

Aceh Conflict Monitoring Update

1st – 31st December 2007

World Bank

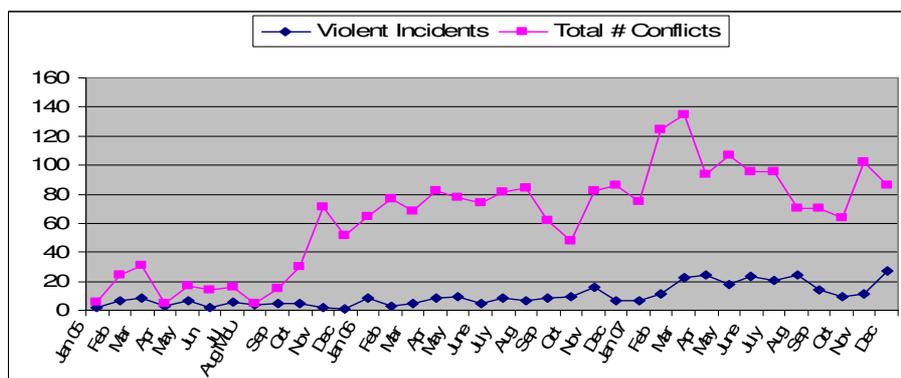


In December, local-level violence increased drastically to reach its highest peak since January 2005 with 27 incidents recorded.¹ Over half the cases involved serious, potentially lethal, forms of violence; four deaths and 49 victims of injuries were recorded, and 16 buildings were damaged or destroyed. Incidents included three murders and one murder attempt including the assassination on December 27th of Teungku Badruddin, a former GAM commander, in Sawang, Aceh Utara. Shootings and terror attacks, including the explosion of a grenade in front of the Bupati of Bireuen's residence, are reminiscent of the conflicts that marred the first half of 2007, and a reminder that some groups remain resolved to use violence as a means to pursue their goals or voice their grievances. Sporadic violence is a common trait of post-conflict theaters and the impact of such incidents on the peace process should not be exaggerated. However, the December events represent a significant worsening of the situation in Aceh. They show that many issues are still unresolved and indicate real remaining challenges, in particular related to increasing divisions within GAM/KPA's ranks. The ongoing anti-Bupati protests in Nagan Raya also led to a number of incidents, illustrating the potential for regional political contests to generate violence. Disputes over issues related to the implementation of the MoU and reintegration programs, including mass demonstrations by IDPs in Banda Aceh, remained peaceful. Nonetheless, they show the need for better cooperation between local and central government in sorting out remaining MoU disagreements and ensuring better management of reintegration funds.

Local-level violence reaches its highest level since January 2005

After a relative drop since September of last year, local-level violence² increased drastically in December to hit its highest peak since January 2005 with 27 incidents recorded (see Figure 1). This leap is all the more remarkable as the total number of conflicts dropped to 86. About 25% of December conflicts led to at least one violent incident.

Figure 1: Violent LL incidents vs. total # of LL conflicts, by month



¹ 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 analyzing the data, complemented by fieldwork. Updates are available online at www.conflictanddevelopment.org. The dataset is available for those interested; contact Blair Palmer at bpalmer@worldbank.org or Adrian Morel at amorell@worldbank.org. There are limitations to using newspapers to map conflict; see Barron and Sharpe (2005) available at www.conflictanddevelopment.org/page.php?id=412

² Here, we use the term "local-level" conflicts as opposed to incidents involving military confrontation between GAM and the Indonesian armed forces. A significant number of the latter kind of incidents continued to occur before the MoU, from January to August 2005. 17 occurred after the signing of the MoU until July 2006. None have been recorded since then.

The December incidents show a number of key features (the cases are summarized in Table 1 below):

- An unusual proportion of the cases (15 cases, or over 50% of the total violent cases) involved *serious* forms of violence (such as use of weapons and arson).
- The leap in violence intensity is mostly attributable to a number of shootings, terror attacks and political violence. Three people were killed and six injured in a series of four “mysterious murders” (*pembunuhan misterius - petrus*), including the assassination of Teungku Badruddin, an ex-TNA³ commander (see section on the Badruddin case below). A grenade exploded at the Bireuen Bupati’s residence, and the political crisis in Nagan Raya escalated with physical assaults and arson attacks (see section on regional conflicts below).
- Aid-related violence hit a post-MoU high, with four incidents resulting in one injury and the arson of twelve buildings. These incidents represent one third of all aid-related violent incidents recorded since October 2006 (12 cases). They show the growing impatience of beneficiaries towards mismanagement in the implementation of post-tsunami assistance, and the need for agencies to improve monitoring, evaluation and complaints-handling mechanisms.
- 27% of the cases occurred in Banda Aceh. However, these consisted mostly of low-intensity violence that resulted only in damage to buildings and/or minor injuries. Nearly half (46%) the serious incidents, including all murders and deaths, occurred in Bireuen, Aceh Utara and Aceh Timur districts.

Table 1: Violent incidents in December 2007

| Number | Type | Incidents | Toll |
|--------|---|--|---|
| 5 | Murders, murder attempts, and kidnappings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 10th, Banda Alam, Aceh Timur. Murder of a village head. • December 27th, Sawang, Aceh Utara. Murder of Tgk Badruddin and kidnapping of a KPA member. • December 28th, Dewantara, Aceh Utara. A villager was shot in a kidnapping attempt. • December 29th, Peusangan Selatan, Bireuen. One villager was ambushed and killed. | 3 dead (fire weapons) 1 kidnapped 6 injured (incl. three by fire weapons) |
| 2 | Terror attacks (motive unclear) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 10th, Bireuen. Grenade attack on the Bupati’s residence. • December 15th, Lawe Alas, Aceh Tenggara. Arson attack on a KPA office. | 1 building arsoned |
| 2 | Political violence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 8th, Kuala, Nagan Raya. Assault on the leader of the anti-Bupati protests. Two houses burnt down in reprisals. | 1 injured 2 buildings arsoned |
| 4 | Aid-related | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syah Kuala, Banda Aceh. Five Bakrie Foundation houses arsoned. • Ulee Lheue, Banda Aceh. Seven PMI shelters arsoned by non-beneficiary youth. • Banda Sakti, Lhokseumawe. Assault on a middleman (inequitable distribution of aid to fishermen). | 1 injured (machete) 12 buildings arsoned |
| 3 | Vigilantism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thieves beaten by mob in Banda Aceh, Bireuen, and Lhokseumawe. | 1 dead 4 injured |
| 3 | Abuse of force by security forces | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including an incident at Tanjung Gusta prison, Medan. 27 Acehese convicts received severe beating by correction officers after allegedly trying to escape. | 30 injured |
| 7 | Personal issues (revenge etc) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Aceh Utara (2 cases); Banda Aceh (2); Pidie (1); Aceh Tenggara (1); Langsa (1). | 7 injured |
| 1 | Others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pidie. Bridge burnt by villagers | 1 building |

³ *Teuntra Nanggroe Aceh* (Aceh Army): GAM’s military wing.

Executions and terror attacks are reminiscent of the type of incidents that marred the first half of 2007 and a reminder that some groups remain resolved to use violence as a means to pursue their goals or voice their grievances. Government, security forces and KPA⁴ have developed the habit of referring to the perpetrators of such violence as “groups of people who are not happy with the peace in Aceh”. This convenient explanation has two downsides. First, it tends to discourage any proper investigation of the actual dynamics driving such incidents, when competition over political and economic interests, and growing frustration over the shortcomings of the reintegration process, should also be factored in. Second, it tends to exaggerate the potential impact of such incidents on the prospects for enduring peace. Sporadic violence is a common trait of post-conflict theaters. Although the December events represent a significant worsening of the situation, they do not justify calls for troop augmentation or for an improbable return of the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM).⁵ Rather, the cases underline the need to strengthen the capacity of existing local institutions to address the inevitable challenges associated with Aceh’s war to peace transition.

The assassination of Tengku Badruddin: question marks surrounding the death of a “renegade” ex-combatant

On December 27th, Teungku Badruddin, an ex TNA commander, was assassinated by a commando of heavily armed men in Sawang, Aceh Utara. This was quickly followed by other violent incidents including a kidnapping and two shootings, one of which led to another death (see Box 1).⁶ These incidents, reminiscent of the conflict years, shook Aceh and attracted the attention of the national media.

Husaini, the alleged leader of the group who killed Badruddin, was arrested in January. He was a former TNA sharpshooter and a KPA member.⁷ Three days later, Husaini died in detention, officially of pneumonia. KPA has said that they found evidence he was tortured.⁸ So far, the accusation that Husaini was responsible for Badruddin’s murder has not been challenged, even by KPA who are usually quick to question charges against their members. However, a number of questions surrounding the case remain unanswered.

Box 1: Chronology

- *May 24th, Sawang, Aceh Utara.* A car belonging to the INGO Cardi is robbed by armed men. Police issue an arrest order for Tgk Badruddin, a suspect in several other criminal actions.
- *June 4th, Makmur, Bireuen.* Failed assassination attempt on Tgk Badruddin. He and his wife are severely injured and their four-year-old daughter is killed.
- *June 6th, Bireuen.* After escaping from the hospital, Badruddin is finally arrested by the police.
- *December 27th, Sawang, Aceh Utara.* Badruddin, released under questionable circumstances, is ambushed and killed by armed attackers. Shortly afterwards, a KPA member is kidnapped and tortured by Badruddin followers.
- *December 28th, Dewantara, Aceh Utara and December 29th, Peusangan, Bireuen.* One villager is shot by armed men that were trying to abduct him. Another is ambushed and killed.
- *January 6th, Sawang, Aceh Utara.* Husaini, a KPA member, is arrested by the police for Badruddin’s murder.
- *January 10th, Lhokseumawe.* Husaini dies in detention.

There are differing accounts of Badruddin’s background and motivations. Security forces and the media have depicted him as a criminal and a suspect in several armed crimes, including the hold-up of the Cardi car in May (see May 2007 Update). He was also said to be a “renegade” GAM commander who

⁴ *Komite Peralihan Aceh* (Aceh Transition Committee): civil organization representing former TNA.

⁵ Ibrahim KBS, KPA’s spokesperson, in a declaration to the press on January 15th.

⁶ Despite the lack of strong evidence to link the December 28th and 29th incidents to the Badruddin case, there is widespread assumption that they were part of a series of retaliation attacks triggered by his murder. In a press conference in Lhokseumawe on December 29th, Governor Irwandi Yusuf hinted that these shootings had been performed by “groups of attackers from Sawang” (*kelompok penyerang Sawang*).

⁷ On January 7th in Syamtalira Bayu, a police officer was shot and his gun stolen. However, there has been insufficient evidence so far to link this incident with the Badruddin case or Husaini’s arrest.

⁸ Ibrahim KBS, *Harian Aceh*, January 12th. Note that the January incidents were not included in our count of December violent incidents and do not appear in Table 1.

disagreed with the Helsinki MoU and refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of KPA to speak for ex-combatants. Police suggested he was responsible for the grenade attack on the house of Sofyan Dawood, then KPA's spokesman, on April 29th of last year (see April 2007 Update). On the other hand, his supporters portray him as a respected *ulama*, a compassionate leader who denounced the way many ex-combatants had been abandoned by the peace process. On June 4th of last year, he survived an initial assassination attempt that took the life of his youngest child.

Other unanswered questions revolve around the conditions of his assassination. Ibrahim KBS, KPA's spokesman, questioned why Badruddin was wandering freely at a time when he was supposed to be serving a seven-month prison sentence for the Cardi car robbery.⁹ Suspicion quickly spread that the police might have purposefully arranged for his release and tipped-off his enemies, thus playing an active role in orchestrating his execution. This and the shady circumstances of Husaini's death in police detention encouraged theories that security forces were pulling the strings behind the incidents, possibly with the aim of fuelling divisions within GAM ranks.

Divisions within GAM have been an underlying factor in many cases of post-MoU violence. Existing rifts have been accentuated by inequities in the reintegration effort. A majority of ex-combatants did not substantively benefit from the reintegration funds. The lucrative patronage networks created by the electoral victories of 2006 have mostly benefited the movement's elite while many rank-and-file have not seen improvements in their living conditions. This situation has generated widespread frustration and the temptation for many to resort to illegal activities, such as robberies, extortion, and illegal logging. As underlined by Fachrul Razi, a researcher who focuses on peace-building at Universitas Indonesia and Syiah Kuala, "figures similar to Badruddin can reappear any time; a lot of leaders share the same grievances towards the peace process and have the potential and charisma to generate wide support".¹⁰ Hundreds of followers attended Badruddin's burial ceremony in Sawang, coming from as far as Bireuen and Aceh Timur, with some of them carrying weapons.

Since then, KPA and Governor Irwandi have issued multiple calls for ex-combatants to bury "old personal issues" and to show more patience towards the reintegration process. The day after Husaini's death, the Governor kissed the gun of the alleged murderer, in a symbolic gesture of forgiveness and mourning.¹¹ However, issues remain unaddressed that could result in further violence. As the third anniversary of the Helsinki MoU approaches, a proper assessment of the achievements of the reintegration effort so far should be performed, in order to identify remaining gaps and appropriate ways to address grievances, especially those of the ex-combatants.

⁹ Arrested on June 6th 2007, Badruddin was to be released in January. Police put the blame on the penitentiary administration, arguing that convicted criminals are no longer under their responsibility. They later provided further explanation, saying that Badruddin had benefited from supervised leave pending release (*Cuti Menjelang Pembebasan-CMP*. Aceh Utara Police Chief, AKP Bambang E. Subandono, press conference in Lhokseumawe, December 30th). However, CMP is normally the privilege of detainees convicted for longer sentences (over a year – see website of the General Direction of the Penitentiary Administration, www.ditjenpas.go.id).

¹⁰ Interview with the Updates team, January 2008.

¹¹ Kissing the gun or the clothes of the dead was a traditional mourning gesture among GAM combatants.

Regional political conflicts: grenade attack in Bireuen and “premanisme” in Nagan Raya

Ongoing regional conflicts also contributed to the leap in violence in December.

On December 10th in Bireuen, a grenade was thrown at the residence of Bupati Nurdin A. Rahman. This is just the latest incident in a series of terror attacks targeting the GAM-affiliated Bupati and Vice-Bupati, Teungku Busmadar (see Box 2). Previous Updates have discussed how tensions arose between local KPA and the Bupati over the nomination of the district secretary and the massive reshuffling of the administration undertaken by Nurdin, which included

Box 2: Terror attacks on Bireuen government since June 2007

- *June 14th-20th*. Several intimidation attempts on Nurdin Rahman and Busmadar Ismail, candidates in the district elections.
- *July 29th*. A grenade exploded in front of the office of newly elected Vice-Bupati Busmadar.
- *September 27th*. Busmadar’s convoy was targeted by two successive stone attacks on his way back from a village in Pandrah sub-district, west Bireuen.
- *October 3rd*. A convoy led district government official Azhari Usman was stoned in Juli sub-district, east Bireuen.
- *December 10th*. A grenade exploded in front of the residence of Bupati Nurdin Abdul Rahman.

changing the heads of many local line agencies (*dinases*). Bireuen KPA acknowledges that a cleaning of the local bureaucracy was necessary. An investigation from the Anti-Corruption Board (KPK) flagged extensive corruption under the previous Bupati, Mustafa A. Glanggang, who now faces criminal charges. Nonetheless, they accuse Nurdin of favoring his own men, mostly from the east of the district.¹² Nurdin’s reshuffling of the administration might also have created other powerful enemies, especially when charges of corruption are at stake.

In Nagan Raya, the ongoing conflict between Gempar, a civil society coalition, and Bupati Zulkarnaini, also led to violence. Gempar has been leading protests demanding that Zulkarnaini, accused of extensive corruption and nepotism,¹³ be removed from his office (see November Update). On December 8th, Samsuardi alias Juragan, Gempar’s coordinator and the head of KPA for Nagan Raya, was ambushed by attackers. Soon afterwards, the houses of two Bupati supporters were arsoned. On December 10th, Juragan led a demonstration gathering thousands, and threatened to overthrow (*kudeta*) the district government. Police since arrested 15 men allegedly involved in the December 8th incidents, and authorities called for the people of Nagan Raya not to give in to “provocations”. The Nagan Raya incidents illustrate a common pattern of Indonesian local conflicts, involving shows of force with demonstrations and counter-demonstrations to eventually escalate into physical attacks perpetrated by thugs (*premanisme*). The worst has been avoided so far in Aceh Barat Daya (Abdya), where similar anti-Bupati protests have been building up (see September to November Updates), and calm now seems to prevail in Aceh Tenggara, where the contestation of the elections results by the incumbent Bupati led to violent incidents last August (see August and November Updates). However, tensions remain high in both districts. With regards to the Nagan Raya and Abdya situations, authorities have rightfully underlined that the removal of Bupatis should be based on solid charges and follow proper procedures. However, few measures have been taken to prevent further violence and facilitate a peaceful resolution of regional conflicts. Proper follow-up on a report issued last year by the Financial Control Agency (BPK) revealing cases of corruption under Zulkarnaini’s first mandate, would be a first useful step to limit tensions.

¹² In an interview with the Updates team, Teungku Dedi, KPA commander for the *Batee Iliiek* region (Bireuen), referred to the newly appointed officials as SDM, which stands for “*Semua dari Matang*” (all from Matang, a town in east Bireuen). A list of 15 officials newly appointed by Nurdin made available to us offered no solid ground to confirm allegations of nepotism and regional favoritism.

¹³ Tabloid Modus Aceh published a list of 25 Nagan Raya officials, all members of the Bupati’s family. Zulkarnaini’s adjutant, also a relative, argues there is nothing wrong in such practices, as Prophet Muhammad himself used to appoint his relatives to government positions (Updates’ team interview with T Banta Idi, December).

MoU implementation and reintegration funds remain a source of conflicts

A number of December conflicts related to issues pertaining to the implementation of the MoU and reintegration assistance programs (see Table 2). Although all took the form of relatively peaceful protests and demonstrations, they underline the importance for local and central government to find ways to better cooperate in sorting out remaining disagreements and to ensure the effective management of reintegration funds.

Table 2: Conflicts related to the implementation of the Mou and reintegration assistance in December 2007

| Issue | Incidents |
|--|---|
| GAM prisoners (<i>Tapol / Napol</i>) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>December 2nd</i>. A statement by the Department of Law and Human Rights saying that GAM prisoners still in detention do not qualify for amnesty raised protestations from SIRA. |
| Human rights and the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (KKR) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>December 10th in Banda Aceh and Langsa</i>. Demonstrations demanding the investigation of violations of human rights abuses and the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. |
| Local political parties | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>December 20th</i>. A statement by the Aceh military commander saying that Aceh does not need political parties but economic welfare raised protests from KPA. |
| Reintegration assistance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>December 3rd</i>. Demonstration of conflict victims in Bener Meriah over the delivery of <i>diyot</i> assistance.• <i>December 12th</i>. Aceh Timur former GAM prisoners demonstrated over promises to provide them with houses and land.• <i>December 12th-27th</i>. Demonstrations of Bener Meriah and Aceh Tengah IDPs over mismanagement of a housing program. |

Dissatisfaction with housing assistance to conflict victims became one of the major issues of December when around 800 IDPs from Bener Meriah and Aceh Tengah traveled to Banda Aceh and demonstrated for three consecutive weeks in front of the Aceh parliament. These protests followed on from previous demonstrations held in July to denounce the mismanagement of a housing program financed under 2005 budget (before the creation of BRA) under which around 2,000 houses were built across the two districts, under the supervision of local government. Investigations by civil society and a parliamentary commission found indications of fund embezzlement, resulting in poor standards of construction. However, no proper follow-up was undertaken. As a result of the December demonstrations, Governor Irwandi Yusuf promised a proper investigation of the case within 40 days.

The early stages of BRA's housing program have also received widespread criticism. The formation of a Housing Task Force in August of last year, at the request of the Governor and the new head of BRA, M. Nur Djuli, has brought significant improvements. A tighter claims verification process has led to a thorough revision of the list of beneficiaries; payments of Rp 35 million/unit (US\$ 3800) in two tranches to 3,075 persons started in late October, and 2,638 units in 16 districts were under construction or rehabilitation as of December. However, these achievements remain far below the objective of 11,000 units set by BRA for 2007. BRA has suffered from difficulties in securing sufficient funding from the central government. Rp 450 billion (US\$ 49.7 million) from the 2007 national budget (APBN) had been promised to BRA, but was cancelled after incomplete documentation was received in Jakarta. A total of Rp 1.085 trillion (US\$ 117 million), to be disbursed from March to September 2008, has since been committed by the provincial and central government to finance both the completion of 2007 activities and the 2008 programs. Better coordination between BRA and national government agencies will be needed to avoid further delays and complications. BRA should also build on the achievements of the Housing Task Force to extend proper claims verification, quality-control, monitoring and complaints-handling procedures to its other programs.