

# Aceh Conflict Monitoring Update

1<sup>st</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007

World Bank/DSF



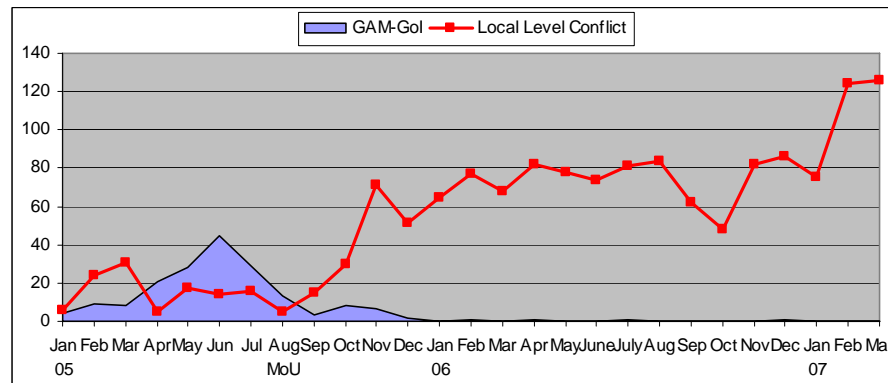
As part of an analytical support program to the peace process, the Conflict and Development Program, within the World Bank Office Indonesia, is using a newspaper conflict mapping methodology to record and categorize all incidents of conflict in Aceh as reported in two provincial newspapers (Serambi and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

This month saw the highest number of violent incidents since the tsunami, with several mob beatings and revenge attacks coming as an urgent sign of widespread tensions between KPA, communities, and the security forces. These dynamics are especially strong in Aceh Utara. Local level conflict also achieved a new high this month of 126 incidents. This update highlights two types of local level conflict. First, conflicts related to reintegration funds. Delivery of funds has increased tensions within both the KPA and anti-separatist groups, and the BRA-KDP program for conflict victims has been targeted in incidents of extortion, robbery and vandalism. Second, conflicts continue over the *pilkada* District Head results, following on from weaknesses in election implementation. These include protests over election violations, protests against allegedly corrupt winning candidates, and the ongoing saga in Aceh Tenggara.

## ***No GAM-GoI incidents, but tensions erupt in violence in Aceh Utara***

As in past months, no direct GAM-GoI conflict incidents were reported in March (see Figure 1).<sup>2</sup> However, tensions in Aceh Utara erupted during a series of violent incidents. These incidents show a lack of trust between the community and security forces, with GAM/KPA playing a large role in the community's actions. As with some cases from previous months, opinions differ on whether GAM/KPA members played a mediating or provocative role in the violence.

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



<sup>1</sup> 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](http://www.conflictanddevelopment.org). The dataset is available for those interested; please contact Blair Palmer at [bpalmer@worldbank.org](mailto:bpalmer@worldbank.org).

<sup>2</sup> 'GAM-GoI incidents' are conflict incidents where members of the two sides clash in the course of their roles as armed forces.

▪ *March 21<sup>st</sup>, Alue Dua village, Nisam, Aceh Utara*

Villagers became suspicious of four men who had arrived in the village and slept a night in a school building without reporting to village authorities. After villagers gathered and accosted them, it was discovered that they were TNI soldiers and that they had brought their firearms in their bags. The villagers, suspecting they were intelligence agents, then beat the four men, badly injuring several, and incarcerated them overnight in the village meeting hall. The next day tensions escalated when the military claimed KPA was behind the attack; KPA, in response, claimed their intervention had saved the soldiers from more severe beatings at the hands of the villagers. In order to placate tensions, the Aceh provincial military commander, Supiadin, guaranteed that his soldiers would not take revenge. However two days later, ignoring this guarantee, TNI soldiers returned to the village allegedly to investigate the incident, and beat at least 14 villagers.

Subsequent reports indicate that the soldiers had been subcontracted as private security guards to protect the school in which they slept, which had been built by an international NGO. With high unemployment among former combatants, KPA members may be envious of TNI soldiers obtaining security jobs at their expense. Thus suspicions about the “mission” of the soldiers may have been augmented by anger at the soldiers’ moonlighting; KPA members were apparently active in arresting and interrogating the soldiers during the original incident. This incident indicates the importance of aid organizations being aware of how distribution of benefits, including employment opportunities, can contribute to, and interact with, ongoing post-conflict tensions, particularly in high-conflict areas such as Nisam.

In addition, the incident highlights the importance of coordination between KPA and the security forces, and of building a clear understanding of their respective roles in the community. Indeed following the incident, Governor Irwandi Yusuf and the Aceh provincial military commander warned KPA not to engage in “community policing”. The newly elected *Bupati* of Aceh Utara, who comes from the KPA camp, has called for monthly *forum bersama* (“cooperation forum”) meetings in order to build relations and trust between the security forces, local government, KPA, and the community. The AMM (Aceh Monitoring Mission) held such meetings, to some success, at the *kecamatan*-level in Aceh Utara.<sup>3</sup> Such forums in high-tension areas should be supported.

▪ *March 11<sup>th</sup>, Lhok Meureubo village, Sawang, Aceh Utara*

Villagers beat eight people described as *jamaah tabligh* (an Islamic missionary movement), who had come to the village to teach Islam from house to house, and accused them of teaching “improper Islam”. Villagers initially became suspicious that the group was not what they seemed, since one was seen to be sporting a tattoo. A crowd gathered to interrogate the men and one was found to have pornography stored on his mobile phone, which was taken as proof that their Islam was flawed. From their ID cards, it was found that the man and two of the others were police officers. At this point all eight received a beating, after which a crowd of over a thousand incarcerated the group in the mosque where they were held for two days until the GAM-affiliated *Bupati* secured their release.

Following the incident, the head of the Syariat Islam department for Aceh spoke out strongly against such vigilante actions, stating that only religious leaders could decide, after a thorough investigation, if the teachings were improper. The police stated that the three officers had abandoned their posts in order to carry out missionary activities, and denied they were gathering intelligence. The incident suggests that either religion was used as a cover for intelligence work,

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<sup>3</sup> See the May 2006 Aceh Conflict Monitoring Update, available at: [www.conflictanddevelopment.org](http://www.conflictanddevelopment.org).

or, alternatively, that the charge of “improper missionary activities” was used as a cover for vigilante attacks against security forces.

▪ *March 27<sup>th</sup>, Lhoksukon, Aceh Utara*

A group of men drove up to the KPA office in Lhoksukon in the middle of the night and burned it down. Aceh Kita reported that a witness claimed to have seen a police patrol go by within minutes of the attack. The Lhoksukon police admitted that they had a patrol in the area at the time, but said they did not know who committed the arson. The office had been vandalized in the past, following a dispute between KPA and police.

▪ *March 13<sup>th</sup>, Tapaktuan, Aceh Selatan*

The head of KPA Tapaktuan protested against the need for families of prisoners to register with the TNI before visiting their relatives in jail. Relatives had visited four KPA members charged over the Trumon attack on TNI soldiers, but were refused entry since they had not reported to the TNI beforehand.<sup>4</sup>

***Both non-violent and violent local level conflict reach post-tsunami highs***

This month 126 local level conflicts were recorded. This is the highest monthly total on record, slightly higher than last month’s all time high (see Figure 2).<sup>5</sup> Together the level of conflict over the past two months represents a dramatic rise, almost double the average 2006 levels.<sup>6</sup> Violent incidents also rose to record levels this month, with 20 incidents reported. Figure 2 indicates violent and non-violent trends and Table 1 summarizes the types of violent incidents this month.<sup>7</sup>

Figure 2: Violent and non-violent local level conflicts by month

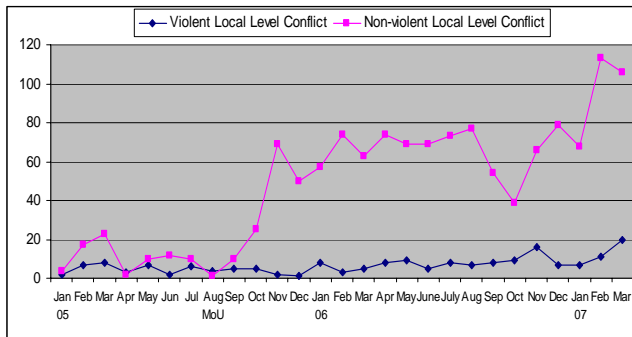


Table 1: Types of violent local level conflict

| #  | Type of violent incident   |
|----|--|
| 11 | <i>Physical attacks, mass beatings, or fights, over a variety of issues.</i>   |
| 4  | <i>Riots, two of which were related to political conflicts in Aceh Tenggara and Aceh Barat Daya (see below).</i>   |
| 3  | <i>Arson. Three buildings were targeted in separate attacks: MPU (Ulama’s Consultative Council) headquarters in Sawang, Aceh Utara; the KPA office in Lhoksukon, Aceh Utara; and a BRR office in Meulaboh, Aceh Barat.</i> |
| 2  | Other types  |

The remainder of this Update deals with two important issues: conflict over post-conflict reintegration funds and election-related conflict.

<sup>4</sup> On the Trumon attack, see January’s Aceh Conflict Monitoring Update, available at: [www.conflictanddevelopment.org](http://www.conflictanddevelopment.org).

<sup>5</sup> Note that the February numbers in Figures 1 and 2 have changed slightly from those reported in last month’s update. This is because some incidents at the end of February were reported at the beginning of March; these incidents have now been added to the figures.

<sup>6</sup> Last month’s update suggested three possible explanations for this rise, but it would be premature to decide between them. The rise is not due to a leap in one particular type of local level conflict.

<sup>7</sup> Previously we classified ‘sweeping’ and arrests by vigilantes as violence even when the victims were not beaten, since the perpetrators did not have the legal right to invade homes and make arrests. We have now re-classified such incidents as non-violent, in order to restrict ‘violence’ to cases of physical violence to people or property (including abduction). Figure 2 has been updated to reflect this new classification.

### *Conflicts over reintegration funding*

BRA, the Aceh Peace-Reintegration Agency, was established in February 2006 to oversee the reintegration process. BRA has developed a series of programs targeted at key population groups, with GoI funding of approximately US\$ 150 million for 2005-2007 (see Table 2). This section describes how these programs have caused or been affected by conflicts of various sorts.

Table 2: BRA's Reintegration Fund 2005 - 2007

| Economic Assistance |  |  |                               |
|---------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|
| No                  | Category   | No. of Beneficiaries                   | Amount                        |
| 1                   | GAM combatants   | 3,000                                  | Rp. 25 million/person         |
| 2                   | GAM non-combatants   | 6,200                                  | Rp. 10 million/person         |
| 3                   | Political prisoners  | 2,035                                  | Rp. 10 million/person         |
| 4                   | GAM who surrendered before MoU   | 3,204                                  | Rp. 5 million/person          |
| 5                   | Anti-separatist groups   | 6,500                                  | Rp. 10 million/person         |
| 6                   | Conflict-affected persons (delivered through the BRA-KDP program)  | All rural communities (5,726 villages) | Rp.60–170 million/ village    |
| Social Assistance   |  |  |                               |
| 7                   | <i>Diyat</i><br>- Village head & religious figure<br>- Civil servants<br>- Community whose members dead or missing | 332<br>426<br>22,000                   | Rp. 3 million/person per year |
| 8                   | Housing assistance   | 14,000 units                           | Rp. 35.0 million/house        |
| 9                   | Assistance for physically disabled   | 3,100                                  | Rp. 10 million/person         |
| 10                  | Medical assistance   | 1 packet                               | Rp. 5 billion/year            |

The first three items of assistance in Table 2 have been distributed, and items 4 and 5 partially distributed. Funds for conflict victims (item 6) have now been disbursed to 1724 villages. However, the delivery of this assistance has caused or significantly exacerbated tensions both amongst and between the various target groups. There have been conflicts within KPA over the internal distribution of reintegration funds (items 1 and 2 in Table 2); similar internal conflicts within anti-separatist organizations (over item 5); as well as a range of conflicts surrounding the distribution of assistance to communities (item 6).

- *Conflict over reintegration funds within KPA*

In Aceh Barat Daya, the delivery of reintegration funds has exacerbated a split in KPA. This split has played out through both rounds of the *pilkada*, leading to further conflict (see Box 1).

**Box 1: A case of reintegration fund conflict within KPA affecting *pilkada* - Aceh Barat Daya<sup>8</sup>**

The distribution of reintegration funds is implicated in a split within KPA in Blang Pidie (the KPA/GAM region covering Aceh Barat Daya). The two factions aligned behind different candidates in both rounds of the local *pilkada* there, which meant those sympathetic to KPA/GAM were forced to choose between candidates. The split also led to violence on at least one occasion.

The main issue that led to the split was whether GAM members who left the struggle before the MoU deserved to receive a full share of the reintegration funds. One faction, aligned behind the current *panglima wilayah* (regional commander) Abdurrahman, determined that "retired GAM" should receive less than those who remained active until the MoU. Further, leaders of the Abdurrahman faction allege that those GAM who had "abandoned the struggle" in fact joined with surrendered GAM to form anti-separatist organizations, such as Forkab (citizen's communication forum), and thus will have access to anti-separatist reintegration funds. In opposition, the faction aligned behind former regional commander Burhan claim that retired GAM are entitled to a full share of reintegration benefits, and that his "retirement" was because "[he] went to Java for medical attention, not to run away from the war". Burhan's faction also claim that Adurrahman has mismanaged the reintegration funds. Each faction claims to have support of 75% of GAM in Blang Pidie (Aceh Barat Daya).

There was a "KPA-associated" candidate in the first round of the *pilkada* in Aceh Barat Daya, but the local KPA office did not formally support any candidate. Instead, the Burhan faction claims to have supported Akmal (who eventually won) while Abdurrahman is said to have supported Sulaiman (who made it to the second round). The KPA-associated candidate suffered from this lack of cohesion, coming third and thus not making the second round. In the second round, Burhan stuck with Akmal and Abdurrahman with Sulaiman; both factions accuse the other of being bought by the candidate they support.

This split resulted in a heated election. Supporters of the rival candidates clashed violently two days before the March 4<sup>th</sup> second round voting. The fact that Burhan's candidate won might mean that his breakaway KPA faction will enjoy increased influence. If KPA Blang Pidie does not consolidate, the split could continue to cause conflicts and negatively influence local politics.

▪ *Conflict over reintegration funds within anti-separatist organizations*

The distribution of reintegration funds has also resulted in conflicts within anti-separatist groups. Two case examples in Box 2 illustrate these conflicts and show that, similarly to the intra-KPA conflict in Aceh Barat Daya, these internal divisions often have a link to local politics. The reintegration funds coupled with political competition have strengthened these links and hence magnified internal divisions.

**Box 2: Two case of reintegration fund conflict within anti-separatist groups - Aceh Barat Daya and Aceh Barat**

Members of PETA (Defenders of the Homeland, an anti-separatist organization) in Aceh Barat Daya, who were each supposed to receive Rp. 10 million (\$1,100) of reintegration funds, complained that the funds (for 135 members) had gone to the wrong people. GPSP (the Resistance Movement against GAM separatists) had changed its name to PETA, but as this happened the interim *Bupati* issued a letter on November 29<sup>th</sup> 2006 installing a new leader for PETA and 90 members who, it was claimed, were not previously PETA members. The first payment, of Rp. 450 million (\$50,000), was received by Amiruddin, head of GPSP, in August 2006, who subsequently claimed he distributed the funds to the organization's members, including surrendered GAM and others. The second payment, delivered at the end of February, of Rp 900 million (\$100,000) went to Muazam, the head of PETA. However, those complaining claim they received nothing of either payment.

<sup>8</sup> The information in this box is based on interviews conducted in December 2006, and follow-up phone calls to local contacts in March 2007.

In Aceh Barat, Frontum (an anti-separatist organization) received Rp. 10 million (\$1,100) for each of its 220 members, all of which was deposited into a single account in order to establish a joint business. The Frontum leader became the election campaign manager for Iskandar, one of the candidates in the second round *pilkada* in Aceh Barat, along with Frontum's treasurer. Frontum members claimed that there were efforts to divert the reintegration funds to support Iskandar's campaign.<sup>9</sup>

▪ *Conflict over reintegration funds at the community-level*

For conflict-affected persons (item 6 in Table 2 above), the funds are being delivered through the GoI/World Bank's *Kecamatan* Development Program (KDP).<sup>10</sup> The overall response to the program is positive, but it faces significant challenges including extortion attempts by former combatants, robbery, and miscommunication of program procedures. Box 3 summarizes four incidents that have taken place in the past two months. Each has now been resolved.

**Box 3: Four cases of conflict surrounding distribution of benefits to conflict-affected communities**

▪ *Sawang, Aceh Utara, February 7<sup>th</sup>*

A mob, led by four men later identified as KPA members, vandalized and stole computers from a KDP office in Sawang. KDP staff fled the sub-district for fear of further violence. After a meeting between KPA and the *Camat*, KPA Sawang said that this was just a misunderstanding and that they would support the return of the staff and the resumption of the program. The computers were returned anonymously.

▪ *Nisam, Aceh Utara, February*

The head of KPA in Nisam demanded that he receive Rp. 13 million (\$1,400) from the BRA-KDP allotment for each village in the sub-district (a total of approximately Rp. 572 million or \$62,000). After a problem-solving meeting in March involving KPA, BRA Aceh Utara, and KDP staff, the KPA head withdrew his demand.

▪ *Seunuddon, Aceh Utara, March 20<sup>th</sup>*

BRA-KDP staff were robbed at gunpoint after withdrawing Rp. 62 million (\$6,800) of project funds from the bank. This meant that funds were lacking to meet project commitments in Aceh Utara. After consultative meetings with communities, it was decided that interest accrued on project funds would be used to cover part of the loss, and that Rp. 800,000 (\$90) would be cut from the allocation for each village in order to cover the shortfall.

▪ *Aceh Tengah/Bener Meriah*

There have been claims that KPA members in Linge (Aceh Tengah/Bener Meriah) were demanding Rp. 3 million (\$330) from every village's BRA-KDP allocation. A letter was circulated, claiming that BRA and KPA had agreed that these payments were to be given to KPA by each village. This was later denied by local BRA and the KPA leaders; the latter stated that KPA would enact sanctions on any members who tried to extort.

Conflicts over reintegration funds are connected with issues of unemployment, crime, social cohesion, and political inclusion. In order to facilitate more effective reintegration programs, BRA should engage in more socialization so that the community, and former combatants in particular, are aware of what benefits are available and how to obtain them. Strong complaints handling, including a contact or hotline for the reporting of extortion attempts, would assist BRA-KDP facilitator staff in the field and help to ensure the program runs smoothly. Finally, reintegration and livelihood programs for former combatants is a vital issue for the sustainability

<sup>9</sup> International Crisis Group (2007). *Indonesia: How GAM won in Aceh. Crisis Group Asia Briefing No.61, 22 March 2007*. Jakarta/Brussels: ICG. See page 8.

<sup>10</sup> As explained in earlier Updates, this BRA-KDP mechanism will deliver approximately US\$ 60 million of Indonesian government resources, covering every rural village in Aceh (5,726 villages in total). Villages receive block grants ranging from Rp. 60 million (US\$ 6,700) to Rp. 170 million (US\$ 19,000) depending on the intensity of past conflict in the sub-district and the village population size.

of Aceh's peace yet it seems that few organization are running programs which address this need; more coordinated efforts need to be made on this front.

***Pilkada conflicts: corruption cases, pressure on KIP, and, of course, Aceh Tenggara***

After various court cases challenging the results of the district-level *pilkada* were defeated,<sup>11</sup> a number of incidents relating to the elections took place this month. These include: protests against the inauguration of winning candidates, primarily on the basis of corruption charges; protests about procedural violations surrounding the run-off elections; and the ongoing saga in Aceh Tenggara (Box 4).

**Box 4: Election-related conflict in March 2007**

▪ *Corruption charges mar inaugurations in Nagan Raya and Singkil and tensions in Simeulue*

There were demonstrations in both Nagan Raya and Singkil this month, protesting the upcoming inauguration of the winning *Bupati* candidates who are currently on trial, and urging that the inaugurations be delayed until the courts render their decisions. The Simeulue incumbent is on trial for destroying thousands of hectares of protected forest to build oil palm plantations, but he could not attend his trial on March 28<sup>th</sup> as he was busy being inaugurated as the new *Bupati*. Golkar incumbents won in three district races (Aceh Singkil, Nagan Raya, and Simeulue); all three of those incumbents have cases against them, and there are protests in all three of those districts about the inaugurations.

▪ *Demonstrations against election violations in Aceh Barat Daya and Aceh Tamiang*

On March 9<sup>th</sup> thousands demonstrated in front of the KIP (elections body) office in Aceh Barat Daya, protesting that the second round *pilkada* was unfair and that votes had been bought. The protest leader urged KIP and Panwas to fully investigate all complaints of infractions, saying that they would hold an even larger demonstration if this did not happen. Aceh Kita reported that local KPA leaders were seen amongst the crowd. On March 20<sup>th</sup> in Aceh Tamiang, a losing candidate began legal action against both the police and the prosecutor's office over their failure to deal with a case of ballot box tampering.<sup>12</sup> The complaint had been passed from Panwas to the police, but it was not acted upon and the time limit passed. It was claimed that this happened due to political considerations.

▪ *The saga in Aceh Tenggara continues*

Aceh Tenggara (Agara) remains the most problematic district. Results have still not been announced after numerous interventions from KIP NAD and multiple promises from KIP Agara. Results reported by sub-district level KIP indicate that Hasanuddin won, beating the incumbent Armen Desky by 2,624 votes. The situation got hotter this month when KIP Agara decided to recount several ballot boxes. The recounting began on March 23<sup>rd</sup> and was quickly followed by a demonstration on March 24<sup>th</sup> that claimed the recounting was against election regulations. The same day, the witness for Hasanuddin was ejected from the recount room for "causing chaos". For almost all ballot boxes recounted, Armen Desky came out ahead. The demonstrations continued on March 25<sup>th</sup>, and turned into a riot, with at least three police officers wounded after being hit by stones. Aceh Kita reported that police shot six people. The recount did not continue after the riot. Also on March 25<sup>th</sup>, KIP NAD declared the recount to be against regulations, and requested that the police shut it down. Governor Irwandi reminded the caretaker *Bupati* to remain neutral, and said that he supported any decisions made by KIP NAD. "If anyone goes against it, we'll just arrest them", he said. The situation remains unresolved.

<sup>11</sup> See last month's Aceh Conflict Monitoring Update, available at: [www.conflictanddevelopment.org](http://www.conflictanddevelopment.org).

<sup>12</sup> See January's Aceh Conflict Monitoring Update, available at: [www.conflictanddevelopment.org](http://www.conflictanddevelopment.org).