

M. Nur Djuli

WCFIA - Nov. 14, 2011

RESEARCH QUESTION:

**DOES LACK OF EMPLOYMENT AMONG EX-COMBATANTS LEAD TO
AN INCREASE OF VIOLENCE IN POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES?**

Abstract

Despite the enduring peace process in Aceh (a region of Indonesia located on the northern tip of the island of Sumatra), the effect of the failure to properly address the issue of unemployment of ex-combatants on violence as well as on the peace process itself remains a question.

Hypotheses

1. Unemployment leads ex-combatants to commit crimes because they are unable to sustain their livelihoods.
2. Unemployment leads ex-combatants to commit violence because they feel a sense of injustice over lack of recognition of their sacrifices during conflict.
3. Unemployment leads ex-combatants to violence because they are vulnerable to third-party manipulation encouraging them **to fight against the authorities in a renewed struggle for the old cause or for a new one.**

Argument

While the three hypotheses above may also hold true for ordinary people who are unemployed, these people are not trained to commit violence, nor do they have a history of group solidarity and loyalty, as ex-combatants do. Unemployed ex-combatants, thus, present a ready pool of people who can act together and pose a greater danger to society and to peace.

Summary

There are many reports on this subject, especially from relevant United Nations (U.N.) agencies, large international organizations linked to post-conflict management through educational and economic development efforts, as well as from the academic

realm. The most recent of these reports from the U.N. is a policy paper from the office of the Secretary General itself titled: “United Nations Policy: Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration” (U.N., 2009). Earlier, the U.N. Development Programme published a similar report: “Post-Conflict Economic Recovery: Enabling Local Ingenuity” (UNDP/Europe & CIS, 2008). Both of these reports link economic issues to incidents of conflict and generally conclude that there are several economic factors that heighten the risk of conflict recurrence. If these risk factors are not or are insufficiently addressed in the post-conflict period, they may contribute to a resumption of violence. Indeed, all U.N. agency reports that I have read concerning this issue point to the necessity of addressing the employment of ex-combatants as a conflict prevention measure, as do reports from large international institutions and non-governmental organizations, such as the International Crisis Group: “Aceh: Post-conflict Complications” (Jones, 2007) and the World Bank: “GAM Reintegration Needs Assessment” (World Bank, 2006).

From the academic realm, Gareth McKibben of the London Center for Skills Development (Mckibben, 2011) is among those who agree with the U.N. policy on this matter. Quoting another report from the U.N.: “High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change” (Samuels, 2006), the author states that unemployed ex-combatants can increase the likelihood of a relapse into armed conflict. On the other side of the coin, I found dissenting opinions from two academics who undertook case studies concerning the Northern Ireland sectarian conflict: J.I.P. Thompson (Thompson, 1989) and Robert W. White (White, 1995). They found no evidence that economic conditions affect the intensity, sources, or direction of violence. In Thompson’s work, deprivation theory (such as unemployment) *is tested with multivariate time-series regression models, with controls for security force levels and industrial production*. He finds that, although Northern Ireland suffered from severe unemployment, increases in fatal violence were unrelated to this phenomenon; that the violence has a tendency to perpetuate itself, independently of its stimuli; and that the conflict is unrepresentative of clashes between state and insurgent forces. Thompson maintains that further explanations should incorporate both political factors and mechanisms that contribute to the escalation process. Then again, James Honaker of Pennsylvania State University (Honaker, 2010) contradicts both White's and Thompson's findings by showing that several methodological flaws exist in their

studies. According to Honaker, *the connection between economic conditions and political violence is central to multiple approaches to the study of conflict. For normative policy makers, economic conditions are often the only policy instruments with the prospect of short-term manipulation or improvement.* This statement concurs with the position taken by the U.N. agencies and the large NGOs mentioned above as bases in forming their policies of economic development in post-conflict societies. Honaker's survey shows that unemployment and violence in Northern Ireland may be hypothesized to be endogenous, but unemployment in England is unlikely to be influenced by violence in Northern Ireland. The economic crisis that Northern Ireland experienced, though, was part of a broader crisis, at a lower magnitude, across much of the United Kingdom. The existence of violence might cause unemployment to rise, rather than the reverse, which strengthens the White and Thompson reports. But Honaker maintains, that in this case, however, the direction appears to be predominantly that unemployment causes violence. The economic shocks that Northern Ireland experienced in the 1970s and 1980s were similar to the economic problems experienced across the whole of the United Kingdom at the same time, but the increase of violence was experienced only in Northern Ireland.

On the other hand, an important international agency linked to the U.N., the International Office for Migration (IOM), which was entrusted by the Indonesian Government to directly distribute the first financial assistance to 3,000 ex-combatants of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) in 2005-2006, finds that *lack of economic opportunity per se did not originally promote armed conflict in Aceh.* Rather, it was violent conflict that clearly brought a grinding halt to productive livelihoods and employment opportunities, particularly in heavily conflict-affected “hot spots” (IOM, 2008).

Based on Honaker's and IOM's findings, I surmise that there **is a strong probability of different reactions to joblessness between former combatants of a politically motivated conflict where economic injustice only serves as contributing or aggravating factor and the ex-combatants of a conflict that has as its source economic injustice.**

Dr. Yuhki Tajima, Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of California, who was assigned by the World Bank to do a specific research project on Aceh for the purpose of looking into the effectiveness of its support for the maintenance of peace in Aceh, wrote in her report: “Understanding the Livelihoods of Former Insurgents: Aceh, Indonesia” (Tajima, 2010) that returning from the war in 2005, ex-combatant men found themselves with significantly fewer assets, more injuries, and lower educational attainment on average than civilian men, and, consequently, less opportunity for employment. This report also indicates that *there is no wish among the ex-combatants interviewed to return to conflict despite their economic predicament.*

Evidence from the Field

My own experience as head of the Aceh Reintegration Board (2006-2009) shows that **unemployment does not automatically lead to ex-combatants resorting to violence.** There was a long period of undisturbed peace (2006 - 2009) after the signing of the peace agreement while practically all the ex-combatants were still unemployed. Although that period was marked by many peaceful demonstrations demanding rights for employment as pledged by the Government in the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that included the provisioning of jobs,¹ there was no armed violence beyond some criminal acts such as robberies and extortions. The increases of incidents of violence between 2005-2006 as reported by a World Bank survey, shown in *Figure 1* in this analysis, were still between old military adversaries: Indonesian soldiers and militiamen on one side and the GAM ex-combatants on the other, pointing to a desire to settle old scores, compete in protection rackets, profit in illegal logging, and the perpetration of other criminal activities that were not widespread or in any way threatening to the peace process. Unemployment became an issue when **some** of the ex-combatants became relatively affluent through the classic post-election clientelist system practiced by the newly elected local government (Aspinall, 2010). The general outlook of the time was that the GAM ex-combatants fared less favorably than ordinary civilians in terms of

¹ Article 3.2.5: “GoI will allocate suitable farming land as well as funds to the authorities of Aceh for the purpose of facilitating the reintegration to society of the former combatants and the compensation for political prisoners and affected civilians ... “; and 3.2.5 a: “All former combatants will receive an allocation of suitable farming land, employment or, in the case of incapacity to work, adequate social security from the authorities of Aceh.”

economic position.

The May 2006 executive elections brought not only the intelligence chief of GAM, Irwandi Yusuf,² to the post of governor and Muhammad Nazar,³ chairman of the Aceh Referendum Information Center (SIRA)⁴ as his deputy, but also the capture of several important districts by former rebel commanders. A few high-ranking GAM leaders were handed lucrative development projects, not only by their newly elected ex-comrades-in arms, but also by the central government, which was eager to pacify the newly emerging power in the troubled province, so it would become friendlier to the central government, while the former soldiers and lower-ranking commanders were neglected. **I hypothesize that it is thus, rather, social jealousy and not outright unemployment that sharpened the pain of unemployment to the point of making ex-combatants ready to resort to violence.**

Arguably, the wide scope and thorough investigations by the U.N. and its development agency, the UNDP, and surveys by the World Bank and other international aid institutions seem to point to the affirmative answer to my research

² In 2003, Irwandi Yusuf was captured in Jakarta, brought back to Aceh, and sentenced to 14 years jail. The 2004 tsunami destroyed the prison and, out of the prison population of 278, Irwandi is one of only 40 survivors. He managed to slip back to Jakarta from whence he was brought to Helsinki by CMI as a member of the support team of GAM in the Helsinki peace talks.

³ Muhammad Nazar is founder/chairman of the Aceh Referendum Information Center (SIRA), a mass organization demanding referendum as a solution to the conflict in Aceh. Known as “lion of the podium,” he often led mass demonstrations of SIRA, twice gathering more than a million people each time, from all over Aceh to demonstrate in the capital of the province to demand referendum as a solution to the conflict. He was sentenced to jail twice, the second time for five years and exiled to a jail in Java. He was freed under amnesty of the Helsinki MoU. His tenure as deputy governor to Irwandi Yusuf was not easy, and, in the April 9, 2012 elections, they stand as fierce opponents for the post of governor.

⁴ SIRA is the Indonesian acronym for the Aceh Referendum Information Center, formed on November 8, 1998 by a congress of 104 Acehnese student and youth organizations after 92 of them voted for referendum as the best means of solving the Aceh conflict, against 10 for joining the Free Aceh Movement and two for joining the Republic of Indonesia. Soon after its formation, it organized many popular demonstrations all over Aceh that culminated with the massive demonstration in the capital, Banda Aceh, on its first anniversary, gathering more than a quarter of the entire population of 4.2 million to support the demand for referendum from the central government. The international media recorded a very well-organized and peaceful gathering that worried the central government of the possibility of Aceh seceding through referendum as has already happened in its East Timor province. A year later, intending to repeat this feat, the military took action to prevent it, killing more than 300 people on the way to the demonstration from all over Aceh and destroying more than 1,000 vehicles. Since then, many SIRA members have been killed or disappeared, and the president himself, Muhammad Nazar, was jailed for five years for delivering a speech considered as “spreading hatred against the state.” Today, the leaders and members of this extraordinary organization of young Acehnese have split to pursue their own political ideals, some becoming fierce political enemies.

question, showing that unemployment among ex-combatants *does* lead to an increase of violence in post-conflict societies. Bearing in mind, however, that these reports are specifically geared to support economic recovery as a very important tool in conflict prevention, the two contrary discoveries (White and Thompson), despite flaws in their analyses discovered by Honaker, the rather different discovery by IOM, the lack of any indication of the wish to return to violence reported in the Tajima survey, and my own direct observations in the field, justify revisiting this issue. **Despite the enduring peace process in Aceh, the effect of the failure to properly address the issue of unemployment of ex-combatants on violence as well as on the peace process itself remains a question. It is in the context of this situation that I am looking into the question again by focusing my research on the case study of Aceh.**

Methods of Investigation

I will present a case study of Aceh through my personal knowledge and my professional experiences and observations, as well as through literature reviews. I will also make comparisons with another post-conflict area with many similarities to that of Aceh, Timor Leste (formerly East Timor), and cite literature concerning joblessness and violence from the Northern Ireland case. Ex-combatants are ordinary people. What make them different are their experiences in a particular surrounding. Acehnese ex-combatants may share similar experiences with the former fighters in Northern Ireland, but their surroundings are different and, therefore, the two cases cannot be treated the same way. For this matter, to comprehend a case fully, it is important to understand not only the experiences of the subjects, but also their surroundings, their history, and their cultural narratives. In giving the backgrounds of Indonesia and Aceh, I have related facts and events that are well-documented in history textbooks and academic papers. Some relatively recent events are also presented from the basis of my personal knowledge.

INTRODUCTION INTO THE BACKGROUND OF THE ACEH CASE AFTER THE RESOLUTION OF ITS THREE DECADES OF ARMED REBELLION AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OF INDONESIA

= INDONESIA =

Internal regional conflicts and the global financial crises have almost led Indonesia to bankruptcy and destruction. The “Reformasi” movement of 1998 that toppled General Suharto's 32-year dictatorship has brought democracy as well as decentralization to the country (Ryaas Rasyid, 1998). This popular upheaval, spearheaded largely by students, saved the country from “Balkanization” (Brunner, 1999). The whole philosophy of the nation drilled upon incessantly during the Suharto’s rule had rested on the strictly enforced unitary system when even a mere mention of federalism was considered treason. Indonesia was a police state held together by brutal military force (Vatikiotis, 1993).

The peaceful resolutions of several regional conflicts, especially the 30-year insurgency for independence in Aceh, were made possible by this reformation at the “Center”, especially with the adoption of the decentralization system through the Second Amendment of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic in 2000. Certainly, the December 26, 2004 earthquakes and tsunami did trigger the negotiation of and the necessity to reach an agreement as soon as possible in order to allow the massive assistance from the international community to be distributed without hindrance and the rehabilitation and reconstruction projects to proceed in security (Helsinki MoU, 2005). The seeds of peace, however, had already been planted by the drastic changes that took place in the country due to the *Reformasi*: the systemic and systematic shifting from dictatorship to democracy, from the very centralized system in favor of a wide autonomy applied to the 36 provinces and to hundreds of districts, practically leaving the “unitary” label of the “state” as an epithet without substance. This decentralization actually means returning to the original idea of the revolutionary founders of the Republic that is written in its coat of arms: “*bhinneka tunggal ika*” (unity in diversity), in a country where the population, out of 238 million people, 58 percent are Javanese and the rest divided into some 700 ethnicities with their own languages and distinct cultures.

The *Reformasi* has also affected The Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) that used to bill itself as the “savior of the nation” after wiping out the communists in the 1960’s. For decades, the military was in control of everything from the presidency to village-level leadership, owning giant companies dealing in services, manufacturing, plantations, and import-export, down to petty distribution outlets. The iron hand

suppression of regional conflicts had earned six of its top generals U.N. indictments for crimes against humanity (U.N., 2005). Today, the TNI is not only prohibited from engaging in business, but also excluded from the House of Representatives (DPR) where it used to hold between seven (1998) to 20 percent (1992) of the total of 500 seats (Crouch, 2007). There is a very strong demand now from the civil society for the military to “return to the barracks,” to be completely out of practical civilian politics of the nation on the move. This has yet to happen as policy decisions at the levels of the provinces and the districts are made at the so-called “*musrenbang*” meetings, which are actually integrated bottom-up development discussions involving all relevant government agencies, but are almost always carried out as “*musrenbang* +”, the + symbol representing the local military commander as well. This practice, while not required and actually inconsistent with the need of democratization to exclude the military from civilian affairs, is governed by the long-established habit among civil servants and politicians to be “nice” to the “man behind the gun.”

= ACEH =

Facts and Figures

Aceh is located at the northwestern tip of Sumatra covering an area of 57,365.57 sq. km or 12.26 percent of the island. It has 119 smaller islands and two volcanic lakes; its Leuser mountain range holds the oldest consistent rainforests on earth, dating back to the Pleistocene Epoch 70 million years ago. This protected world heritage has a biological richness and diversity unequalled by that of the Amazon or African rainforests (Robertson, 2002). According to the census before the 2004 earthquakes and the tsunami, Aceh had a population of about 4.2 million and it is estimated that between 160,000 to 200,000 people perished in this natural disaster. The latest census conducted in 2009 shows its population has reached 4.5 million, representing a growth of about 2 percent a year after the tsunami. This rapid increase is due mostly to a population influx from other provinces, as natural growth accounts only for 1.2 percent a year. By May 2011, the number surged to 4,953,262, an increase of 11.59 percent in five years. Most parts of its capital, Banda Aceh, were destroyed, but have been completely rebuilt with massive international donations. The fear of the “bursting of the bubble” when the Aceh Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Agency

(Lembaran Negara, 2005) ended its mandate on April 19, 2009 did not materialize; the economy continues to improve albeit at a slower rate compared to the national level. The reduction of the number of people living below the poverty line has continued, from 26.66 percent in 2006, to 21.98 percent in 2010, and to 19.57 in 2011 (UNDP/Indonesia, 2010).

War and Peace

The Acehnese had been in wars and conflicts to regain their sovereignty as an independent state almost continuously since the Dutch Kingdom officially declared war on the Sultanate of Atjeh⁵ on March 26, 1873, until August 15, 2005, when it signed a peace agreement in Helsinki with the Indonesian Government to end their most recent which lasted 30-year. The war with the Dutch that came to be known as the Atjeh War for the Dutch and the Dutch War for Acehnese has never been ended officially. This war started as result of European colonial expansion in Southeast Asia.

The State of Aceh was a sovereign regional power recognized by Britain, the United States, Portugal, France, the Netherlands, and Turkey. It made the **Treaty of Perpetual Friendship** with the Court of King James 1 of Britain in 1603 that was renewed in 1819 when Aceh was made administrator in the region, providing that “there shall be a perpetual peace, friendship, and defensive alliance between the States dominions and subjects of the High Contracting Parties, neither of whom shall give any aid or assistance to the enemies of the other.”

In 1858, the Dutch invaded a territory of Aceh in South Sumatra. Aceh retaliated by sinking Dutch ships passing through the Straits of Malacca. The opening of the Suez Canal made the Straits increasingly important, and the British signed an agreement with the Dutch in 1871 assigning the Dutch Navy the role of protector for the safety of navigation along the coast of Sumatra, thus allowing the Dutch to take action against Aceh without worrying about its Friendship Treaty with Great Britain. To counter this development, Aceh started trade talks with the U.S., Italian and Turkish Consuls in Singapore and was about to sign a trade pact with the United States. The

⁵ Dutch spelling, Acheh in English and Atcheh in French. In 1972, the Indonesian and Malaysian governments reached an agreement to synchronize the Malay and Indonesian spelling systems, called the Malindo Spelling System Agreement, thus changing both tj and ch into c.

Dutch sent an ultimatum to the Sultan demanding that he abandon this plan. When the ultimatum was rejected, the Dutch declared war, and they informed the Government of the United States, asking for American endorsement of their aggression (U.S. State Department, 1873). President Ulysses S. Grant refused this appeal, declaring U.S. neutrality and reported to Congress. *“Official information being received from the Dutch government of state of war between the King of Netherlands and the Sultan of Acheen. The officers of the USA who were near the seat of the war were instructed to observe impartial neutrality. It is believed that they have done so”* (Grant, 1873).

The first Dutch expedition with 3,000 troops was swiftly repulsed, killing its commander Major General Johan Köhler. This war never came to a formal end, but the Dutch withdrew in March 1942 as a consequence of the war in the Pacific (WW2). It cost the Dutch some 10,000 soldiers, more than all the casualties it had suffered in its colonial wars around the world combined.⁶ On the Aceh side, the Sultanate lost three-quarters of its population of around 20 million, a loss that it has never been able recover due to other wars and conflicts that it has had to engage in during attempts to regain its sovereignty. Aceh also lost all its colonial territories in Sumatra and the Malayan Peninsula, and became itself a colonized nation when, in 1904, an *Ulèë Balang* (eq. of Baron) illegally signed the surrender to the Dutch on behalf of the Sultan, an act that made his name a synonym for traitor in the Acehnese language.

Starting in 1940, the All Aceh Religious Leaders Association (PUSA)⁷ conducted negotiations with Japanese military intelligence to get their help in expelling the Dutch. In February 1942, at least three delegations from different popular resistance movements in Aceh were sent to meet the Japanese occupational commander in Penang, located across the narrow Straits of Malacca, an island that the Japanese had captured from the British (today a state of the Malaysian Federation). The mission managed to get the Japanese to agree to help expel the Dutch, already hard pressed by the disastrous defeat by the British in Malaya, and give Aceh its independence within

⁶ *The New York Times*, May 6th, 1873, wrote: “A sanguinary battle has taken place in Acheh, a native Kingdom occupying the Northern portion of the island of Sumatra. The Dutch delivered a general assault and now we have details of the result. The attack was repulsed with great slaughter. The Dutch general [J.H.R. Köhler] was killed, and his army put to disastrous flight.”

⁷ *Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh* (All Aceh Religious Leaders Association) was formed specifically to re-launch the struggle for independence after the defeat of the Western colonial powers and the advance of the Japanese military forces in Southeast Asia.

the proposed Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere that the Japanese eventually formed in 1943. On March 12, 1942, a small unit of bicycle soldiers led by the Fujiwara Kikan intelligence corps landed on a beach in North Aceh and was met with jubilation by the Acehnese. But this euphoria did not last long. *“Though initially welcomed as liberators, the Japanese gradually established themselves as harsh overlords. Their policies fluctuated according to the exigencies of the war, but in general their primary object was to make the Indies serve Japanese war needs”* (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2007). Within months the Acehnese, especially the *ulemas* (religious leaders), shocked at having to bow eastward to the Japanese Emperor every day at sunrise, began to resist the occupation. Small skirmishes started to occur. On November 10, 1942, after the Japanese failed to persuade these *ulemas* to abandon their opposition to the occupation, they conducted a dawn attack on a religious school in North Aceh that was to be known as the *Cot Plieng incident*. It took three attempts for the crack Japanese military to bring down this little rebellion by a few hundred villagers and students of the religious school. In the process, they killed the *ulema*, Teungku Abdul Jalil, and burned down the village mosque. This incident signaled the total ending of the collaboration with the Japanese. Thus began a new war for the Acehnese against yet another and much bigger nation that can only be described as a “superpower” of the time. This war was brief and severe; brutalities were the order of the day. For the first time in their long history, the Acehnese people experienced famine and such abject poverty that they had to wear gunnysacks for clothing, and all their time, energy, and produce had to be surrendered to the Japanese to help in their war efforts against the Allies.

Brief Independence

The news of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki energized the Acehnese to such a level that, before the end of 1945, all the Japanese occupation troops had either managed to flee to Medan (North Sumatra), where they surrendered to the allied forces that had already landed there, or were captured by the Acehnese popular resistance armies, such as the *Mujahidin* and the *Tentera Pelajar* (Students Army). The Dutch, who had formed the Netherland Indonesian Colonial Administration (KNIL) in an attempt to use the victory of the Allies in the World War II to return to Indonesia, landed with the British in Medan. Using the pretext of repatriating the

Japanese, they entered Aceh under the British flag. This attempt failed and not only were the *Mujahidins* able to push them back to Medan, but also to capture this city, which was the third largest in Indonesia. *Thus, from 1945 to 1949 not a single foreign official remained in Aceh; Aceh achieved de facto independence.*

Unwittingly Became Part of the Republic of Indonesia

Under pressure from the United States, already fearing the advance of communism in Asia and wanting to establish democracy in this new country of 75 million people that had declared its independence on August 17, 1945, the Dutch agreed to hold *The Hague Round Table Conference* under the auspices of the U.N., and on December 31, 1949, the Dutch surrendered sovereignty over its entire East India (Indonesia) colony to the new republic. Without any consultation with the Acehnese, The Hague Roundtable agreement includes Aceh as a province of the Republic of Indonesia (RI), which itself was a state within the Federal Republic of Indonesia (RIS). The RI's territory covered only the islands of Java, Madura, and Aceh, while the rest are state republics within the RIS. Revolutionaries in Java who had rallied under Sukarno regarded the RIS as a puppet state of the Dutch. Sukarno came to Aceh to meet with Daud Beureu'eh, the governor, and managed to persuade him, with a pledge to make the RI an Islamic State, not only to accept that Aceh was a part of the RI, but also to help destroy the RIS. To consolidate his power, Sukarno absorbed the *Muhajidins* into the TNI and replaced several regional commanders. He dismissed Lt. Col. Husin Yusuf as military commander of Sumatra and broke his military command into four divisions: North, Center, West, and South Sumatra. The Acehnese military was placed under the North Sumatran Division. The Province of Aceh itself was reduced to a mere district of the newly formed Province of North Sumatra.

A New Type of War

In 1953, Beureu'eh and Husin Yusuf, declared Aceh as part of the NII (Islamic State of Indonesia) formed by Sekarmadji Kartosuwiryo in West Java on August 7, 1949. Thus, they led Aceh back to war, but the struggle this time was not against a foreign power; it was rather a regional, religious struggle against the nationalist *Center*. Although the majority of the Acehnese people supported this new struggle, they were not fully united, mainly because the enemies were fellow Muslims. Indeed while the

DI (Darul Islam, Nation of Islam) ideology did spread to several provinces, most were quickly quashed by the Indonesian Army. Karto Suwiryo, a hero of the independence revolution who felt betrayed by Sukarno's failure to form an Islamic state when most of the fighting against the Dutch and the Japanese was by the *Mujahidins*, was captured in 1962 and executed. Almost at the same time, the central government sued for peace in Aceh, and Beureu'eh ended his rebellion when Jakarta accorded Aceh the status of "Special Province" with autonomy in cultural, educational, and religious matters. The DI in the province of South Sulawesi under another disgruntled independence war hero, Col. Kahar Muzakkar, continued to fight until 1965 when Muzakkar was killed in battle. This spelled the end of the DI/NII.

Back Again to War for National Independence

The "Special Province" status of Aceh was never really implemented; Aceh was treated more and more like a colony than a province, especially in economic terms. One of the richest provinces in natural resources, it was the poorest compared to the others. Aceh oil and gas, exploited by Exxon-Mobil starting in 1972, contributed 20 percent to the national budget of Indonesia, but Aceh obtained only 0.5 percent.⁸ Thus, on December 4, 1976, Dr. Hasan di Tiro, a graduate of Columbia University who had been living in New York for many years, returned to Aceh and formed the Atjeh-Sumatra National Liberation Front (ASNLF), later popularized and known as GAM, and declared Aceh's independence. Hasan was from the Tiro family that for eight generations had held the mantle of "wali" (regent) of the Sultanate. In 1874, when Sultan Mahmud Shah died without an heir, the Council of State⁹ appointed his six-year-old nephew Tuanku Muhammad Daud as sultan; Teungku Tjihik di Tiro (the Great Imam of Tiro) was appointed regent to lead the fight against the Dutch, which had become more and more of a religious struggle between Islam and the "infidels" after the Dutch burned down the State Mosque. This regency continued for seven generations with each successor dying in battle; the eighth, Hasan, took the mandate on the basis of his hereditary link, not appointed by the Council of State that had long extinct. Hasan lived to see peace return to Aceh; he died in 2010 at the age

⁸ "Aceh Di Mata Internasional, Proyek Vital Dan Pelanggaran Ham."

⁹ In modern terms, the Acehnese Sultanate can be categorized as a constitutional monarchy, with the Quran and Hadith as the constitution as interpreted by its grand mufti. The Council of State, comprising four persons, has the power to appoint the sultan and to declare war.

of 87 in Aceh and is buried in the national heroes cemetery beside Teungku Tjihik di Tiro whom the Republic has acknowledged officially as one of its greatest national heroes.¹⁰

The Road to Peace

There were several attempts for a peaceful solution to this latest conflict of separatism in Aceh that became more and more destructive in term of losses of property and life. At the height of the repressive military action in the 1990's, more than 200,000 people, or about 5 percent of the population, were internally displaced and some 50,000 fled to Malaysia (USCR, 2002). Some sources estimate that between 10,000 to 20,000 people were killed, while others put the number at between 20,000 to 25,000. The variation in figures derives from a range of public and private sources. The figure 10,000 is the most often quoted number, including by some NGOs and most of the media (e.g., *Radio Netherlands* November 19, 2002 and June 9, 2003; *CNN* April 11, 2003; and *Reuters* June 1, 2003). GAM claimed that 26,000 people were killed during this period while Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch put the number at 12,000. The lower numbers appear to be based on reports that these organizations were able to verify (Kingsbury, 2005).

The Geneva-based Henry Dunant Centre¹¹ brokered several stages of ceasefire culminating in the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) in January 2001; a very wide gap in interpretations of the terms of the agreement by the parties and weak monitoring capacity soon led to its collapse (Aspinall & Crouch, 2003).

International Interventions

The global financial crises hit Southeast Asia in 1997 and 1998 after a long period of phenomenal economic development. These crises plunged Indonesia into heavy debts and insolvency. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund stepped in to help, though with several strings attached, such as imposing an austerity budget,

¹⁰ The title of national hero is given by the state with the approval of the parliament (DPR) Although some criticism was expressed in parliament and in the opinion columns of the press in Jakarta concerning the ex-rebel to be buried in a national heroes' mausoleum, it had already become a fait accompli with tens of thousands of people attending and dozens continuing to visit the grave daily up to the present.

¹¹ Now called the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (The HD Centre).

abolition of subsidies, and reduction of military spending; the latter had the biggest impact on Aceh, as it required the central government to solve its regional conflicts by peaceful means. Hence, pressures also came from the Co-Chairmen of the Tokyo Conference for the Economic Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Indonesia comprising the United States, the European Union, Japan, and the World Bank - "The Tokyo Quartet" (Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003). Large international human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International increased their protests, when, in January 2000, the military-backed government of President Megawati Sukarnoputri declared martial law on Aceh for six months. This was extended for another six months, followed by two more extensions of six months each, disguised under the title of "civil emergency," which is legally a step lower than martial law, but, in reality, its implementation by the military remained the same. This decree was lifted only upon the signature of the Helsinki MoU on August 15, 2005. During the implementation of both the martial law and the civil emergency status, the military had a free hand to commit massacres, torture, rapes, and destroy public and private properties (Human Rights Watch, 2003). Potential investors gravely needed to jump-start the national economy were scared off. The first-ever direct presidential election in 2004 that brought the reformed general Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and business tycoon Yusuf Kalla as his deputy to power in this newly democratized and decentralized country, saw the adoption of peaceful means to end the various regional, ethnic, and religious conflicts.

On GAM's side, with more than 50,000 government troops on the ground and tens of thousands of militiamen trained to fight against its 25,000 members, with just over 3000 armed combatants, it became practically impossible to maintain logistic links not only between its own units, but more so with the people. Before the martial law, GAM had control over 75 percent of Aceh, over which it ran a parallel government. Now forced out from the towns and villages, its fighters were dispersed into small groups struggling to survive on their own in the jungles.

Thus in January 2005, the Crisis Management Initiatives (CMI) of Helsinki, chaired by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, came at the right time to offer a new mediation effort, backed initially by the Finnish Government and eventually by the European Union (Herrberg, 2005). After six months of difficult negotiations, the

Helsinki MoU was signed on August 15, 2005, on the basis of “self-government” rule for Aceh. Under this agreement, Aceh will exercise authority within all sectors of public affairs, which will be undertaken in conjunction with its civil and judicial administration, except in the fields of foreign affairs, external defense, national security, monetary and fiscal matters, justice, and freedom of religion, the policies of which belong to the Government of the Republic of Indonesia in conformity with the Constitution.¹²

THE EX-COMBATANTS IN PEACETIME AND THE QUESTION OF THEIR EMPLOYMENT

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration

As with most peace processes in modern times, the Helsinki MoU that was signed on August 15, 2005 between the Indonesian Government and GAM prescribes the procedure of **Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)** as the starting point of the peace process in Aceh. The U.N. has been engaged in this procedure in post-conflict situations for more than 15 years. In his May 2005 note to the General Assembly, the U.N. Secretary General (U.N., 2009) defined the elements of DDR as the following:

- ***Disarmament** is the collection, documentation, control, and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives, and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. Disarmament also includes the development of responsible arms management programs.*
- ***Demobilization** is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups.
The **first stage of demobilization** may extend from the processing of individual combatants in temporary centers to the massing of troops in camps designated for this purpose (cantonment sites, encampments, assembly areas or barracks).
The **second stage of demobilization** encompasses the support package provided to the demobilized, which is called reinsertion. Reinsertion is the*

¹² Article 1.1.2 a) of the “Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement.”

assistance offered to ex-combatants during demobilization, but prior to the longer-term process of reintegration. It is a form of transitional assistance to help cover the basic needs of ex-combatants and their families and can include transitional safety allowances, food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term education, training, employment, and tools. While reintegration is a long-term, continuous social and economic process of development, reinsertion is short-term material and/or financial assistance to meet immediate needs, and can last up to one year.

- **Reintegration** *is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open timeframe, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility, and often necessitates long-term external assistance.*

The DDR Process in Aceh: The Successful DD and the Problematic R

In Aceh, the disarmament and demobilization parts of the DDR procedure were implemented smoothly and successfully as scheduled in the Helsinki MoU (Aceh Monitoring Mission, 2006). On December 21, 2005, the leadership of GAM officially disbanded its military wing, the *Teuntra Nasional Aceh* (TNA) (Afrida & Suryana, 2005) and completed the process of handing 846 weapons to the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) to be destroyed as stipulated in the MoU. Ten days later, a ceremony was held to mark the final withdrawal of 7,628 soldiers and 2,150 police, bringing the total security forces withdrawn to 31,681.

Both the numbers of GAM weapons and the Indonesian soldiers pulled out from Aceh represent the figures agreed on in the MoU, and not in reality, which are greater in both cases. Although this issue created some disputes and complaints later, they are not as problematic as the unrealistic number of 3,000 of GAM combatants registered in the MoU. While the TNI) has often expressed its concern over what it suspects to be hidden GAM weapons, the Indonesian Government was satisfied with the criminalization of all weapons that remained in civilian hands without permit. On its

side, GAM did not insist on verifying the number of the *non-organic*¹³ Indonesian troops left in Aceh, satisfying itself on the stipulation of Article 1.1.2.a) of the MoU that the role of the Indonesian military in Aceh is external defense. GAM had given this lower number due to the fear that, if the peace accord failed, its real strength would be known. This calculation was also based on the possibility of having to give the names of the declared number, thus risking that those operating in urban areas would be picked up immediately and the talks would be scuttled. The military is on record as stating its opposition against the peace talks.

Figure 1 shows that the number of clashes in the field surged drastically during the negotiations, until the president forced the chief of the army to take early retirement. GAM thus gave only the number of those who bore arms and not those in support services, such as intelligence, medical, and logistics, which, if included, would have brought the number to well over 25,000 (GAM's own claim stood at 36,000). This situation would pose difficult problems later in the work of *reinsertion*, employment, and reintegration. Indeed, the DDR process as proposed by the U.N. had already missed one *R* in its implementation in Aceh: *Reinsertion*. The cash distribution method carried out in Aceh is more appropriately termed reinsertion than reintegration.

The reintegration part of the process was entrusted to the Aceh-Peace Reintegration Board (BRA). Formed in February 2006 by a decree of the Governor of Aceh, the BRA is mandated to reintegrate over 25,000 ex-combatants and 10,000 militiamen, and to provide livelihood assistance to more than 100,000 victims of conflict (widows, orphans), and build around 30,000 houses for those whose homes had been destroyed or heavily damaged during the conflict (BRA, 2009). Carrying out this mandate has been problematic for BRA from the beginning. There was no real understanding from the parties, including those at the highest levels of the government, of what reintegration as meant by the MoU is all about. Short-term fix was preferred to sustainability; budgeting of the reintegration programs has to pass through the normal process of government bureaucracy, resulting in the rigid cash distribution of the funds to individual beneficiaries without any control on how it

¹³ Reinforcement sent to Aceh from other regions.

should be used. Group capitalization programming became impossible; with very rare exceptions, the recipients of the cash grants used the money for consumptive purposes. BRA itself saw its first chairman, an academic, resign within three months fearful of the ex-combatants he was supposed to help, and its second and third within a year. Its fifth was fired after six months in office, and I, No. 4, was able to serve for three years with very strong and persistent support from the governor, my fellow GAM leadership comrade. It is thus not difficult to conclude that the handling of ex-combatants in Aceh is far from proper. *To speak about their employment is to speak about the failure of providing it, despite the matter being clearly stated in the Helsinki MoU.*¹⁴

Be as it may, **there is no indication in the field that this situation of un-employment has led GAM ex-combatants to commit violence.** On the contrary, the current development (time of writing: January - March 2012), that has seen a sudden sharp increase of violence by recognized ex-combatants, is linked to political differences between old comrades-in-arms who are vying for the posts of governor and chiefs of 36 districts in the coming executive elections called PILKADA on April 9, 2012 (see Annex).

Incidents of Violence

The immediate change of situation after the signing of the MoU in August 2005 has been dramatic; the drop in the number of incidents of violence, both of armed clashes between the security forces and the GAM fighters, as well as of those incidents termed by the AMM as “purely criminal,” is impressive. From a highly insecure place, Aceh became is now billed as “one of the safest places on earth” (Singapore Institute of International Affairs, 2006). Many towns along the trunk road from Banda Aceh, to Medan, the capital city of North Sumatra, became “sleepless.” High-frequency bus services to other provinces as far as Lampung in South Sumatra (more

¹⁴ Art. 3.2.3: “The Government of Indonesia and the authorities of Aceh will take measures to assist persons who have participated in GAM activities to facilitate their reintegration into the civil society. These measures include economic facilitation to former combatants, pardoned political prisoners, and affected civilians. A Reintegration Fund under the administration of the authorities of Aceh will be established.” Art. 3.2.5. a): “All former combatants will receive an allocation of suitable farming land, employment or, in the case of incapacity to work, adequate social security, from the authorities of Aceh.”

than 1,700 km), then crossing the Sunda Straits by ferry to Java on the same bus, all the way to Jakarta and then to Surabaya in East Java (four-day journey), were introduced. Construction of infrastructure, roads, bridges, public buildings, schools, and hospitals with funding from tsunami-related projects, from the newly established special autonomy funds,¹⁵ and direct grants from various foreign donors in support of the peace process, fuelled the booming economy. New cars are clogging newly tarred roads. Of the 14 incidents of violence reported within the month of August 2005, only three took place after the signing of the Helsinki MoU on August 15 (*Figure 1*).

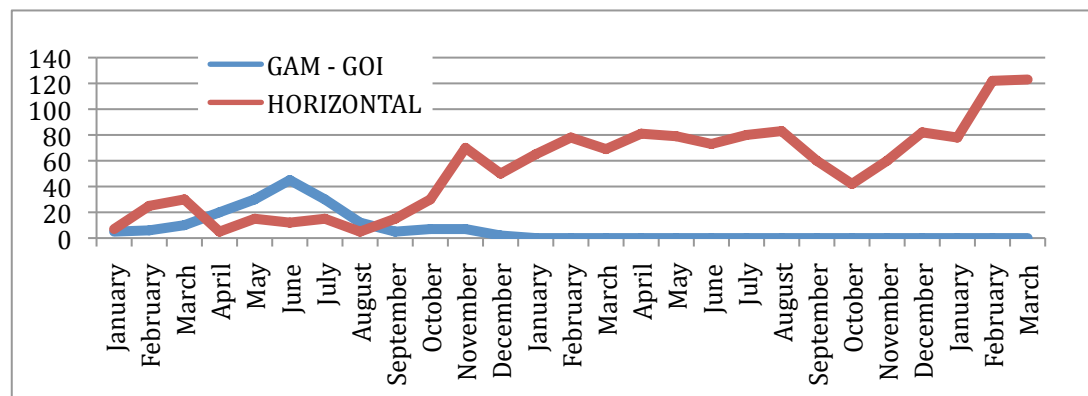
Ordinary criminal cases during the conflict can be considered non-existent as such acts were deemed by the authorities to have been perpetrated by the rebels; when they were clearly perpetrated by the state apparatus, they were termed “battle,” despite the fact that most of the victims were innocent civilians. Thus, the cases quoted here represent the incidents of armed clashes between the two sides. The Indonesian military strongly opposed the Helsinki peace talks and they showed their opposition by increasing attacks on GAM bases. When the attacks started to threaten the peace talks, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono ordered the outspoken chief of the army, General Ryamizard Ryakudu, to take “early retirement.” As soon as the peace agreement was signed on August 15, the clashes tapered off drastically and, by December, no clashes were reported. Violent incidents between non-government actors, however, started to increase significantly; these clashes are attributed to quarrels over distribution of development projects. It is important to note that this new situation is directly linked to actions of ex-combatants from both sides (rebel guerillas and militiamen) for economic purposes, including competition in getting projects, protection money, illegal logging, and control of the bird nest trade.

At this point, the DDR procedure as specified by the U.N. should have reached the phase of Reinsertion”, i.e. “*assistance offered to ex-combatants during demobilization, but prior to the longer-term process of reintegration ... to help cover the basic needs of ex-combatants and their families and can include transitional safety allowances, food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term education,*

¹⁵ Two percent of the national budget

training, employment, and tools.” But, as mentioned above, there seems to be no full understanding of this procedure even among AMM officers.

Figure 1: Incidents of Violence Between January 2005 and March 2007



Source: Press Reports compiled by the World Bank (Dsf, 2007).

The GAM-GoI (blue line) development chart in *Figure 1* above shows the level of clashes between GAM and the Indonesian military (GOI). The horizontal clashes (red line) are those between “armed civilians.” The MoU deemed all arms in civilian hands without permit as “criminal weapons,” and by conjecture, their actions are also criminal, even if several of these clashes were between former political enemies (GAM fighters and militiamen).

It is important to note that, during the same periods, other areas in Indonesia, outside of a particular social or political incident, do not show any unusual increase in incidents of violence, and that such incidents are necessarily linked to criminality. In the national capital, Jakarta, the rate of street criminality has remained at between nine to ten incidents per minute for the last five years (Kapolda Metro Jaya, 2011). Even during the election year of 2006, the rate of violence in non-post-conflict areas did not show any significant increase. “... *Elections in most district polls pass peacefully; the small number that does not reveals nationwide institutional weaknesses that should be fixed. These contests are often intense personal rivalries for community power that can be highly emotive and, if not closely watched, can quickly turn violent. While these tense races accentuate religious and ethnic ties they have not triggered any sectarian schisms. Many confrontations could be avoided in future polls by relatively simple changes in practices, policies, and laws. Rather than*

being too small for national attention, these political battles matter to this large country because, since decentralization, it is this level of public administration that has the greatest impact on the lives of citizens. How these elections take place can determine the judgments that voters make on the success or failure of democracy throughout the archipelago.” (I.C.G, 2010)

Efforts and Challenges in Reintegrating Ex-combatants

The Aceh acting governor, appointed as caretaker three months before the executive election in April 2004, was able to obtain from the central government 25 million rupiah (approx. \$U.S. 2,500) for each of the 3,000 registered ex-combatants. There were several problems in distributing this money:

1. The representative of GAM in the AMM boycotted the BRA, because the acting governor included the militia in its assistance programs on the same level as for GAM ex-combatants. During the peace negotiations in Helsinki, the military denied having formed and trained the militia, and, thus, their existence is not even mentioned in the MoU.
2. GAM refused to identify its 3,000 ex-combatants for fear that, if the peace agreement failed, their safety and the safety of their families would be jeopardized.
3. The term ex-combatants under the U.N. specifications include such supportive elements as intelligence, medical, and logistics. In the Helsinki agreement, only those bearing arms are considered; hence, the given figure of 3,000. Using the U.N. criterion, the number reaches more than 25,000.

It took more than a year for the amount of 3,000 x 25 million rupiah to be handed finally to Muzakkir Manaf, the former commander-in-chief of GAM, who distributed the money through 17 regional commanders, and also directly by himself, to nearly 25,000 recipients, including widows and orphans of ex-combatants, rendering the amount received by each beneficiary insignificant: between 2 million rupiah (about U.S. \$200) to just 150,000 rupiah (\$15). There was much confusion and many allegations, suspicions, and dissatisfactions concerning this money as the media had announced that each ex-combatant would receive 25 million rupiah (Ralla, 2009).

This issue of compensation for ex-combatants has never been resolved; it has, thus, exacerbated the feeling of being cheated once again by the central government when added to many other pledges yet to be fulfilled (Mahmud, 2006) .

During the first few months after this payment was made on November 29, 2006, however, there was a period of raised expectation for more adequate compensations. The call for patience by the leadership of the ex-combatants and by government officials as well as by the AMM calmed the situation, and **incidents of violence subsided significantly**. At the same time also, the election of the new governor and my appointment in 2007 as the new director of BRA, both of us being members of the GAM leadership, gave new hope to the ex-combatants of a better understanding of their problems. My appointment mandate was very specific: to restructure the agency and to draw up a medium- and long-term plan for reintegration, which I did, as presented in the five-year plan “BRA Comprehensive Action Plan 2009” (BRA, 2009). As a short-term measure, in addition to the 3,000 ex-combatants, BRA introduced other categories of recipients of economic assistance. Prior to 2007, all money was from the central government; beginning in 2008, I also obtained funding from the government of Aceh. Assistance to several other categories of beneficiaries was provided, including around 35,000 dependents of civilians who had been killed in the conflict. Disability assistance was provided to almost to 15,000 conflict-related beneficiaries, and more 35,000 houses were built for those whose homes had been burned down or destroyed during the conflict (BRA, 2009). None of these programs, however, were designed specifically for sustainability of employment of ex-combatants. Such sustainable programming as contained in the five-year plan mentioned above has never been realized due to internal politicking and the lack of continued international support.

In the midst of these unfulfilled pledges, the European Union, which backed the implementation of the Helsinki MoU, decided to pull out of the AMM after only 18 months in operation, stating various reasons from funding difficulties to the reluctance of the Indonesian government to allow its continued presence in Aceh.

The euphoria of peace, freedom of movement, and free speech, drowned the expressions of dissatisfaction of the ex-combatants for a while. The massive tsunami reconstruction funds were still circulating, jobs were relatively easy to obtain, and foreign NGOs were carrying out surveys, capacity/life skill trainings, holding seminars, conferences ... The peace become stronger and stronger every day.

The executive election of April 2006 went smoothly, and a new government of Aceh headed by Irwandi Yusuf, former intelligence chief of GAM, and his deputy Muhammad Nazar, chairman of the presidium of SIRA, was established.

On April 19, 2009, the Tsunami Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Board (BRR) ended its mandate. One-by-one, U.N. agencies and large international NGOs closed their offices in Aceh mostly because the central government refused to give them professional visas; even cultural visas for the purpose of academic research became very difficult to obtain. The recommendations for obtaining visas that were previously given by the BRR were withdrawn, and the procedure reverted back to the Immigration Office. But strangely, despite this “return to normalcy,” the Immigration Office still considered Aceh a “conflict area” and professional/cultural visas granted to foreign professionals were - and are - not valid for Papua or Aceh. To visit these two provinces, foreigners are required to obtain special visas given only to those employed by foreign companies contracted to finish infrastructure-building, such as roads, hospitals and schools, in Aceh. Academic and cultural visas are given only for the duration of the events the applicants are invited to attend. Obtaining tourism visas, on the other hand, has become very easy with Visa On Arrival (VoA) available at the Banda Aceh airport for the first time in the history of the republic.

Jobs began to become scarce, and, especially hard-hit are the ex-combatants who have no skills to compete in the open job markets. Armed violence started to occur, although at the beginning these were clearly criminal cases such as robberies and kidnappings for ransom. There were 154 violent criminal cases in 2008, representing a significant increase from 51 criminal cases of all types (violent and non-violent) in the previous year (Kontras Aceh, 2008). In 2009, the line between purely criminal cases and the politically motivated ones became more and more unclear, and the peace in Aceh is again vulnerable. Worse, in 2008, at least 33 recorded criminal cases

involved firearms. Armed crimes ranged from kidnapping for ransom to plain robbery and murder. Most of the incidents occurred between March and July 2008, perpetrated by former separatist combatants, members of the military or police, and a number of unknown assailants (Malik, 2012).

While the number of cases is not dramatic and may even be considered normal in a post-conflict situation, the intensity is disturbing. In an interview with several young ex-combatants in North Aceh in 2011 conducted by Shadia Marhaban, President of Aceh Women's League (LINA),¹⁶ they openly expressed their readiness to fight again if there is nothing for them to do. "We want to go back to school, or to start small businesses if we have the capital. We can't go on like this, sitting in coffee shops doing nothing." Asked if they would be ready to fight again if the conflict should break anew, they readily said yes. "We prefer to live in the jungle; it was not easy in the jungle, but we had our dignity, we had a purpose."

Following the heated regulatory disputes arising from the decision of the Constitutional Court (see Annex), and the thinly veiled threat from the Secretary General of Partai Aceh ("we will not be responsible if the people return to violence...") within less than two months (early December 2011 to early January 2012), 10 people were killed and 13 wounded by gunmen in just four totally unprovoked incidents. Although these cases are not random and the victims are innocent laborers, the authorities have immediately declared that they were "purely criminal cases." All the victims were poor Javanese plantation or construction workers who had come to Aceh as much as 15 years ago and as recently as a few weeks before the attack; the gunmen simply came, asked a few questions, and shot them; some were killed on the spot, others were wounded and survived. This is similar to the execution-style killings of medium-level GAM commanders before the legislative election of 2009. There has been press speculation that the killings were the result of non-payment of extortion money, but the authorities have offered no proof for such linkage. This is the same as before, when speculation was that the murdered GAM ex-combatants were involved in some illegal trades (logging, drugs). Today, these cases have been forgotten, and that leads to speculation that national

¹⁶ Unpublished survey carried out for the International Conference of Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies (ICAIOS)/Syah Kuala University, Banda Aceh, 2011.

intelligence operators were involved, especially when no denials have been offered by relevant authorities.¹⁷ Ironically, in a vast country like Indonesia where several murders that do not normally elicit a statement from the Minister of Home Affairs take place every minute, the latest killings in Aceh have prompted reactions not only from the highest local authorities, but from those at the national level as well; the Ministers of Home Affairs, of Law, Political and Human Rights Affairs, and the national police chief have issued contradictory official statements without offering any proof. The Minister of Home Affairs and the police chief categorized the cases as “purely criminal”; the military explanation dominated the other ministries, which said the killings were due to “social jealousy.” Even some members of Parliament have stated that the murders were perpetrated by military intelligence in order to sabotage the peace process in Aceh.

Evidently, incidents of violence in Aceh have shown significant increases just before and during the elections. While there has been no solid proof that these cases are politically motivated, circumstantial evidence surrounding them as presented above is supportive of such a conclusion. Although the police have not charged anyone for the murders, widespread suspicions are centered on old political adversaries: military intelligence, and ex-GAM combatants. In the context of this paper, the question that arises out of these increases is: *Is there a direct connection between this trend and the joblessness of ex-combatants?* The two suspects arrested by the police whom they have identified as former GAM were indeed unemployed; but the number is too small to use as a proof of the link, especially when the police have not charged them in court.¹⁸

TIMOR LESTE: A COMPARATIVE CASE

¹⁷In its statement dated February 4, 2011, the Indonesian Human Rights NGO KONTRAS (Commission of Missing Persons and Victims of Violence) openly accused the police of “letting” the violence to take place and the military of interfering in civilian life in contravention of its doctrine as well as the law on national defense. On January 8, this organization had asked the police in Aceh to be more professional in handling the case in order to stop wild speculations that disturb the fragile peace.

¹⁸While writing this paper, incidents of political violence are taking place on a daily basis, all linked to the overheated electoral campaigning (see Annex). This development, which involves mainly two rival factions of GAM – supporters of the Partai Aceh and those on the side of former Governor Irwandi Yusuf – is due to the special electoral conditions, and, even if some unemployed ex-combatants may be involved, it will not be considered for the purpose of this paper.

There are about 56,000 ex-combatants in Timor Leste (Cordon Peak 2008). More than 10 years after the formation of Timor Leste's army and the demobilization of the guerrilla force that fought for independence, the struggle about how to pay tribute to the ex-combatants, known in the new nation as the Veterans, continues. The government established a scheme of cash benefits in order to engage veterans' voices in mainstream politics. This cash benefit has eased discontent among former fighters. As categorized in U.N. DDR procedure, however, this process is not a long-term solution; it is merely a *reinsertion* process and, by definition, is not sustainable. Jealousy soon emerges, essentially a standoff between eastern-born Timorese (a former Portuguese colony) and those born in the west (an Indonesian province). Soldiers of western origin had long complained of ill treatment at the hands of eastern-born commanders. They also complained of lower pay rates and poorer conditions. In January 2006, a group of westerners - or Loromonu - delivered a petition to the prime minister clarifying their grievances. By the end of February, almost 600 soldiers - a third to a half of East Timor's total armed forces - had gone on strike over the lack of action. They were sacked in late March for failing to return to duty, sparking days of violent riots in Dili, the capital. Police fired on rioters, and events quickly spiraled out of control. Australia and eventually the U.N. had to send troops to maintain the peace.

Today, Timor Leste still being heavily "tutored" by the U.N. The government continues to think in terms of cash benefits while unemployment is rampant. For 2011, \$72 million (6 percent of the state budget) has been set aside for veterans' benefits; but there are two areas where they are demanding greater influence. The first is the scope and shape of a proposed veterans' council, whose primary role will be to consult on benefits as well as to offer a seal of institutional legitimacy. Some veterans hope it will be given an advisory dimension. Dissident groups who have thus far stayed outside electoral politics are also attracted to this idea. The second decision is to give the veterans a formal security role in defending the state in the form of a military reserve force as foreseen in existing legislation.

There are several difficulties in the decisions:

- Donors have little role to play in influencing policy towards former combatants, but the challenges of the veterans' pension system underscore the

difficulty in designing cash transfer programs that are less susceptible to fraud.

- According to a report by the Australian daily, *The Herald Sun*, the central issue is “*poverty which is rising and the stagnating economy amid rapid population growth. Unemployment and disease is rife and confidence in the government is low*” (Butterly, 2006).
- As is common in post-conflict situations, identifying former combatants is one of the most difficult problems in the effort to reintegrate them into society or even in incorporating them into the national military or police forces.

As in the case of Aceh, the situation in Timor Leste, especially the soldiers' rebellion, was not sparked by joblessness, which is rampant, but by social status jealousy.

CONCLUSION

My findings are that:

- 1. When the source of conflict is not economics-based but socio-political, separatism, ethnicity, and religion, and economic injustices including inequitable sharing of natural resources, discrimination in employment, education, etc., only exacerbate the dissatisfaction; unemployment alone is not sufficient to cause ex-combatants to return to violence.**
- 2. When the source of conflict is economic injustices, unemployment among ex-combatants make these former soldiers receptive to instigations to return to violence either renewing the struggle for the old cause or for a new one.**

ANNEX: *The Electoral Disputes*

As part of the “self-government” solution to the conflict, the Helsinki MoU allows the formation of local political parties and independent candidates to participate in all future elections in Aceh. Although eventually the right of independent candidates will be adopted for the whole country, the formation of local parties remains a unique

arrangement for Aceh. The Law on Governing Aceh (LoGA) (UUPA no 11/2006), which was promulgated specifically for the purpose of implementing the MoU, limits the right to contest elections as independent candidates in Aceh for one time only, i.e., for the executive election of April 2006, purportedly in the belief that, by then, local political parties would have been formed and thus participation of independent candidates would no longer be necessary. Observers assert this is a strategy of the national parties to assure their supremacy in Aceh; this theory was proven later when all national parties made a coalition to field a joint candidate for the governorship. This law creates an ironic situation in which Aceh as the province that fought for this right becomes the only one deprived of it. Several local politicians filed a complaint with the Constitutional Court and won back it back; the Constitutional Court ordered the deletion of this discriminatory clause from the LoGA.

Meanwhile, in the legislative election of 2009, the Partai Aceh (Aceh Party, formed by top GAM leadership) won the control of the local parliament (DPRA) by gaining 44 percent of the seats, with the rest shared by four national parties. The other local political parties not able even to pass the electoral threshold (five percent of the votes) thus losing their rights to participate in future elections. This situation led the Partai Aceh into the position of having no local adversary in the coming executive election scheduled to take place in early 2012. But the decision of the Constitutional Court changes this position again. The Party now finds itself being challenged by many independents, especially by the incumbent governor with whom it has been at loggerheads for some time. Under the Aceh Party's influence, the DPRA has declared its rejection of the Constitutional Court decision and is demanding that the central government postpone the election until a new electoral law is drawn up. The central government initially took the position that the decision of the Constitutional Court is final and non-appealable, and it ordered the Electoral Commission (EC) to proceed with preparations to hold the election as scheduled on February 16, 2012. The Aceh Party has declared that it will boycott of the election and persuaded the DPRA to challenge the Constitutional Court's decision.

The Ministry of Home Affairs, faced with the prospect of another bloody upheaval in Aceh, suddenly changed its course and requested the Constitutional Court to postpone

the election. The Constitutional Court, which is supposed to consider its decision solely on the basis of the constitutionality of laws and regulations, amended its decision halfway; while still not allowing the postponement of the electoral date, it ordered the EC to reopen the registration of candidates in order to allow those who have boycotted it to register.

This instruction puts the EC in a dilemma because it is not possible to open the registration on such a short notice (two weeks; a minimum of 54 days is needed to process the registration and to verify identities, health certificates, and other procedures). The EC then pushed back the date of the election to April 9, 2012, thus indirectly fulfilling the original demand of the Partai Aceh.

While the Partai Aceh considers this development a victory, such childish posturing has not only damaged its credibility, but also the reputation of the GAM leadership in general.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMM	Aceh Monitoring Mission
ASNLF	Atjeh-Sumatra National Liberation Front
BRA	Aceh-Peace Reintegration Board
BRR Rehabilitation Board	Tsunami Reconstruction and
CMI	Crisis Managements Initiatives
CoHA	Cessation of Hostilities Agreement
DDR Reintegration	Disarmament, Demobilization, and
DI	Darul Islam (Nation of Islam)
DPR Council)	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (Legislative
DPRA	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Aceh
EC	Electoral Commission
GAM Movement)	Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh
GOI	Government of Indonesia
ICASOS	International Conference of Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies
IOM	International Office for Migration
KNIL Army)	Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger (The Royal Netherlands East Indies
KONTRAS	Commission of Missing Persons And Victims of Violence
LINA League)	Liga Inong Aceh (Aceh Women's
LoGA	Law on Governing Aceh
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding

NII Indonesia)	Negara Islam Indonesia (Islamic State of
PUSA Aceh Religious	Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh (All Leaders Association)
SIRA (Aceh Center)	Sentral Informasi Referendum Aceh Referendum Information
RI	Republic of Indonesia
RIS	Republik Indonesia Serikat (Federal Republic of Indonesia)
TNA Armed	Teuntra Nasional Aceh (Aceh National Forces)
TNI National	Tentera Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian Armed Forces)
UNDP Programme	United Nations Development
VoA	Visa on Arrival

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aceh Monitoring Mission. (2006). *AAM report on ending mission in Aceh*. Helsinki: European Union.
- Afrida, N., & Suryana, A. (2005, December 28). Ex-rebels disband armed wing. *Jakarta Post*. Jakarta.
- Aspinall, E. (2010). Edward Aspinall , Combatants to Contractors: The Political Economy of Peace In Aceh. *Cornel University - South East Asia Program, Indonesia*. Retrieved from <http://cip.cornell.edu/seap.indo/1241189295>
- Aspinall, E., & Crouch, H. (2003). *The Aceh Peace Process: Why it Failed. Policy Studies*. Washington: East West Center Washington.
- BRA. (2009). *Following up on The Helsinki Peace Framework: A Comprehensive Action Plan. Chart*. Banda Aceh.

- Brunner, B. (1999). *Indonesia After Suharto - The Year of Living Dangerously*. Retrieved April 16, 2012, from www.infoplease.com
- Butterly, N. (2006, May 25). Timor Leste rebel soldiers. *Herald Sun Australia*. Melbourne.
- Crouch, H. (2007). *The Army and Politics in Indonesia*. Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur: Equinox Publishing.
- Dsf, W. B. (2007). Aceh Conflict Monitoring Update. *Conflict*, (7), 1-7.
- Encyclopedia Britannica. (2007). Encyclopædia Britannica. *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved March 3, 2012, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica
- Grant, U. S. (1873). State of the Union Address. Harvard Library.
- Helsinki MoU. (2005). Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement Governing of Aceh. *Crisis Management Initiatives*. Retrieved March 16, 2012, from http://www.acehpeaceprocess.net/images/stories/publications/aceh_mou.pdf
- Herrberg, A. (2005). The Brussels “backstage” of the Aceh peace process. *Accord*, 20, 32-35.
- Honaker, J. (2010). Unemployment and Violence in Northern Ireland: a missing data model for ecological inference . 1, (July 2005).
- Human Rights Watch. (2003). *Aceh Under Martial Law: Inside the Secret War*. New York. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/402d1de54.html> [accessed 22 November 2011]
- I.C.G. (2010). Indonesia: Preventing Violence In Local Elections. *Asia Report*, 197(December).
- I.O.M. (2008). *Meta Analysis - Vulnerability, Stability, Displacement and Reintegration: Issues Facing the Peace Process in Aceh, Indonesia*. Access. Jakarta.
- Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2003). MOFA: Co-Chairmen's Summary Preparatory Conference on Peace and Reconstruction in Aceh. *Dispute Commission of Cessation of Hostilities Agreement*. Tokyo: MOFA Japan.
- Jones, S. (2007). *Aceh: Post-conflict Complications*. Jakarta, Brussels.
- Kapolda Metro Jaya. (2011). *Data Kriminalitas Jakarta Tahun 2005 s/d 2010*. Jakarta: Polisi Metro Jaya.
- Kingsbury, D. (2005). A Mechanism to End Conflict in Aceh. *Security Challenges*, 1(1), 73-88. Retrieved from www.securitychallenges.org.au

- Kontras Aceh. (2008). *Laporan situasi politik dan HAM tahun 2008*. Banda Aceh.
- Lembaran Negara. (2005). UU 10-2005: Badan Rehabilitasi dan Rekonstruksi Aceh dan Nias. Indonesian Government. Retrieved from <http://ngada.org>
- Mahmud, M. (2006). *Compilation of the Most Serious Concerns Regarding The Implementation of the MoU*. Banda Aceh: GAM.
- Malik, I. (2012, January 23). Rebuilding peace in Aceh after the Helsinki agreement. *Jakarta Post*, p. Opinion. Jakarta: Jakarta Post. Retrieved from <http://www.thejakartapost.com/>
- Mckibben, G. (2011). *Bridging the divide: Connecting training to jobs in post-conflict settings*, (July).
- Ralla, A. A. (2009). Kontroversi Pembagian Dana Reintegrasi. *Kabar Indonesia*. Retrieved 2012, from www.kabarindonesia.com
- Robertson, Y. (2002). *The Leuser Eco System*. Wildlife Research Group, Cambridge University. Cambridge, United Kingdom. Retrieved from www.duke.edu
- Ryaas Rasyid, M. (1998). *The Policy of Decentralization in Indonesia*. Seminar.
- Samuels, K. (2006). Rule of Law Reform in Post-Conflict Countries Operational Initiatives and Lessons Learnt. *Access*, (37).
- Singapore Institute of International Affairs. (2006). *Aceh: A celebration of peace*. Singapore Institute of International Affairs. Singapore.
- Tajima, Y. (2010). Understanding the Livelihoods of Former Insurgents : Aceh , Indonesia. *Indonesian Social Development Paper*, (17). Riverside, CA.
- UNDP/Europe & CIS. (2008). *Post-Conflict Economic Recovery: Enabling Local Ingenuity*. New York.
- UNDP/Indonesia. (2010). *Provincial Human Development Report: Aceh 2010*. Human Development. Jakarta.
- US State Department. (1873). Papers Relating To The Foreign Relations (part 2). *US Government Official Journal*.
- United Nations. (2005). *Indictment of 6 Indonesian General for Gross Violations of Human Rights*. Human Rights (Vol. 42617).
- United Nations. (2009). *United Nations Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration*. Geneva.
- Vatikiotis, M. R. J. (1993). *Indonesian Politics Under Suharto*. Abingdon, UK: Taylor & Francis. doi:10.4324/9780203279809

White, W. R. (1995). *Repression and the Liberal State Robert*. Indianapolis: The Journal of Conflict Resolution.

World Bank. (2006). *GAM Reintegration Needs Assessment*. Jakarta: World Bank.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMM	Aceh Monitoring Mission
ASNLF	Atjeh-Sumatra National Liberation Front
BRA	Aceh-Peace Reintegration Board
BRR Rehabilitation Board	Tsunami Reconstruction and
CMI	Crisis Managements Initiatives
CoHA	Cessation of Hostilities Agreement
DDR Reintegration	Disarmament, Demobilization, and
DI	Darul Islam (Nation of Islam)
DPR Council)	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (Legislative
DPRA	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Aceh
EC	Electoral Commission
GAM Movement)	Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh
GOI	Government of Indonesia
ICASOS	International Conference of Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies
IOM	International Office for Migration
KNIL Army)	Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger (The Royal Netherlands East Indies
KONTRAS	Commission of Missing Persons And Victims of Violence

LINA League)	Liga Inong Aceh (Aceh Women’s
LoGA	Law on Governing Aceh
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NII Indonesia)	Negara Islam Indonesia (Islamic State of
PUSA Aceh Religious	Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh (All Leaders Association)
SIRA (Aceh Center)	Sentral Informasi Referendum Aceh Referendum Information
RI	Republic of Indonesia
RIS	Republik Indonesia Serikat (Federal Republic of Indonesia)
TNA Armed	Teuntra Nasional Atjeh (Aceh National Forces)
TNI National	Tentera Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian Armed Forces)
UNDP Programme	United Nations Development
VoA	Visa on Arrival