

Aceh Conflict Monitoring Update

1st – 30th September 2005

World Bank/DSF



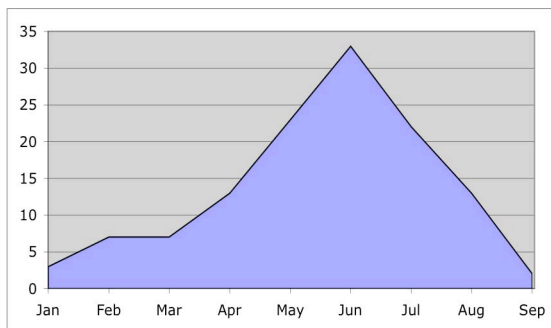
As part of the support program to the peace process, the Conflict and Community Development Program, within the World Bank Jakarta, is using a newspaper conflict mapping methodology to record and categorize all incidents of conflict in Aceh as reported in two provincial newspapers (Serambi and Aceh Kita). The Program, with support from the Decentralization Support Facility (DSF), will publish monthly updates and analysis of the data, complimented by fieldwork where possible, in both English and Indonesian.¹

As for August, the September data shows positive trends. Two incidents of GAM-GoI related conflict were reported, all of which took place in the first half of the month; no incidents have been reported since the full AMM operation started on September 15th. Trips to the field indicated that communities are slowly becoming more confident in the peace process, although significant gaps in socialization remain. Less positively, however, vigilante/gang-type incidents increased significantly and, in some areas, seem to be replacing GAM-GoI conflict. Further, the practice of extortion seems to be changing in form rather than stopping completely.

GAM-GoI incidents continue to decline further in September

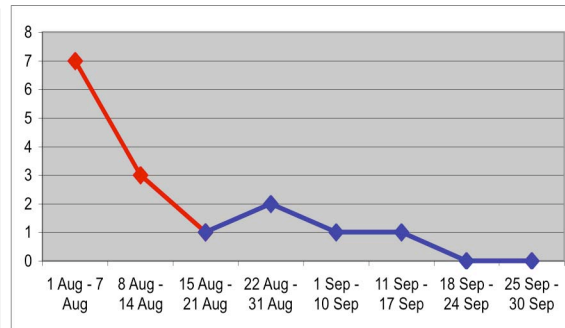
Incidents of GAM-GoI conflict have steadily declined from a peak of 33 incidents in June. In September this decline continued with Serambi and Aceh Kita reporting only two incidents. These two occurred in the first half of September, with no GAM-GoI incidents being reported in the latter half of September (Figure 2). In both incidents the role of GAM was denied making it difficult to determine whether these incidents should in fact be coded as vigilante/gang-type conflict.

Figure 1: GAM-GoI incidents by month



Source: Newspaper dataset

Figure 2: Post-August 15th GAM-GoI incidents by week



Source: Newspaper dataset

¹ There are limitations to using newspapers to map conflict: newspapers, particularly those published at the provincial level, do not pick-up all incidents and there may be bias in reporting certain incidents. Generally, newspapers are reliable for recording incidents of violence and actors involvement; they are less reliable for mapping resolution actors and small local non-violent conflict incidents. For more information on the dataset and more analysis, see Patrick Barron, Samuel Clark and Muslahuddin Daud (2005). *Conflict and Recovery in Aceh: An Assessment of Conflict and Options for Supporting the Peace Process*. Jakarta: World Bank. On the methodology, see: Patrick Barron and Joanne Sharpe (2005). "Counting Conflict: Using Newspaper Reports to Understand Violence in Indonesia", *Indonesian Social Development Paper No. 7*. Jakarta: World Bank. Both reports, and the monthly monitoring updates, are available online at: www.conflictanddevelopment.org The dataset is available for those interested. Please contact Samuel Clark at: sclark@wboj.or.id

Post-August 15th incidents and impacts in four districts

Since the signing of the MoU between GAM and GoI there have been a total of five GAM-GoI incidents reported in local newspapers. In September these occurred in Aceh Barat and Aceh Utara. That post-August 15th incidents are small and have been widely dispersed geographically, suggesting conflict incidents are sporadic rather than systematic patterns of conflict.

Table 1: Post-August 15th Impacts of GAM-GoI incidents by district

District	Incidents	Deaths	Injuries	Buildings Damaged
September				
Aceh Barat	1	0	0	0
Aceh Utara	1	2	0	0
August				
Aceh Barat	1	1	1	0
Aceh Besar	1	0	0	0
Bireuen	1	0	1	0
TOTAL	5	3	2	0

Source: Newspaper dataset

▪ *Aceh Utara, Kecamatan Baktiya, 10th September*

Aceh Kita and Serambi both reported that two non-organic TNI soldiers were shot while travelling along an irrigation road in the evening. Locals questioned by Serambi were unable to identify who was responsible, but the local TNI commander claimed it was in fact 20 GAM members. He stated he would discourage his troops from taking retaliatory action and would defer the issue to the AMM. Aceh Kita reported that GAM was disappointed with the accusation. The local AMM/IMP presence collected evidence from the scene and stated they would report the incident to their head office.

▪ *Aceh Barat, Kecamatan Pante Ceremen, 11th September*

Serambi reported a case of extortion and kidnapping that resulted in the village head of Desa Lawet and his family, as well as a teacher from nearby Desa Keutambang, fleeing to Meulaboh. There were threats that their house would be burned down after a week earlier an “armed group” demanded Rp. 50 million from the local teacher. The district police chief stated that what they considered to be a criminal gang was under the leadership of the local GAM leader, Gambiet. Previously in August Gambiet was reported to be responsible for the death of Arifin (see Box 1).

Communities increasingly positive but fears of isolated revenge remain

Field work conducted by the Conflict and Community Development Team during the month of September indicated communities are increasingly optimistic and have begun to feel the effect of the peace agreement on their day-to-day lives. **Photo 1: Women reading the MoU in Calang, Aceh Jaya**

Socialization of the MoU has begun to reach the grassroots. Despite these positive steps, some informants were concerned of personal revenge killings.

“In terms of farmers going back to the forest, where in the past they’d been disturbed by GAM, the problem is resolved. But in terms of individuals feeling they can give a welcome to GAM and others it is less clear. The peace is with the government, but it’s unclear whether GAM and the TNI have made peace with the community.”

Aceh Barat



In the last update, we reported on the killing of a one-time GAM combatant in Pante Ceremen, Aceh Barat. Fieldwork provided more information on an incident that seems to be the result of a “squaring-up” between GAM and one of its one-time followers (see Box 1). These incidents seem isolated although it is almost certain that many (smaller) incidents are not reaching the press.

Box 1: Death of one-time GAM combatant in Pante Ceremen, Aceh Barat

The case of the death of Arifin, a one-time GAM combatant, on the 21st August was explained to us by a well connected local informant.

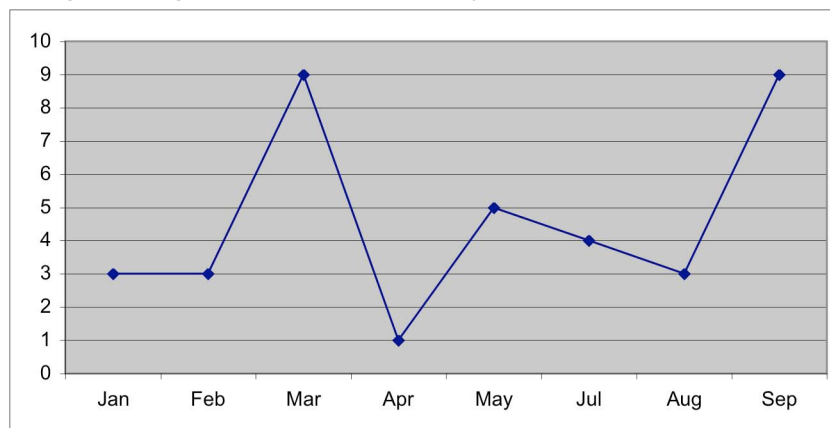
“First, you need to understand that Arifin used to be a GAM member. About one year ago he left. GAM has no problems with their members leaving but they have to follow two rules: leave your weapon, and don’t inform the *aparats* of GAM locations. Arifin broke both rules. He was also considered a troublemaker by GAM when he was a GAM member. On a number of occasions he demanded money from communities for GAM commanders that didn’t exist. He also married twice and there’s a rule amongst GAM that you can only marry once.”

“On the day [21st August] Arifin had been invited by Gambiet [GAM leader in Aceh Barat] to meet and resolve the issues from the past. The meeting spot was at a football game. Gambiet brought with him as many as 15 combatants, many more than the 5 reported in the newspapers, and when Arifin saw them he started running. GAM gave chase shouting ‘don’t run, don’t run, no problem if you don’t run.’ He kept running and when he crossed a small river Gambiet himself shot Arifin. GAM then brought the body back to the football game and asked the community to tell Arifin’s family that it was GAM who shot him and not the *aparats*.”

Vigilante/Gang-type incidents increase significantly

The number of vigilante/gang-type incidents increased in September to nine in total. This is the joint highest total of such incidents since the tsunami (Figure 3). These occurred in Aceh Utara, Aceh Barat, Aceh Selatan, Aceh Timur, Pidie, Gayo Lues, Bireuen, and Lhokseumawe and resulted in violence in Bireuen, Aceh Barat and Lhokseumawe. This brings total vigilante deaths post-August 15th to four, which have occurred in Bireuen (3) and Aceh Utara (1).

Figure 3: Vigilante incidents in 2005 by month



Source: Newspaper dataset

Post-August 15th there seems to be three distinct forms of vigilante/gang-type conflict. The first category, which includes the two incidents in Bireuen and one in both Lhokseumawe and Aceh Utara, involve attacks with no apparent, or unreported, motives carried out by unidentified

assailants. All of the deaths from vigilante action are in this category. Although not reported as such, these incidents *may* be the revenge killings that communities fear.

The second category, which includes those incidents in Aceh Selatan, Aceh Timur, Pidie and Gayo Lues, involve demands for money and threats of violence carried out by groups labelled “unidentified armed groups.” Whether these groups are former GAM, militias or just criminal gangs is unclear and newspapers seem unwilling to speculate. Some cases are, however, and in a separate report in Serambi unrelated to a particular incident, the head of Police in Pidie suggested that it is in fact former GAM members who are responsible. In contrast, a GAM representative to the AMM, Tengku Marzuki, stated there had been no reports of GAM involvement in extortion.²

The third, and less alarming, category is those incidents where citizens take relatively small matters into their own hands. This includes one incident in Aceh Barat where a villager accosted a DPRD member for personal reasons and one incident in Aceh Utara where villagers beat a state electricity employee accused of corruption.

Table 2: Post-August 15th impacts of vigilante/gang incidents by district

District	Incidents	Deaths	Injuries	Buildings Damaged
Possible revenge				
Bireuen	2	3	0	0
Lhokseumawe	1	0	1	0
Aceh Utara	1	1	0	0
Extortion related				
Aceh Selatan	1	0	0	0
Aceh Timur	1	0	0	0
Pidie	1	0	0	0
Gayo Lues	1	0	0	0
Smaller incidents				
Aceh Barat	1	0	1	0
Aceh Utara	1	0	1	0
TOTAL	10	4	3	0

Source: Newspaper dataset

Extortion levels and form are changing

Research and interviews conducted prior to signing of the MoU indicated that widespread extortion of commercial and public transportation was rife across the province. In the past six weeks this seems to be changing. On the west coast, informants told how extortion of private trucks is no longer occurring along the road but rather at one particular Brimob point near Tapaktuan in Aceh Selatan, where Rp. 50,000 for a one-way trip to Medan is being collected. Further, informants reported police posts across the border in North Sumatra had recently increased their average demands from Rp. 2,000 per post to Rp. 5,000-10,000. Evidence from trips along the east coast, although somewhat anecdotal, indicates that extortion at TNI and police posts has largely stopped.

Local level conflicts (non-GAM-GoI) incidents increase

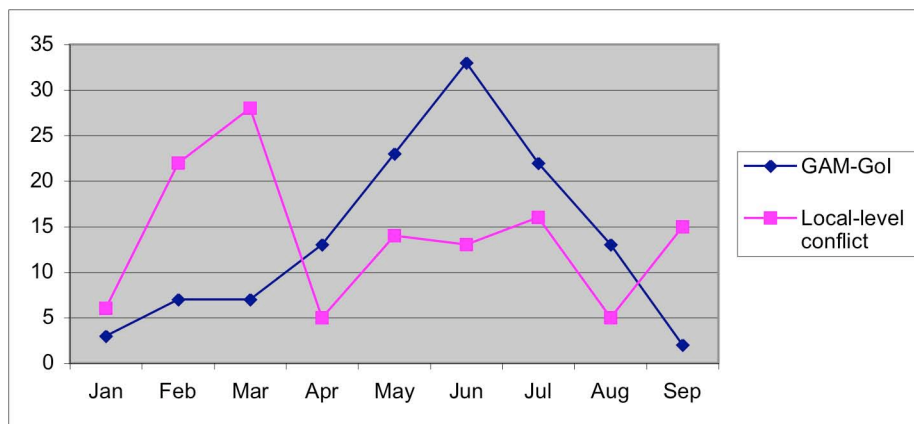
The newspaper dataset also collates incidents of non-GAM-GoI local level conflicts. These include both natural and man-made resource disputes, administrative disputes, political conflicts

² Serambi Indonesia, “Pemersan Masih Marak”, 15 September 2005.

and incidents, as noted above, of vigilante conflict. As Figure 4 indicates, these incidents have not followed the same downwards trend as have GAM-GoI conflicts. There was a notable rise in the number of these conflicts compared to August and, for the first time since the months immediately after the tsunami, reported local level conflict was higher than GAM-GoI conflict. It is worth noting, however, that many local-level conflicts are unlikely to be reported, particularly if they do not result in violence.

To some degree, local-level conflict forms are replacing GAM-GoI. Nine of the 15 local-level conflicts reported in September are vigilante incidents, some which may have previously been reported as vertical GAM-GoI conflict (see above). For this reasons it will be necessary to continue to monitor levels and forms of local conflict in the coming months, in particular as troops and police pull out and GAM gives up its weapons.

Figure 4: GAM-GoI and Local-level conflict incidents by month



Source: Newspaper dataset