



Aceh Under Martial Law: Conflict, Violence and Displacement

A Day of Analysis

Hosted by the Refugee Studies Centre (RSC), Queen Elizabeth House,
University of Oxford in collaboration with the Asian Studies Centre, St Antony's College

20th May 2004, St Antony's College, Oxford

Convenor: Eva-Lotta Hedman, Senior Research Fellow, RSC

Summary Report

Background

On 6 November 2003, the Indonesian government announced that the existing state of emergency and the on-going massive military offensive in Aceh were to be extended for another six months. According to government sources, some 40,000 troops of the Indonesian armed forces (TNI), and additional units of the Mobile Police Brigade (the so-called 'BRIMOB') have been deployed since the first declaration of martial law on 19 May 2003. A reported \$200 million has been officially allocated to this military campaign against the separatist Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and its armed wing (AGAM). Communication and travel has also been put under severe restrictions by the military, which has virtually closed off Aceh to non-Indonesian nationals, including media and humanitarian assistance organisations, since June 2003.

Of course, the TNI has made the management of refugee camps and the distribution of relief goods to internally displaced people quite a high-profile component of its military campaign, which has also featured so-called 'embedded journalists.' At the same time, however, TNI campaigns include forced evacuations and so-called 'sweeping' operations by the military, compulsory participation in mass loyalty oaths and rallies, and 'special screening' of civil servants and others. In combination, these campaigns suggest that, in the current climate in Aceh, forced displacement is perhaps best understood as a strategy of war deliberately pursued by the Indonesian armed forces. There are also reports of gross human rights violations, as well as concern that TNI officers already linked to such violations elsewhere in Indonesia and, in particular, East Timor, are currently serving in key posts in Aceh.

Issues

Against the backdrop of some 10,000 civilian casualties during a period of 30 years of protracted conflict, the current situation raises a number of especially grave concerns and important questions. First of all, there is concern that the militarization of the conflict in Aceh has placed an entire population under the discretionary powers of the military, including the delivery of law and justice, as well as humanitarian assistance and protection for IDPs in the province. To what extent does the Indonesian military fail even on its own terms, and at considerable expense to the national budget? To what extent does this situation violate international law? Second, there is concern that the current militarization of the conflict in Aceh has served to polarize further the situation, in such ways as to undermine the implementation of 'Special Autonomy.' To what extent does such a process of polarization reflect – and reproduce – the political ambitions of certain factions in Jakarta? To what extent may (other factions/interests in) Jakarta contribute to the strengthening of 'civil' and 'political'

society in Aceh through a sustained and systematic focus on ‘good governance’? Third, there is concern that, despite sympathy for the plight of Acehnese, including IDPs in the province and elsewhere in Indonesia, foreign governments have remained unwilling to engage the current administration in Jakarta on this issue. To what extent does such evident caution reflect – and reproduce – the prerogatives driving the ‘international war on terror’? To what extent may Aceh serve as a worrisome ‘precedent’ of a kind within the region?

Workshop

With these concerns and questions in mind a one-day workshop focused on Aceh was organised by the Refugee Studies Centre in collaboration with the Asian Studies Centre, St Antony’s College. Coinciding with the announcement of the cessation of martial law on the 19th May 2004 the workshop brought together academics and practitioners to exchange perspectives and expertise to focus analysis and debate on recent developments in Aceh. Participants explored obstacles and opportunities for the long-term resolution of this protracted conflict. The workshop format allowed for the kind of analytical reflection *and* advocacy orientation that, it is hoped, policy makers might find especially useful.

Dissemination

Presentations made at the workshop are currently being revised in the light of the day’s discussions. These are being collated by the workshop convenor and are due to be made available to a wider audience through the RSC Working Paper Series later in 2004.

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Programme

*Thursday 20th May 2004,
Dahrendorf Room, St Antony's College, Oxford*

- 9.30 – 9.45 Registration and Coffee
- 9.45 – 10.00 Welcome Address by Stephen Castles (Director, RSC)
Workshop Introduction by Eva-Lotta Hedman (RSC)
- Session I: Conflict, Violence and Displacement** Chair: Stephen Castles
- 10.00-10.20 The Rootedness of Rebellion: Aceh in the Grip of the Past
Tim Kell, Refugee Advisor, UK
- 10.20-10.40 Modes of Displacement during Martial Law
Ali Aulia, Field Representative, JRS
- 10.40-11.00 In Dire Straits: Acehnese, Malaysia and the International Refugee Regime
Eva-Lotta Hedman, Senior Research Fellow, RSC
- 11.00-11.45 Discussion
- Session II: Inside Martial Law** Chair: Ali Aulia
- 11.45-12.30 Anywhere But Fear: Inside Martial Law in Aceh
Audiovisual recording, JRS Indonesia & Asia-Pacific
- 12.30-14.00 Lunch
- Session III: Dynamics of Conflict and Resolution** Chair: Eva-Lotta Hedman
- 14.00-14.20 The Free Aceh Movement (GAM): Terrorists or Freedom Fighters?
Kirsten E. Schulze, Senior Lecturer, LSE
- 14.20-14.40 *Pace* Aceh: Democratization, Decentralization, and Demilitarization in
Indonesia
John T. Sidel, Reader, SOAS
- 14.40-15.00 Breaking the Deadlock: Civil Society Engagement for Conflict Resolution
Aguswandi, Researcher, Tapol
- 15.00-16.00 Closing Discussion

*Support for this workshop was generously provided by
Asia Section - Cafod, Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department - DFID,
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Queen Elizabeth House Oppenheimer Fund, and
Asian Studies Centre at St Antony's College*



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Speakers

Aguswandi, Current Contributor to Tapol The Indonesian Human Rights Campaign. Born to Acehnese parents in Sibreh, in Aceh Besar District, Aguswandi studied constitutional law at Syiah Kuala University in Banda Aceh, where he was elected Secretary General of the University Senate. With the organisation Student Solidarity with the People (*Solidaritas Mahasiswa Untuk Rakyat*, or SMUR), Aguswandi played an active role in a number of key civil society initiatives in Aceh during the transition from the New Order regime (1998-99). Subsequently, he also served as a local coordinator of the Aceh chapter of the Commission for Disappearances and Victims of Violence (*Komisi Untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Tindak Kekerasan*, or Kontras). Aguswandi has also campaigned for human rights, conflict resolution, civil society and development in Aceh at international fora in Southeast Asia, the United States and Europe.

Ali Aulia Ramly, Coordinator of Jesuit Refugee Services in Aceh. A graduate from Faculty of Psychology at University of Indonesia, Ali Aulia has worked in the areas of psychosocial support and child protection issues (UNICEF Emergency Office in West Timor). He has also served as Technical Adviser for Psychosocial Support and Child Trafficking of Children in Conflict Areas (UNICEF Jakarta). In addition to his work in the humanitarian field, Mr Aulia is also a founding member of PULIH, a centre for trauma prevention and rehabilitation in Jakarta.

Stephen Castles, Professor of Migration and Refugee Studies, and Director of the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford. He has carried out research on migration and multicultural societies in Europe, Australia and Asia for many years. He has been an advisor to the Australian Government, and worked for the ILO, the IOM, the European Union and other international bodies. He currently chairs the UK Home Office Advisory Panel on Country Information. He is the author of numerous publications, including *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (co-authored, 2003, 3rd ed.), *Migration in the Asia Pacific: Population, Settlement and Citizenship Issues* (co-edited, 2003); and *States of Conflict: Causes and Patterns of Forced Migration to the EU and Policy Response*, (co-authored, 2003).

Eva-Lotta E. Hedman, Senior Research Fellow, Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford. To date, Dr Hedman has focused most of her research and writing on questions of civil society, social movements and democratization in Southeast Asia. She has also developed a particular interest in the political dynamics of forced migration in the region. Related publications include *East Timor in Transition: Human Rights Law Review* (Guest Editor, Special Issue 1999), and 'Reimposition of Martial Law in Aceh,' *Forced Migration Review* (Vol. 19, 2004).

Timothy P. Kell, Community Services Refugee Adviser, Stonham Housing Association, Newcastle upon Tyne. In the past decade, Mr Kell has been working mainly in the field of social welfare support for refugees in the UK. With a BA Hons. in Politics from the University of York, he first went to teach English at a school in Sudan, before spending more than three years in Indonesia in the mid-1980s with the Volunteer Services Overseas. In 1992, he graduated from the University of Hull with an MA in South East Asian Studies. His MA dissertation was published as *The Roots of Acehese Rebellion, 1989-1992* (Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1995).

Kirsten E. Schulze, Senior Lecturer in International History, London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London. Dr Schulze specializes on conflicts in the Middle East and Indonesia. She is currently a Visiting Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Jakarta, writing a co-authored book on democratisation and conflict in Indonesia. Dr Schulze's publications include 'The Struggle for an Independent Aceh: The Ideology, Capacity, and Strategy of GAM,' *The Anatomy of The Free Aceh Movement*, and 'Laskar Jihad and the Conflict in Ambon,' as well as several books on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

John T. Sidel, Reader in Politics, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Dr Sidel has written widely on Indonesian and Philippine politics and has recently completed a book manuscript titled *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad: Religious Violence in Indonesia*. He is presently on research leave from SOAS under the auspices of a British Academy Research Readership.



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Participants

Aguswandi	Tapol - The Indonesian Human Rights Campaign
Ali Aulia	Field Representative, Jesuit Refugee Service
Graham Brown	Research Officer, Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity
Kerry Brown	Head of Indonesia & East Timor Section, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Lucy Carver	International Peace Brigades
Stephen Castles	Director, Refugee Studies Centre
Dawn Chatty	Deputy Director, Refugee Studies Centre
Siddo Deva	Regional Policy Adviser for East Asia, Oxfam
Katherine Desormeau	MSc Student, Refugee Studies Centre
Rosemary Foot	Senior Fellow, St Antony's College
Matthew Gibney	Elisabeth Colson Lecturer in Forced Migration, Refugee Studies Centre
Ruth Halstead	Volunteer, International Peace Brigades
Eva-Lotta Hedman	Senior Research Fellow, Refugee Studies Centre
Tim Kell	Refugee Advisor, UK
Arnim Langer	Postgraduate, Queen Elizabeth House
Gil Loescher	Senior Fellow, International Institute for Strategic Studies
Maryanne Loughry	Pedro Arupe Tutor, Refugee Studies Centre
Henny Ngu	Asia Section, Cafod
Signe Poulsen	Indonesia and Timor-Leste Team, Amnesty International
Mark Rebick	Director, Asian Studies Centre, St Antony's
Graeme Rodgers	Research Fellow, Refugee Studies Centre
Nicola Rounce	Volunteer, International Peace Brigades
Philip Rudge	fmr. Gen. Secretary of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles
Paul Ryder	Research Information Officer, Refugee Studies Centre
Ramli Sa'ud	Minister Councillor, Embassy of Indonesia, UK.

E. Schroeder-Butterfill	Visiting Researcher, St Antony's College
Kirsten E. Schulze	Senior Lecturer, London School of Economics
John T. Sidel	Reader, School of African and Oriental Studies
Claire Smith	Postgraduate, London School of Economics
Liem Soei Liong	Tapol – The Indonesian Human Rights Campaign
Frances Stewart	Director, Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity
Pribadi Sutiono	First Secretary, Embassy of Indonesia, UK
Nur Aisyah Usman	Postgraduate, South Bank University
Marianna Volpi	Postgraduate, Queen Elizabeth House
Victoria Wheeler	Researcher, Humanitarian Policy Group, Overseas Development Institute
