

Aceh Conflict Monitoring Update

1st – 30th November 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 publishes monthly updates and analysis of the data, complimented by fieldwork where possible, in both English and Indonesian.¹

November saw GAM-GoI related incidents decrease, suggesting the spike at the end of October was an anomaly. For the first time, no incidents between GAM and the *aparatus* (military or police) were recorded. Only two vigilante incidents were reported in November, but local level conflict rose to 75 incidents, a more than 100 percent increase on October. Close attention must be paid to these forms of conflict, which include a large number of disputes related to development aid. This update also summarises preliminary findings from the first research phase of the World Bank's GAM Reintegration Needs Assessment. Overall, these findings are positive and suggest high community acceptance of returning GAM.

GAM-GoI incidents decrease in November

In the month of November five incidents were reported, a decrease from eight in October.² This decrease suggests that the spike of incidents at the end of October was an anomaly. The overall trend of decreased levels of conflict since the signing of the peace agreement is still holding (see Figures 1 and 2).³

Figure 1: GAM-GoI incidents by month

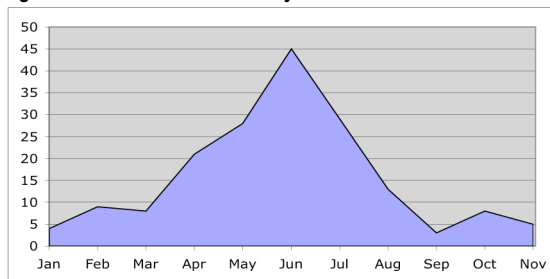
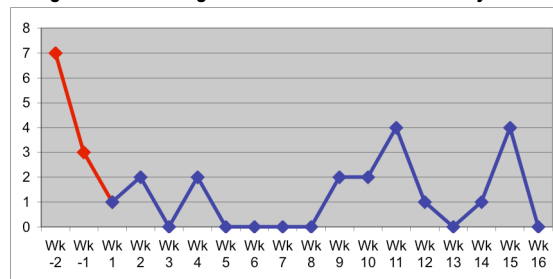


Figure 2: Post-August 15th GAM-GoI incidents by week



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. For more information 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. This report, as well as 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

² In last month's Update we reported seven incidents of GAM-GoI related conflict as having taken place in October. However, in November Serambi and Aceh Kita reported that two GAM members were shot at in Idi Rayeuk, Aceh Timur on 31st October. A TNI soldier was reported to have shot at two GAM members while they were traveling by motorbike sidecar late at night. One died and another suffered serious injuries. AMM was reported to be making investigations.

³ Please note that there have been some revisions to Figure 1 from previous Updates. A review of our newspaper archive found that in the months of April, May and June there were a number of incidents missing. The regularity of incidents in these months meant that multiple incidents were often reported in one newspaper article. Our database had not picked up on these. Most of the missed incidents occurred in Aceh Timur and Aceh Selatan. Overall trends are not affected; incidents still, for example, peaked in June for this year. The geographical spread is altered slightly, although Aceh Selatan, Aceh Timur, Bireuen and Aceh Utara still remain the districts most affected by conflict in 2005.

No deaths were recorded in November, and only one injury occurred – in an incident in Aceh Barat Daya. Indeed, most cases were relatively minor, taking the form of political disputes rather than violent conflict. Problems of extortion are most prominent. In November, incidents were reported in three districts. For the first time, no incidents between GAM and the *aparats* (military or police) were recorded.

- *Aceh Barat Daya, Tangang-Tangan, 14th November*

Serambi reported that police in Aceh Barat Daya had charged two GAM members for the beating and mistreatment of a village head. The case reportedly began on 14th November when the village head was seen holding the hands and going around with the wife of a GAM member who has not yet returned. The local *Mukim* (traditional leader) called a *musyawarah* (meeting to find consensus) to discuss the issue and it was decided the local *adat* (traditional rule system) would be used. A few days later, however, the village head was kidnapped and beaten by the GAM members whose case was now being processed by the police. The village head was also forced to promise to pay a “fine” of Rp. 2,000,000.

- *Banda Aceh, 22nd November*

Serambi reported that GAM in Banda Aceh protested the drafting of the new Governance Law for Aceh. GAM claimed the current version of the legislation that is being prepared by the provincial parliament was not in conformity with the MoU. GAM also protested the process of drafting, which, they claimed, was dominated by the provincial government and did not involve the people of Aceh. Abdullah Saleh, the vice-head of the ad hoc committee formed to draft the legislation, stated that GAM could still discuss their concerns with the parliament.

- *Aceh Utara, Syamtalira Aron, 22nd November*

Serambi Indonesia reported that staff and workers of plantation companies in Aceh Utara and Aceh Timur have experienced harassment and extortion. The report, however, only mentioned one plantation company, PT Satya Agung Krueng Pase, and its location in Syamtalira Aron sub-district in Aceh Utara. Although not stating that those responsible were members of GAM, the report included statements from Sofyan Dawood, who was sceptical that these incidents involved GAM members.

- *Aceh Utara, Syamtalira Aron, 22nd November*

Serambi also reported that in the same location as the plantation incident above, the village head had also been approached to pay “*pajak nanggroe*”, a “state tax” levied in the past by GAM. Rp. 300,000 was requested for each ton of sap produced and sold by the village. The village head could not identify those responsible and instead referred them to as an “unknown armed group”. The village head stated that he had reported the incident to the local TNI Commander.

- *Aceh Utara, Lhoksukon, 22nd November*

The village head of Bukit Hagu in Lhoksukon sub-district also reported that an “unidentified armed group” had approached him for “*pajak nanggroe*”. In a meeting with the TNI and AMM, TNI commanders stated their view that if it was really GAM who were responsible, then names and details should be noted. GAM spokesperson, Sofyan Dawood, was unable to comment directly on the incident, but reiterated that GAM was committed not to use weapons. He also added that those responsible may not in fact be members of GAM.

Box 1: Multiple interpretations of “extortion”

In Pidie one “extortion” incident was followed from the district level down to the village, where in-depth interviews were held with those involved. The three quotes below indicate the various interpretations of what is perceived by some as “extortion” and others as a request for “assistance”.

“Extortion by GAM in the villages is still occurring. For example, in Muara Tiga (*kecamatan*) just one or two weeks ago the *Panglima Sagoe* demanded a cut of the KDP⁴ project from the village head. I don’t think they were successful but in a nearby village one Village Head was beaten up when he refused.”

DPRD Member, Pidie

“The GAM leader approached me for money from the KDP fund. I took it to a community *musyawarah* meeting and the community decided they didn’t want to give Rp. 2 million to GAM. I relayed this to the leader and I’ve not heard back since. But you know, they were half-hearted in their request. They didn’t demand the money. I think they were just trying to see if they could get something.”

Village Head, Pidie

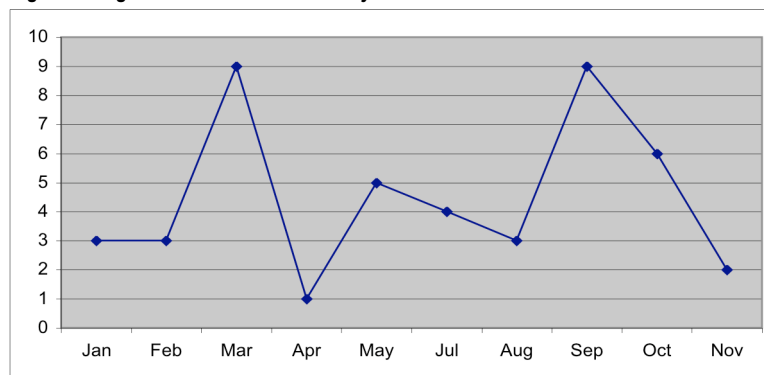
“We asked the village head for money. They thought that we wanted “*pajak nanggroe*” but it’s not like that. Actually we only asked the village head as a community member. We’ve just returned from the mountains and hardly have the clothes on our back. We asked the community for help not for tax.”

GAM, Pidie

Vigilante incidents declined to two in November

Positively, only two incidents were recorded in the month of November. These took place in Langsa and Pidie. In both incidents one person was injured. As Figure 3 indicates this is the lowest level experienced since the signing of the peace agreement in August. It would seem to suggest, that following a spike immediately after the agreement, the concern that vigilante incidents may replace GAM-GoI conflict is unlikely. It also concurs with the preliminary findings of the GAM Reintegration Needs Assessment, discussed below, that the return of combatants and other groups to the village is not causing significant social tensions or vengeance for past acts. It is also, perhaps, a credit to both the police and GAM, that they have been able to maintain social order and discipline their members. However, attention will need to continue to be paid to this kind of conflict, especially once the AMM has withdrawn.

Figure 3: Vigilante incidents in 2005 by month

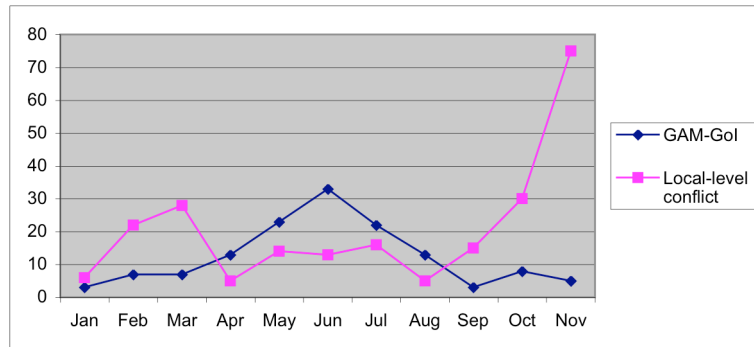


⁴ The Kecamatan Development Project (KDP or PPK in Indonesian) is a large GoI/World Bank community-driven development project. Communities, normally the village, plan and implement small-scale infrastructure projects, such as roads, irrigation and micro-credit programs (Rp. 50 million – Rp. 150 million per village).

Local level conflict rose to very high levels

In November, an extraordinary 75 local level conflict incidents were reported. This is more than a 100 percent increase on October (see Figure 4). The vast majority of these disputes, 51 from 75 or 68 percent, were administrative disputes involving the distribution of government funds and services, including corruption.

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



In last month's update we flagged three hypotheses for why local level conflict is on the rise: *one*, that editorial policies are changing; *two*, that a security vacuum is resulting in more conflict; and *three*, that the peace agreement has opened socio-political space for contestation at the local level. Although it is difficult to pin-point the exact causes, given the vast majority of disputes are administrative in nature, it would seem to suggest that a combination of the first and third is responsible. What is also clear, given 26 of the 61 administrative disputes relate to the administration of humanitarian-type assistance, delivered both by NGOs and the local government, is that development interventions need to be conflict sensitive. This includes identifying how the provision of assistance may trigger conflict but also assuring appropriate complaint handling and dispute resolution mechanisms are in place. This is likely to become increasingly important next year in both tsunami and conflict-affected areas.

Field research indicates the reintegration of GAM and prisoners is progressing smoothly

In November the first round of the World Bank's GAM Reintegration Needs Assessment was completed in three areas: Aceh Selatan, Aceh Tengah & Bener Meriah, and Aceh Timur.⁵ The findings from this in-depth field work are generally positive (see Box 2). These include.

- *High community acceptance of GAM and political prisoner returnees*
Overall, reintegration at the village level was progressing without problems. Community religious welcome ceremonies (*peusijek*) had been held in almost all villages. Isolated exceptions were found in some places where factors such as extortion, lack of security and militia/anti-separatist activity contributed to tensions. These tensions tend, however, to be directed at individuals rather than social groups.
- *High numbers of returnees, conflict victims and high conflict damage*
The research showed that in most areas the number of returnees and conflict victims is higher than expected. This has significant implications for post-conflict programming.

⁵ In-depth research for the first phase was conducted in 14 villages. The research aims to capture an overall picture of the socio-economic needs of returnees and receiving communities as well as the current dynamics of reintegration. The final reports will integrate qualitative and quantitative data.

- *Returnee numbers and conflict damage vary within kecamatan*
In most research *kecamatan* there were two or three villages that had particularly high levels of returnees and conflict damage. Again, this has implications for programming.
- *Returnee and community needs are similar*
Returnee and community needs are similar in both the immediate and longer term. Housing, food and health were the immediate priorities.
- *Distribution of jadup not without problems*
The distribution of *jadup* (social security payments) via the GAM hierarchy was causing tensions amongst GAM, most notably in Bener Meriah and Aceh Tengah where some members had not received payments. In all locations combatants, due to higher numbers than specified in the MoU, received less than the Rp. 1 million.
- *Extortion and requests for money*
In some areas, villagers noted that GAM members have asked for money. While the research teams encountered a number of examples of extortion, it is worth noting that not all persons interviewed agreed that this type of request for money was in fact extortion (See Box 1 above).

The World Bank plans to release an interim report summarising findings from the first two research phases before the end of the year. The final report is due at the end of January 2006.

Box 2: GAM chosen to work with KDP

In one village in Aceh Selatan we came across former combatants who had already become the TPK (Project Implementation Team) just a month after returning from the mountains. Not only does this indicate just how well received combatants are but also how community-driven projects can help to bring various groups together and help to break down combatant versus community distinctions.

“After I had just come down from the mountains and entered the community again as it says in the MoU, I joined one of the KDP meetings and straightaway I was chosen by the community to be the TPK. It means that the community still has trust in me.”

GAM / TPK, Aceh Selatan

“But you know why we [the community] choose him? Well, we didn’t want him to make conflict again. We thought if he had a job he’d be less likely to join GAM and start fighting again. [laughing].”

Community member, Aceh Selatan