beatings, sexual harassment, and other abuses of victims. This month there were several protests or acts of resistance against this type of abuse, as well as one case of vigilante-type resistance to the actions of the WH (*shari’ah* police) themselves (See Box 2). The new government has strong views on the implementation of *shari’ah* in Aceh. Immediately after his inauguration, Nazar was quoted (in Serambi, February 9th) as saying, “the implementation of *shari’ah* should go beyond canings for infractions, which are usually inflicted on the little people”, by which he seemed to be critical of the role played by the WH in policing Acehnese society. But the debate about *khalwat* arrests has as yet gained little momentum in the public sphere.

Box 2: Resistance against *khalwat* arrests

January 14th, Sawang, Aceh Utara. After a ‘sweeping’ incident carried out by vigilantes, a group of victims lodged a complaint with police and government officials. They argued that women were the targets, and included those wearing appropriate clothing; that the vigilantes swore at them; and that there were assaults against their family members. Such sweeping can only be carried out by the WH, they said, and should be done gently and with respect. A leading member of the Aceh Utara DPRD commented that sweeping was okay, but should be done politely. The head of Aceh Utara Syariat Islam Department said that such sweeping was illegal, because it wasn’t reported to them. “That kind of thing should not be tolerated”, Serambi quoted him saying. ‘It is a human rights abuse’.

January 29th, Banda Aceh. A WH patrol had arrested at least six people, and was on the road when their vehicle was struck from behind and then forced off the road by another car. A group of men then forcibly released two of the women who had been arrested for *khalwat*. Serambi reported the men as ‘well-built’, which is often a euphemism for ‘military’.

Another incident occurred this month but was not reported in the newspapers. According to an NGO activist, a woman was chatting with a male guest, alone together in the house’s ‘guest area’ (where guests are received), when a group of village youths came and arrested them, accusing them of *khalwat*. The boys beat them both, shaved the woman’s head, and many kissed her face. The boys then vandalized the house and stole a laptop computer and a water dispenser. The female victim remains traumatized by the attack; she is receiving support from the NGO but it is not clear how her protest will be pursued.

⁶ We classify ‘sweeping’ and arrests by vigilantes as violence even when the victims are not beaten, since the perpetrators do not have the legal right to invade homes and make arrests.