

Long, Checkered and Unfulfilled Road to Recovery for Aceh

Aceh: Then & Now

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Abstract

The tsunami in the Indian Ocean in December 2004 resulted in massive destruction in Aceh province of Indonesia - the northern most region in Sumatra Island belonging to the Indonesian archipelago. Aceh was facing a secessionist movement by the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) in phases since 1976. The destruction was so complete that the international community and the Indonesian authorities were overwhelmed by the human tragedy that was unfolding. The immediate need was to ensure speedy distribution of aid and help to the people across the region by the government authorities. To this effect, GAM announced a unilateral ceasefire intended to let the relief aid reach the needy. This was reciprocated by the Indonesian authorities' decision to uphold the ceasefire. Amidst the pause in hostilities, the stage was set for Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) headed by Former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari to organize negotiations between the two parties starting on 27 January 2005. On 15 August 2005, the peace agreement was officially signed in Helsinki by chief Indonesian negotiator Hamid Awaluddin and GAM leader Malik Mahmud¹.

As per the negotiated deal, Aceh would have local parties allowed to contest in the provincial elections, which was a marked departure from the norm in the rest of the country. Massive peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts were carried out that have put an end to the cycle of violence that Aceh witnessed earlier. However, these efforts have given rise to many questions on the way they have been implemented. The issue of how Partai Aceh - the political party that arose out of GAM to contest and win the provincial elections - has been consistently winning the electoral mandate by virtue of being the only local party of prominence has raised many doubts on how Aceh can blossom

¹ Starck, Peter and Rajendran, Raj. "Indonesia and Rebels Seize the Chance to Talk Peace" Sydney Morning Herald January 30, 2005 <http://www.smh.com.au/news/Asia-Tsunami/Indonesia-and-rebels-seize-the-chance-to-talk-peace/2005/01/29/1106850159961.html>

into a multi-party democracy in the future. Another issue of prime concern is how the former GAM rebels have now formed terror groups that now owe allegiance to the Caliphate floated by the Islamic State in the Middle East.

This article will look at the political issues that remain unfulfilled amidst the environment of dangerous radicalization and thriving conservatism and how this has the potential to spill over to not just the other territories of Indonesia but also across the region like Southern Thailand and Myanmar. While searching for previous policy recommendations on this topic, this article will attempt to provide suggestions and recommendations of its own on how to deal with the growing menace as witnessed in Aceh.

List of Acronyms

Full form	Acronym
Aceh Transition Committee	KPA
Civil Society Organization	CSO
Commission for Disappearances and Victims of Violence / Komisi untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Tindak Kekerasan	KONTRAS
Crisis Management Initiative	CMI
Darul Islam	DI
Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration	DDR
Free Aceh Movement / Gerakan Aceh Merdeka	GAM
Indonesian Defense Forces	ARBI
Indonesian National Armed Forces	TNI
Indonesian Police	POLRI
Information, Counseling and Referral Service	IOM
Islamic State	IS
Islamic State of Indonesia	NII
Memorandum of Understanding	MoU
National Counterterrorism Agency	BNPT
Police Watch	PoIWatch
Tentara Negara Aceh	TNA

Introduction

Indonesia recently kicked off a 3-month long commemoration of the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed 10 years ago with the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) rebels. It is claimed that the autonomous region of Aceh and the state at large have moved on from the bloody violence that had marred the region for almost three decades. Aceh, as it stands today appears to be slowly limping back to normalcy with its own Sharia law in force. The region has seen a single party rule (former militants adopting a political role) ever since by winning all the elections conducted. The region has recently enacted an Islamic Criminal Code criminalizing homosexuality, adultery, and public displays of affection outside of a legally recognized relationship. With this, the reports of human rights violation have been on the rise. ²

The security scenario is slowly worsening in the region. With a large influx of persecuted Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar and subsequently being given temporary refuge, the social living conditions have deteriorated gradually.³ Also, Partai Aceh, the political party in power in Aceh is accused of running a mafia to influence the people through terror tactics and stay in power for as long as possible.⁴

² Siswo, Sujadi. "Aceh celebrates 10th anniversary of peace deal" Channel News Asia. 15 August 2015. <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/aceh-celebrates-10th/2052610.html>

³ Morris, Ruth. "Indonesians got help after the tsunami. Now they want to help Myanmar's Rohingya refugees" PRI 17 August 2015 <http://www.pri.org/stories/2015-08-17/indonesians-got-help-after-tsunami-now-they-want-help-myanmars-rohingya-refugees>

⁴ Jones, Sidney. "Lessons learned from Indonesia's conflicts: Aceh, Poso and Papua" Inside Indonesia. October-December 2014. <http://www.insideindonesia.org/lessons-learned-from-indonesia-s-conflicts-aceh-poso-and-papua>

Some of the GAM rebels who held extreme views of Islam have turned towards running organized terror groups around the world. Some even owe allegiance to the IS. Of late the minorities have faced the brunt of radicalization witnessed in the Acehnese society. Recently, a mob torched a church, killing one person and injuring several others and now the regional government is considering closing down all churches due to pressure from Muslim groups.⁵

With such multiple factors both internal and external at play within the self-governed region of Aceh, it is being observed that the security situation is worsening rapidly. This evolving situation should be studied extensively to prevent any spillover to not just the other regions of Indonesia but also to other countries in the larger Southeast Asia region. This article begins with an overview of the conflict that had crippled the region for almost three decades. The next section talks about the transition from a violent society to a fully functional self-governed unit through a well-chalked transition. This will be followed by a section dealing with the next steps in peacebuilding that will identify the core security issues marring the autonomous region currently, looking at past research and possible policy recommendations that can be of any help to the region. The final section concludes with a summary of the transition, peacebuilding efforts, security issues and the policy recommendations.

Conflict

Aceh is the northern most region in the island of Sumatra belonging to the Indonesian archipelago. Historically, Aceh was the first region in Indonesia to embrace Islam in the 1500s. The Acehnese people followed a conservative form of Islam all throughout. Despite differences with the Javanese

⁵ Kapoor, Kanupriya. "Indonesia's Aceh to close churches after pressure from Muslim groups" Reuters 18 October 2015 <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-indonesia-aceh-violence-idUSKCN0SC0AC20151018>

and other islands in the Dutch East Indies, the Acehnese fought along with them during the Second World War to obtain independence after the War.

During the early 1970s, the government in Jakarta led by General Suharto had centralist tendencies, which led to Hasan di Tiro to establish GAM with a mission to declare Acehnese independence. The GAM fought the Indonesian armed forces from 1976 to 2005 in three separate phases. The first phase lasting from 1976 to 1978 was not much of a people's movement and got quashed by the armed forces quickly. The leaders of the movement such as Hasan di Tiro, Zaini Abdullah, and Malik Mahmud fled overseas and the original GAM cabinet setup ceased to function.

The second phase of armed struggle lasted from 1989 to 1998. This time too the Indonesian armed forces were successful in destroying GAM as a guerilla unit. The surviving members of GAM were again forced to hide outside the country.

Under his "New Order" administration, Suharto had constructed a strong, centralized, and military-dominated government. The fall of Suharto in 1998 and the decision of the successor President Jusuf Habibie to withdraw troops from Aceh as part of domestic reform gave GAM the much-needed space to re-establish. This resulted in the third phase of conflict starting from 1999. With violence on the increase, the Indonesian government too increased its military presence. This phase of violence also saw two failed negotiations between the warring parties. Although there is no clear indication of the number of lives lost due to the violence, rough estimates claim that about 15,000 people have lost their lives.⁶

⁶ "Indonesia agrees Aceh peace deal". BBC News. 17 July 2005
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4690293.stm> Accessed December 8, 2015

Transition

International Pressure Bringing About An End of violence

The negotiations carried out in 2000 were called the Humanitarian Pause. The 2002 December negotiations were called the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA). Both these negotiations were carried out at the wrong moments when the warring parties did not believe that the negotiations were the only positive way out for them. In other words, the parties believed that they could get from violence what they were getting from negotiations without having to give up on their core demands. These negotiations had another flaw. While the deals agreed on disarming the GAM rebels and sending back the non-organic Indonesian troops, they did not discuss the political issue of Aceh. The Indonesian government was unwilling to talk of any special autonomy, let alone granting secession to Aceh. At the same time, the GAM rebels were not willing to agree to special autonomy, let alone continue under the existing Indonesian constitution. This lack of resolution of the core political issue acted as a root cause for the deals to break down and for the conflict to resume. As long as the deals were in place, the conflicts remained frozen, only to be picked up once the deals collapsed.

The situation after the tsunami of 2004 was much different though. The GAM rebels had suffered severe losses prior to the tsunami and many of its leaders were in hiding. The Indonesian armed forces had inflicted heavy damage on the rebel group prior to the tsunami and had wanted them to get to the negotiation table. With the international community coming in and assessing that the tsunami damage in Aceh was very extensive, there was tremendous pressure on the GAM rebels to stop the fighting. There was a perception among the GAM rebels that the tsunami was a punishment for insufficient piety. As a result, they announced a unilateral ceasefire that eventually ended up as

a complete cessation of violence. This was followed by five rounds of tough bargaining eventually leading to the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding. The negotiations between the representatives of the Indonesian government and the GAM leaders were held in Helsinki under the mediation of CMI led by Martti Ahtisaari. Unlike the previous negotiations where the political issue was left out as an open-ended issue, during these negotiations the process was reversed. This prompted both the parties to first resolve the political issue after which the secondary issues were dealt with.⁷

Both the parties agreed to a Memorandum of Understanding signed on 15 August 2005. As per the deal, there were a number of provisions to address the root causes of the conflict⁸ (see Index). Aceh would have local parties allowed to contest in the provincial elections, which was a marked departure from the norm in the rest of the country. The province of Aceh would be declared as a special autonomous territory with a relevant amendment to the Indonesian constitution. GAM would demobilize 3000 fighters and relinquish 840 weapons between 15 September and 31 December 2005. In response, the Indonesian government would pull out all non-organic troops from the province in response to disarmament and demobilization of the GAM rebel troops. The GAM members would receive amnesty and political prisoners would be released. Former combatants, pardoned prisoners, and affected civilians would receive farmland, jobs, or other compensation. A Human Rights Court and a Commission for Truth and Reconciliation would be established to address human rights issues. Aceh would be entitled to retain 70 percent of its natural resource revenues. GAM representatives would participate in the post-tsunami Reconstruction and Rehabilitation

⁷ Morfit, Michael. "The Road to Helsinki: The Aceh Agreement and Indonesia's Democratic Development" GSRDC Applied Knowledge Services 2007 <http://www.gsdr.org/document-library/the-road-to-helsinki-the-aceh-agreement-and-indonesias-democratic-development/>

⁸ "Aceh: Peacemaking after the tsunami" Worldwatch Institute <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/3930>

Commission. The European Union and ASEAN contributing countries would establish an Aceh Monitoring Mission to monitor human rights, demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration progress and also rule on disputes. Such massive peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts were carried out that have put an end to the cycle of violence that Aceh witnessed earlier. However these efforts have given rise to many questions on the way they have been implemented.

Peacebuilding Approaches

The MoU of 2005 was far more comprehensive than the previous two failed negotiations in that it not just dealt with peripheral issues like economic and security aspects but also addressed the political issue in a satisfactory manner. This section briefly deals with the different dimensions of the peacebuilding approaches taken up.

Political Institution-Building: Elections

As part of the negotiated deal, Aceh held its provincial elections in December 2006, which was out of sync with the national election cycle. There were crucial developments leading up to the elections, such as when all candidates came together to sign their names on a marble stone in front of the Baiturrahman Grand Mosque, committing to a peaceful contest. The message to the whole world was that there had been enough tears and bloodshed and now it was time for peace. During these elections, GAM was allowed to form Partai Aceh political party and contest elections. Not only did Partai Aceh emerge as the largest party, a number of GAM rebels won political office, including the election of an independent candidate, Irwandi Yusuf, a former rebel as provincial governor.

Thereafter, provincial elections have been held a second time in 2012 in which another GAM rebel, Zaini Abdullah has been elected as the provincial governor. It is to be noted that the national party

Gerindra had entered into an alliance with Partai Aceh, implying that the national parties were open to the possibility of working with the party of ex-rebels and not consider them as pariahs.⁹

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Combatants (DDR) Programs

As part of the DDR programs, GAM had to demobilize 3000 fighters and relinquish 840 weapons between 15 September and 31 December 2005. In response, the Indonesian government would pull out all non-organic troops from the province in response to disarmament and demobilization of the GAM rebel troops.

Although the due date was the end of the year as agreed upon earlier, there had been a rush to wind up the disarmament program by 26 December 2005, which would be the first anniversary of the tsunami disaster which prompted the two sides to negotiate an end to the conflict. Although the quantity of 840 weapons seemed trivial, this was the number agreed upon during the negotiations based on the quality of the weapons used. These included automatic rifles, shoulder-held missile launchers, etc. among many others. In addition, the GAM dissolved its military wing Tentara Negara Aceh (TNA) within the end of the year.

In response, about 25890 TNI personnel and 5791 police personnel were redeployed out of Aceh by the Indonesian government. This brought the total figure to 31, 681 non-organic troops pulled out of Aceh in the same time period.

As part of the reintegration program, nearly 90 percent of ex-combatants returned to their places of origin without any problems. In addition 1900 amnestied prisoners too returned back to their places of origin as reported by the Information, Counseling and Referral Service (IOM). The reintegration

⁹ "Aceh's surprising election results" Australian Policy Online 30 April 2014
<http://apo.org.au/research/acehs-surprising-election-results>

program also included payments from the BRA to the ex-combatants of three payments of about \$100 each.¹⁰

Security Sector Reforms

Following Suharto's abdication, the Indonesian Defense Forces (ARBI), now the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), undertook a self-imposed process of internal reform as part of the general *reformasi* movement. Security sector reform (SSR) has been an almost entirely locally driven process, with limited participation from outside parties. The relationship between the Indonesian security forces, the civilian government, and civil society organizations (CSOs) is complex. Since the initial *reformasi*, SSR has proceeded through fluid, negotiated processes that do not lend themselves to timelines or structures imposed by outside actors.

Central SSR Programs

The most fundamental change was the creation of a civilian body above that of the military command. The other major change was the formal separation of the TNI and the police (POLRI). Community policing was established by the POLRI as a major step forward in building public trust. The TNI withdrew itself from social and political offices, banned its members from taking civilian jobs while serving in the force and severed ties with political parties.

Major Civil Society Stakeholders

¹⁰ "Indonesia (Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration in Aceh, 2005 – 2009)" Agencia Catalana de Cooperacio al Desenvolupament
<http://escolapau.uab.es/img/programas/desarme/mapa/indonesia08i.pdf>

A few civil society organizations (CSO) have been formed which aid in documenting the reforms. Commission for Disappearances and Victims of Violence (KONTRAS) is a major CSO involved in revealing extra-judicial killing by the Indonesian security forces in Aceh and West Papua. Police Watch (PoIWatch) is another CSO working as a watchdog keeping the POLRI accountable in their operation.

Challenges

Owing to a rapid decentralization process in 1998, coined as the “Big Bang”, the country transformed from the most to the least centralized country in the region. Despite a smooth transition process, it produced a rift between the local politics and the central authority. In addition, the counter-terrorism wing has been successful in uncovering terrorist cells and plots. However, the excessive use of force and human rights violations are major concerns. Amidst all this, the problems with community policing also persist since it has failed to garner public trust¹¹.

Economic Reforms

In fiscal matters, the law provided—for a period of eight years—for an 80 percent share of tax revenues from forestry, mining, and fisheries to accrue to the provincial government, with 55 percent of the revenues from oil and 40 percent from gas going to the province. At the end of eight years, these latter allocations were to be reduced to 35 percent for oil and 20 percent for gas. Although this represented a substantial increase over previous revenues, it fell to the central government to

¹¹ “SSR Country Snapshot: Indonesia” Security Sector Reform Resource Center
<http://www.ssrresourcecentre.org/countries/ssr-country-snapshot-indonesia/>

calculate the amounts, collect the taxes, and distribute the provincial share, which was, of course, controversial because of the potential for manipulating revenue amounts.

This is a much greater proportion than the previous law had granted, and the law is much more specific as to the derivation of these revenues. The accounting process is relatively complex. The adoption of more rigorous specifications means that revenue allocations are classified according to well-defined categories. Furthermore, the Aceh government is charged with calculating the relative allocations among different levels of government and remitting the central government's share. Although the percentages are specified by statute, this reflects an important increase in the trust reposed in the provincial government as well as heightened transparency of the central government's operations. Finally, the Aceh government gains the authority to administer all natural resource exploitation; this is an unprecedented delegation of powers over revenues.¹²

Bringing Back Displaced Populations

With the extensive destruction of the tsunami, a lot of Acehnese had moved outside to countries like Malaysia in search of work as refugees. Malaysia had provided them with temporary work permits for four years without paying any taxes so they could rebuild their homes. With conditions improving in Aceh, by 2008 Malaysia started sending these Acehnese refugees back.¹³

Retribution and Reconciliation

The Helsinki Agreement mandated the immediate establishment of a human rights court and a commission of truth and reconciliation in Aceh. Prior to the agreement, civil society members in

¹² Bertrand, Jacques. "Indonesia's Quasi-federalist Approach: Accommodation amid Strong Integrationist Tendencies." *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 13, no. 3 (2015): 576-605. Accessed December 10, 2015. <http://icon.oxfordjournals.org/content/5/4/576.full>.

¹³ "Malaysia wants 25,600 Aceh tsunami refugees to go" The Associated Press / Jakarta Post. 26 August 2008. <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/08/26/malaysia-wants-25600-aceh-tsunami-refugees-go.html>

Aceh, together with their colleagues from all over Indonesia, were known for their very progressive movement in promoting human rights as part of the peace process and peace building. One of their significant efforts in promoting human rights based on the MoU was intensive studying, researching and lobbying of the draft of a bylaw or qanun on the truth and reconciliation commission in Aceh.¹⁴

Issues in Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding measures are aimed not just at preventing recurrence of conflict but also at addressing the root causes of the conflict. Implementing peace agreements and fostering reconciliation is yet another aspect of peacebuilding. Other facets of peacebuilding include building democratic governance, protecting human rights, strengthening the rule of law, promoting sustainable development and ensuring equitable access to resources and environmental security. Although at the outset, these peacebuilding measures seem to be working, deep down there seem to be a lot of issues that have cropped up amounting to disappointment at the whole peacebuilding process.

Militarily, the GAM rebels were asked to hand over just 840 weapons (of any type including automatic weapons, rifles, pistols, shoulder-fired rocket launcher, grenade launchers). Given the size and duration of the conflict and knowing very well the fact that arms had been smuggled into Aceh all along, it baffles to know why the Indonesian negotiators agreed to such a small number. In fact, it would be safe to claim that the arms were largely untouched as part of the DDR program. Even the definition of a weapon was not clearly defined in the deal. Weapons with missing springs, rusty metallic parts were also considered as a valid weapon and counted towards demobilization. Even

¹⁴ Reza, Bhatara Ibnu. "Don't Force Aceh Victims to shake hands with the devil" Jakarta Post. 21 August 2015 <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/08/21/don-t-force-aceh-victims-shake-hands-with-devil.html>

when it comes to demobilization, the combatants were never registered or licensed as belonging to any particular rebel group. This led to the military chain of command of GAM remaining largely intact.

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The reintegration program too had its fair share of troubles. Shoddy, delayed and ill-directed distribution of economic help led to discontent among the ex-GAM rebels. By the end of 2006, many GAM members had not received any economic assistance. But some amnestied prisoners had received subsidies for reintegration. The government asked GAM to submit the full list of 3000 ex-combatants eligible to receive help. But GAM refused probably on two counts: mistrust and possible intention to divert the funds to help war widows and orphans of combatants. Hence, with no clear list of ex-combatants, this effort ended up being a poorly managed one at best.¹⁶

Politically, Aceh seems to be turning into a one-party state led by Partai Aceh resulting in a new set of problems. During the transition, the old military structure of GAM metamorphosed into Aceh Transition Committee (KPA), consisting of the commanders who were the real power behind the elected officials. These officials have by and large involved themselves in corruption and extortion and also involving in trading in guns and drugs. In short, this has turned out to be a mafia with political backing. One cause to cheer has been the recent provincial elections in 2012 in which Partai Aceh won the Governor contest again but with much lesser vote share than anticipated despite entering into an alliance with Gerindra. The nearest opposition parties were not other provincial parties but a national party. This goes to show the level of control Partai Aceh holds on the day-to-

¹⁵ Norton, Jerry. "Rebels in Indonesia's Aceh start handing in weapons". The Star. 15 September, 2005.

http://www.thestar.com.my/story/?file=%2F2005%2F9%2F16%2Fworldupdates%2F2005-09-15T190758Z_01_NOOTR_RTRJONC_0_-216266-3&sec=Worldupdates

¹⁶ "Indonesia (Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration in Aceh, 2005 – 2009)" Agencia Catalana de Cooperacio al Desenvolupament
<http://escolapau.uab.es/img/programas/desarme/mapa/indonesia08i.pdf>

day administration of the region. In addition, Muzakir Munaf who is currently the vice-Governor of Aceh is also the head of the party Partai Aceh and also the leader of the KPA.¹⁷

When it comes to addressing the issue of human rights, the situation is no different. Aceh has been witnessing a radicalization of Islamic groups and the general society is turning more conservative as each day passes. Aceh has enacted strict Islamic Sharia law. As a result, usage of floggings to punish offenders is a regular occurrence in the region. Aceh now forbids alcohol, punishes premarital romance, and has zero tolerance for same sex couples. Women's rights activists claim that local zealots and vigilantes have abused the laws. Girls and women who have been abducted and raped hesitate to register a complaint for fear of being labeled as a prostitute and tried under the Sharia law and punished by flogging.¹⁸

More recently the religious minorities have come under attack. In one such attack a church was torched and a person killed, injuring several others. This has led to a state of panic among the minorities who have now fled to the neighboring North Sumatra province.¹⁹

What is of even bigger concern than all the earlier issues put together is the emergence of home grown radicalized terror groups. Many radicalized youth have not only formed terror groups but have also owed allegiance to IS caliphate.²⁰ They have even asked the Acehnese governor for financial

¹⁷ Jones, Sidney. "Lessons learned from Indonesia's conflicts: Aceh, Poso and Papua" Inside Indonesia. October-December 2014. <http://www.insideindonesia.org/lessons-learned-from-indonesia-s-conflicts-aceh-poso-and-papua>

¹⁸ Strangio, Sebastian. "The heavy hand of religious police in Aceh" Al Jazeera. 21 December 2014. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/12/heavy-hand-religious-police-aceh-2014122071758539966.html>

¹⁹ "More Singkil residents flee to North Sumatra" Jakarta Post 15 October 2015 <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/10/15/more-singkil-residents-flee-north-sumatra.html>

²⁰ Hasan, Nurdin. "Indonesia: Acehnese Criticize Ex-Rebel's Plan to Join IS" 7 October 2015 <http://www.benarnews.org/english/news/indonesian/Aceh-IS-07102015191852.html>

assistance to go fight in Syria.²¹ This can and in all likelihood, will emerge as a big security issue for the authorities in Jakarta.

Previous Recommendations

The jury is still out on whether the post-war transition in Aceh can be termed as a success or a failure.

Ten years is too short a time to observe an evolving situation, understand and even come out with policy recommendations on how to handle the issues that Aceh faces at this critical juncture.

In general though, there have been calls for adoption of Universal Human Rights by dropping Islamic Criminal Code.²² In addition, there have been calls to handle terrorists and terror groups through active de-radicalization both through soft and harsh approaches as pointed by in a white paper by the Consortium for Strategic Communication.²³ Prior to the tsunami of 2004, Peter Chalk had looked at the larger regional picture of Southeast Asia in his article and spoken about the need to address the roots of ethnoreligious unrest stemming from basic factors like insensitivity to local concerns, regional neglect, military repression and the contemporary face of militant Islam.²⁴

²¹ “Aceh: Muslim extremists asking government for money to join the Islamic State group” Asia News 7 September 2015 <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Aceh:-Muslim-extremists-asking-government-for-money-to-join-the-Islamic-State-group-34728.html>

²² “Human rights groups slam tougher Islamic laws in Aceh” Jakarta Post 23 October 2015 <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/10/23/human-rights-groups-slam-tougher-islamic-laws-aceh.html>

²³ Woodward, Mark, Amin, Ali and Rohmaniyah, Inayah. “Lessons from Aceh Terrorist De-Radicalization” Consortium for Strategic Communication 13 May 2010 <http://csc.asu.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdf/124.pdf>

²⁴ Chalk, Peter. “Separatism and Southeast Asia: The Islamic Factor in Southern Thailand, Mindanao, and Aceh” Taylor & Francis Online Volume 24 Issue 4, 2001 241-269 <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/citedby/10.1080/10576100116748>

Policy Recommendations

As pointed out by previous policy recommendations in the earlier section, there is a need to address the issues facing Aceh and the Acehnese people in a holistic manner. Despite the tenth anniversary celebrations of the peace deal, the governments both in Jakarta and Banda Aceh have to double their efforts to restart the reintegration programs for the ex-combatants who were left in the lurch in the first pass. This will ensure that these combatants do not have any economic gripe to work against the establishment. In doing so, emphasis should be given to speedy and direct distribution of the aid. If needed, such efforts need to be audited too to prevent any misuse of funds either by the federal or provincial authorities. Aceh has seen a decline in foreign aid and donations in the past 2-3 years and this trend needs to be reversed. It is heartening to see European Union continue its aid for the development of Aceh by continuing projects relating to environmental stability and development.²⁵ To further boost the Acehnese economy, Indonesian President Joko Widodo has announced massive infrastructure projects for the region, which he hopes will ensure an era of growth for the people of the region.²⁶ Currently such aid and infrastructure programs are only chalked out for short- and medium-terms. It is essential to draw plans into the long-term future too to avoid change in investment patterns if and when a new government takes charge, which is against massive spending. Any curbs on infrastructure and aid spending might only alienate the Acehnese once again which Jakarta can ill afford.

²⁵ Amirio, Dylan. "EU still engaging with Aceh economy 10 years after tsunami" Jakarta Post 18 December 2014 <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/12/18/eu-still-engaging-with-aceh-economy-10-years-after-tsunami.html>

²⁶ "From Aceh to Papua: Jokowi's Infrastructure Visions" Jakarta Globe <http://jakartaglobe.beritasatu.com/archive/aceh-papua-jokowis-infrastructure-visions/>

When the provincial elections were conducted in 2006 in Aceh, there were six local parties contesting. Currently though there are only three major local parties – Partai Aceh (PA), Partai Nasional Aceh (PNA) and Partai Damai Aceh (PDA). This is largely due to both the poor performance of the other parties as well as the consolidation and increasing assertion of PA's now vast political machine.²⁷ PA leadership's ability to control the government, the party and also KPA is a definite risk that Jakarta cannot ignore. Political reforms have to be brought in to discourage holding multiple offices of profit by a single individual. In addition, awareness campaigns of political transparency have to be carried out in Aceh through media and street demonstrations to drive home the point of political pluralism. With such awareness comes greater transparency in the administration of Aceh as a region and this will help the governance in the long run.

Aceh today faces a danger of extensive radicalization of its conservative Muslim youth. Emergence of terror groups like Darul Islam (DI), Islamic State of Indonesia (NII) and the GAM are a few examples of how widespread the problem is in the entire country. Although the federal government has established the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), it has been plagued by insufficient funds to carry out its activities.²⁸ Fighters returning from the Middle East having fought for the IS need to be debriefed and de-radicalized and encouraged to merge back into the main society. Similarly arrested terrorists also need to be weaned out of terror mindsets and need to be put through counter-narratives to impress upon them the perils of terrorism. In addition, using Rohingya Muslims to commit acts of terror due to their stateless existence should be prevented by active tracking of the refugees who have found shelter in Aceh province.

²⁷ Zyad, Teungku. "The Aceh exception" Australian National University 29 April 2014
<http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/newmandala/2014/04/29/the-aceh-exception/>

²⁸ "Discourse: Threat looms from IS returnees, 600 freed former terrorists" Jakarta Post 11 December 2015 <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/12/11/discourse-threat-looms-is-returnees-600-freed-former-terrorists.html>

Acehnese influential Muslim groups and government need to be convinced of the virtues of a pluralistic society and how respecting minority rights is a core aspect of plurality. Liberal forms of Islam (including peaceful co-existence) need to be encouraged to prevent any further violent attacks on religious minorities. In addition, the regional and federal governments need to put a tight leash on any evangelistic missions in Aceh that might result in rousing anger in the majority community. Although Sharia law is not enforced on non-Muslims, there might be discrimination due to non-adherence to strict dress code, etc. by vigilante groups. Such acts of mob violence need to be dealt with firmly at a local level as a law and order problem without letting it become a political issue. The federal government must be quick to conduct impartial investigations on any acts of religious intolerance and punish the guilty as per the federal law and not Sharia law.

Therefore with a combination of military, economic, political and social solutions, the Indonesian and Acehnese governments will need to prevent the Acehnese population from getting disillusioned with the rule of law again and head back in the path of internal violence. Both the governments will have to act as watchdog for each other to ensure that there are no lapses in implementation of any of these programs.

Conclusion

To the naked eye, Acehnese transition from a violent past to a functional democracy with participation of the local parties in electoral politics looks like a tailor made recipe for a successful peacebuilding campaign. However a scratch on the surface reveals an entirely different picture with security issues waiting to explode into full-blown conflicts both in the region and outside. This article has looked at the Acehnese conflict and the negotiated settlement of 2005, which triggered a transition period with DDR programs and political reforms. Inefficiency in delivery of aid and support

to the deserved and needy has led to huge discontentment leading to a reverse trend towards violence directed against the religious minorities and also as a terror tool in various parts of the world. The article has made several recommendations – political, economic, social and military to prevent further radicalization and counter-radicalization of the Acehnese youth. Aceh today stands at the crossroads unsure of the path it should take into the future. The options it has are simple. Involve itself with Jakarta's growth story and become the beacon of peace and hope for the rest of the country or become alienated by breeding homegrown vigilante mobsters and Jihadists who have no respect for the law of the land. The responsibility is on the international community and the governments at Jakarta and Banda Aceh to make sure that Aceh chooses the latter option.

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Selected Provisions of the Aceh Peace Agreement

Issue	Provision
Human rights	A Human Rights Court and a Commission for Truth and Reconciliation will be established.
Amnesty	GAM members receive amnesty and political prisoners will be released.
Reintegration	Former combatants, pardoned prisoners, and affected civilians are to receive farmland, jobs, or other compensation.
Security	GAM is to demobilize its 3,000 fighters and relinquish 840 weapons between 15 September and 31 December 2005. Simultaneously, non-local government military forces are to be reduced to 14,700 and non-local police forces to 9,100.
Political participation	Free and fair elections are to be held in April 2006 (for Aceh governor) and in 2009 (for Aceh legislature). The government is to facilitate the establishment of local political parties (by amending the national election law) no later than January 2007.
Economy	Aceh is entitled to retain 70 percent of its natural resource revenues. GAM representatives will participate in the post-tsunami Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Commission.
Monitoring	The European Union and ASEAN contributing countries establish an Aceh Monitoring Mission. It will monitor human rights, demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration progress and will rule on disputes.

Map of Aceh in Indonesia



Map source: http://www-tc.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/indonesia605/images/indonesia_map_detail_lrg.jpg

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