

# The Acehnesse

For Peace,  
Freedom & Justice  
in Aceh

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## Monthly Review

### Military Dynamics in Aceh Conflict

By: Yee Siong Tong

Will the ongoing military operation against separatist rebels in the Aceh province work?

The answer depends pretty much on to whom this question is asked in Indonesia, and how a military success is defined.

Since President Megawati Soekarnoputri declared martial law on May 19 and gave the green light to a six-month integrated operation, voices which speak against the operation have not ceased as the military operation enters its fourth month.

It may be an unspoken fact but much criticism and scepticism are not targeted at questioning the necessity of the overall operation. Instead, critics and sceptics are more concerned with three issues related to the military operation – the discipline of personnel involved, the objective and the duration.

This concern reflects a lack of confidence in the military credibility and accountability, which is understandable.

After all, the Indonesian military (TNI) which is currently battling the guerillas who have fought for an independent state of Aceh for the last 27 years, was not without its fair share of mistakes during its previous operations in the province, most notably the decade-long Kolakops Jaring Merah which ended in 1998.

The combat command, now infamously referred to as Daerah Operasi Militer (DOM), was intended to crush the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) but did exactly the opposite – it resulted in some 3,000 deaths and consequently strengthened GAM by giving it the much-needed fodder in its recruitment campaign.

Aside from this, historical baggage also plays a key role in fuelling speculation among military observers, activists, journalists and the likes that the military is not truly committed to its job in Aceh this time around.

For 30 years, the TNI was given extensive consultative and decision-making power in the social and political affairs.

Until the fall of Suharto five years ago, many military leaders were known to have used force to help perpetuate the former president's grip to power, and got away with it. Since then, civil society groups and democracy-minded strategists have called for reforms within TNI.

To them, TNI should be involved only in external defence and should stay away from matters of internal security, as well as political and social stability.

Seen in this light, it is unsurprising that some are worried that TNI may use the latest military operation in Aceh to reassert, or retain, the political influence that it had long enjoyed.

Ikrar Nusa Bakti, a political researcher and military observer at Indonesian Institute of Sciences, is among such people who share the worry.

He said the military seems interested to stay on in politics, even though it will keep its promise to relinquish its long-held seats in the the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) in 2004 and in the House of Representatives (DPR) in 2009.

Kusnanto said he could not see how the military would reap any real political benefit from the operation if it succeeds.

"The military sees itself as the defender of the Indonesian Republic. I think they want to be recognised and remembered as the defender of a unitary state before they quit active politics starting 2004," he said.

Nevertheless, he stressed that it is important for the media and rights groups to monitor the conduct of the operation and any abuses of human rights.

Equally important is that Indonesian society continues to exert pressure on the government to ensure that reform of TNI is not sidetracked and that the civilian authorities, not the military, are chiefly in control of the operation in Aceh, he added.

"Accountability remains a big problem within TNI. But my criticism on the slow progress in military reform goes to the civilian authorities because they should be defining rules for the military. This is not happening because politicians still rely on military support to win elections," he said.

Judging by the military's success in regaining territorial control in Aceh, he said it seemed likely that TNI will suppress GAM's strength to a minimum level though the separatist movement could not be destroyed entirely.

He said the chances for a military victory are increased with a better chain of command under martial law administrator Maj. Gen. Endang Suwarya, an military officer who is familiar with the terrains and GAM's hide-outs in Aceh.

However, he said a military victory is not enough to ensure lasting peace in Aceh.

"It is important to have proper execution of the non-military parts of the integrated operation. Restoration of law and order, humanitarian aids as well as the implementation of special autonomy package are the key to overall success."

"If the government fails to take up on the military victory and improve the condition in Aceh, then the political defeat will go to Jakarta," he warned.

He said the government must also be prepared to resume negotiations with GAM when and if the time comes.

Speaking along the same line of reasoning, Kirsten Schulze, senior lecturer in international history at the London School of Economics (LSE), said there is still room for peaceful solutions to the conflict in Aceh even with the ongoing military operation.

"If you look more closely at peace processes around the world you seldom have just dialogue. In most cases there is a dynamic of negotiation and violence," she said.

Such was the case with the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities agreement (COHA) in



The number of Acehnesse refugees in Malaysia is estimated to be between 15,000 to 27,000. Thanks to intensive campaign by local students, media, lawyers, NGOs, political and rights groups, there are now increasing support from Malaysian communities throughout the country. In addition, UNHCR has issued more than 8,000 Temporary Protection Letter (white letter) to the Acehnesse in Malaysia and has worked with local groups to persuade Malaysian authorities to better respect the refugees rights for protection. Given the geopolitical importance of Aceh's position on Malacca Straits, international community can not close their eyes any longer to help resolve the conflict in Aceh. (photo: TAB, August 2004)

December 2002. GAM concluded the agreement shortly after the military surrounded one of the movement's strongholds in Aceh.

Schulze said there were two possible scenarios for peace within the next few months.

"The first is to use this military operation to significantly weaken GAM on the ground with the aim of making its leadership in exile more compliant so that they will agree to autonomy at future talks. This is based on the belief that GAM is willing and capable of compromise.

"The second scenario presumes that GAM will not compromise under any circumstances and consequently this military operation will weaken GAM in order to create space for focused economic development and addressing the grievances of the population.

"Both, if meticulously implemented, can lead to peace in Aceh," she remarked.

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### The Acehnesse Bulletin

Address: 6300 GUYER AVE., Philadelphia, PA 19142

E-mail: [aceh\\_bulletin@hotmail.com](mailto:aceh_bulletin@hotmail.com)

Editor-in-Chief: Eddy Suheri

Manager: Abdul Jalil

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Suggested participation: \$0.97 (fotocopy \$0.60 + stamp \$0.37), more generous participation, however, is welcome. Please make participation payable to Abdul Jalil and send it to the Bulletin address.

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**Military Dynamics ... From page 1.**

She noted that TNI has had the upper hand in the military operation and has dealt some serious blows to the mid-level GAM leadership.

"There's no doubt that TNI is technologically and militarily superior as GAM has comparatively few weapons," she said. "TNI's success, however, depends on their ability to target GAM's structure, communication lines, arm supplies and funding as well as to cut GAM off from its popular support base without inflicting too much violence on the civilian population."

Hasballah Saad, former human rights minister, said the military operation in Aceh has two advantages which it did not have in the past.

"The international community does not oppose much to it. The majority of Indonesians seem to support it too [a poll in Indonesia's largest daily Kompas last November showed that 79.6 percent of respondents outside Aceh and 54.6 percent inside in favour of a military operation in the province]," he said.

United States deputy defence secretary Paul Wolfowitz had advised at the onset of the operation that the Aceh conflict should be resolved through peace talks which US has long sponsored, but did not suggest any form of action or pressure if the Indonesian government did not heed his words.

Australian ambassador to Indonesia David Ritchie meanwhile said his government "understands" Indonesia's right to uphold its territorial integrity though Australia still prefers a peace solution to the problems.

In June, Indonesia's neighbours in the region also voiced out their support for the military operation at the Asean Regional Forum in Cambodia for fear of regional instability.

Be that as it may, LSE's Schulze cautioned that the answer to the problems in Aceh requires more than just a military solution.

"GAM is about the idea of independence and that, of course, must be challenged politically rather than militarily. In the short-term TNI tends to be successful in reducing GAM's capacity but human rights abuses and the failure to deal with the political dimension of GAM has always resulted in strengthening GAM in the long-run.

"Military success also does not equate to a resolution of the conflict in Aceh. There are political and economic issues which need to be addressed," she said.

ICG's Jones said both TNI and GAM will not restart negotiation on their own and therefore the international community should continue to look for ways to bring the two parties back to the process.

"If negotiations resume, it will almost certainly need to have a government, rather than a non-governmental organisation like the Henri Dunant Centre, as the facilitator," she said.

She also said the new round of talks, if any, should take place in secret at the early stage, rather than in full public view, so that the two sides would not feel obliged to stake out their positions to satisfy their constituencies.

"If need be, the talks might have to take place without the participation of the GAM leadership in Sweden," she suggested.

All said, the key tasks of the integrated operation are not mutually exclusive and the government should ensure that much non-military ground work is carried out effectively starting now, and that the soldiers will behave or be given due punishment.

The military is after all a state apparatus which is not all superior and above the law.

Acehnese need to see this for themselves, and Indonesians at large, deserve such an assurance. (The writer is 2004 SEAPA Fellow. Copyright@ 2003 Southeast Asian Press Alliance. All rights reserved)

## Indonesia: U.S. underwriting terrorism?

Reprinted from Portside, September 4, 2004  
By Conn Hallinan

Behind a recent, highly controversial indictment by the U.S. Department of Justice, the Bush Administration is maneuvering to revive military ties with the Indonesian Army (TNI), one of the world's most oppressive institutions.

In late June, U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft convinced a federal grand jury to indict Anthonuis Wamang for a 2002 ambush in West Papua that killed two Americans, an Indonesian, and wounded 12 others. The indictment identifies Wamang as a commander in the Free Papua Movement (OPM) and, despite strong evidence to the contrary, clears the Indonesian military of charges that it engineered the incident.

Human rights groups, long-time observers of Indonesia, and even the Indonesian police say the indictment ignores evidence tying the ambush to the most notorious unit of the TNI, Kopassus. Indeed, rights groups charge that Wamang works for Kopassus, not the OPM.

The OPM has been fighting a low-key rebellion since Indonesia—with U.S. support—short-circuited a UN election and engineered the seizure of West Papua in 1969. West Papua is the western half of New Guinea and Indonesia's eastern-most province.

The U.S. has a long relationship with the TNI, dating back to the 1965 coup that overthrew President Sukarno and led to the murder of over 500,000 Communists and leftists. According to declassified U.S. documents, American intelligence helped finger some of the coup's victims. The U.S. also supported Indonesia's violent takeover of East Timor in 1975.

The Bush Administration is presently pushing Congress to fund an International Military Education and Training (IMET) program for Indonesia, but Congress is holding up the monies because of Indonesia's resistance to seriously investigate the 2002 ambush.

The U.S. first restricted Indonesia's IMET funds following the 1991 massacre of 270 civilians in Santa Cruz, East Timor. All military ties were suspended in 1999 when TNI-organized civilian death squads ravaged East Timor following that country's independence vote. IMET funds were suspended after the 2002 West Papua ambush.

While the TNI blamed the OPM for the attack, not even the local police agree. Two months after the Aug. 31 ambush, a police report found that the OPM was an unlikely suspect because the group "never attacks white people." It concluded that TNI involvement "was a strong possibility."

At the time, U.S. officials concurred with the charge of TNI involvement. A "senior (Bush) administration official" told Raymond Bonner of the New York Times, that "there is no question there was military involvement. There is no question it was premeditated."

Two vans were ambushed leaving Freeport McMoran's Grasberg mine, the largest gold and copper mine in the world. The attacker, or attackers, used M-16s, a weapon that has never been associated with the OPM, many of whose members use bows and arrows. OPM spokesperson John Ondowame denied any involvement in the attack. "I can say with assurance that the incident did not involve the Free Papua Movement," he told the press in Melbourne, Australia.

According to a November, 2002 story in the Washington Post, Australian intelligence intercepted phone calls from Indonesian Commander-in-Chief, Endriartono Sutarto, discussing carrying out an ambush as a way to discredit the OPM and get the U.S. to designate it a "terrorist organization."

It would hardly be surprising that the TNI, in particular Kopassus, would engineer such an incident. In 2001 seven low-level members of

the unit were jailed for murdering Papuan independence leader, Theys Eluay.

The seven are appealing their two to three year sentences which, given the track record of such appeals for war crimes committed in East Timor, are likely to be overturned. Out of 18 Indonesians charged with war crimes for their behavior in East Timor, Indonesian courts acquitted 12, and convicted six. Of the six, four had their sentences overturned, and one had his sentence halved. The one civilian charged, the former governor of East Timor, was sentenced to three and a half years. The minimum for such crimes is 10 years.

In the meantime, Indonesia has ignored the UN-sponsored court in East Timor, which has charged almost 400 people with war crimes, including former presidential candidate, General Wiranto. Indonesia has refused to hand over any of the defendants.

Besides discrediting the OPM, the military had a financial stake in the ambush. Freeport McMoran paid the TNI \$10.7 million in protection money from 2000 to 2002, and provided military officers with free airline tickets. The company stopped the payments shortly before the ambush because a new American corporate responsibility law required disclosure of such payments. One intelligence analyst told Bonner it was "extortion, pure and simple."

But the stakes are much bigger than bribes and free airline tickets.

Re-starting the lucrative Indonesia-U.S. arms pipeline and roping in a potential ally against what some in the Bush Administration see as their future competitor—China—overshadows greasing the palms of local Indonesian military commanders. Indonesia could be an important link in the chain of bases and allies the U.S. is forging in Asia. Australia, the Philippines, Japan, and India have already signed up for the U.S. anti-missile system. The Bush Administration says it is directed at North Korea, but the Chinese are convinced it targets their small missile fleet.

The U.S. Defense Department (DOD) has lobbied to end the ban on arms sales and cooperation with the Indonesian military, in spite of the latter's horrendous human rights record in the rebellious province of Aceh, the Maluku, East Timor, and Papua.

"I think it is unfortunate that the U.S. today does not have military-to-military relationships with Indonesia," says Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. Rumsfeld's right hand man, DOD Assistant Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, argues, "More contact with the West and the United States and moving them in a positive direction is important both to support democracy and support the fight against terrorism." Wolfowitz was Ambassador to Indonesia during the Reagan Administration.

But others argue the opposite.

According to Karen Orenstein, Washington coordinator for the East Timor Action Network (ETAN), "History demonstrates that providing training and other assistance only emboldens the Indonesian military to violate human rights and block accountability for past injustices."

The Indonesian military's "worst abuses," says Ed McWilliams, former State Department political counselor in the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta from 1996-99, "took place when we (the U.S.) were most engaged."

"Abuses" is a mild term for what the IMT has inflicted on places like East Timor and Aceh.

According to the UN, Indonesia's 24-year occupation of East Timor resulted in 200,000 deaths, a higher kill ratio than Pol Pot managed in Cambodia. Following the vote for independence, TNI-sponsored militias went on a rampage, killing up to 1,500 people, forcing another 250,000 into concentration camps in West Timor. 70% of East Timor infrastructure were destroyed.

In May, 2003, Indonesia broke a cease-fire with the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), sent in 40,000 troops and 10,000 police, and sealed off the oil-rich province of Sumatra from journalists, ...to page 3 col. 3

For more information on Aceh see:  
[www.aceh-eye.org](http://www.aceh-eye.org)

## Meurumpok Ngon Nyak Wa Ti

keunarang  
Dian Rubianty

Lam keudè, Bunda tengah geu piléh-piléh bawang watèe na nyang cukèh bahô gobnyan.

"O PotAllah, droe keuh lagoë, Kher..." rupa jih Nyak Wa Ti dari duson Blang Blah Déh. Gobnyan saboh mukém ngon Bunda sidéh di gampông. Bunda ngon Nyak Wa Ti meum-um, hana sangka meurumpok lam peukan nyo.

"Pajan keuno u Banda..." tanyong Nyak Wa Ti bak Bunda, watèe awaknyan geupiyôh siat bak warông cindoi.

Bunda geu peugah teuk musibah di gampông sampoan payah hijrah u Banda. Alhamdulillah, Allah peu rumpok ngon Bu Husein geu meutuwah.

"O PotAllah oiii...gèt that akai Ibuk nyan, Kher. Padahai kon bansa droe teuh"

"Meunan keuh ureueng panyoe malém ngon panyong ilmè agama, Nyak Wa."

"Man Droenneuh ka neuminah keuno ciet, Nyak Wa?" tanyong Bunda sira geu adôk-adôk cindoi lam glah yang ka tinggai sikhah.

"Hai bacut sahoë cit ngon musibah droe keuh. Yah Wa dicok, nyan kamoe payah teuboh 100 juta. Mandum meuh yang ku keubah keu jinamè si Jamal payah jok. Teudong utang lom ku peugala umong. Goh abéh kuteuboh umong, keudè si Jamal meukat ditot lé gop. Yah Wa rheut seumangat troh an jinoe. Nyan kamoe meu minah teuk u Banda sajan si Badriah." Nyak Wa Ti meuleng-léng ie mata. Gobnyan bak Mukém Makmu Beu Saré sidéh di gampông di thèe lé ureueng sibagoë ureueng le hareuta yang galak geu tulong ureueng susah. Bunda rhap tiep thon meuteumeung zakeut padé dari gobnyan.

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Khauri hakikah aneuk Badriah peunoh ngon ureueng dari mukém Makmu Beu Saré. Nyak Wa Ti geu hoi mandum ureueng-ureueng mukém nyang gobnyan tupeue na di Banda. Leubèh 200 rumah soh sidéh di gampông. Macam ta deungô calitra. Maka jih ka ramee ureueng di Banda nyo.

"Assalamu'alaikum..." Kheun Nyak Wa Ti lhueh mandum ureueng lingka geu gisa, tinggai ureueng Mukém Makmu Beu Saré.

"Wa'alaikum salam..."

"Sigala pujo keu Allah, Seulaweut ngon saleum keu Rasulullah Saw. Lon tuan bak uronyoe lon wakilah Ayah Wa ngon keluarga kamoe banmandum. Kamoe peu sampoe teurimong geunaseh bak rayeuk that keu mandum kawom syedara, yang ka geu peu phui langkah, geu meulangkah u rumah kamoe nyoe. Siharoih jih uronyo tanyoe mandum meubahgia, Badriah ka meutamah aneuk, lon meutamah cuco, man meusabab musibah di gampông, lam ta khem pih teu rho ie mata. Lon sibago po rumah, lon lakee meuh bak rayeuk that meunyoe na yang hana meukeunong bak hatèe."

Lheuh Nyak Wa Ti duek, ureueng mandum kalon ateh Cek Baka. Gobnyan sideh di gampông Geusyiek Dusôn Blang Barôh.

Cek Baka geu beudoh geu peumulia po rumah. "Assalamu'alaikum...Phon that Pujo ta peutroh keu PotAllah, Alhamdulillah mantong geubrie nikmat udep ngon sihat keu geutanyo. Syedara geutanyoe ladom ka geuwo sajan, ladom saket..." Cek Baka sengap siat. Brat that bak geu peusampo pasai nyan. Yang laen mandum treptrop ie mata. Tingat keu nasé maseng-maseng.

"Seulaweut ngon saleum keu Nabi geutanyo Yang Mulia Rasulullah Saw. Alhamdulillah, ngon Rahmad Allah Ta'ala tanyo mantong jeut ta meusapat bak rumah yang penoh beureukah nyo. Kamoe peusampo terimong geunaseh bak rayeuk

that keu Yah Wa Lah ngon Nyak Wa Ti, ka geu peu mulia tanyoe ngon meubago-bago hidang. Seulamat ngon Do'a keu Lokman ngon Badriah, ka Geubrie aneuk agam leu Allah. Ya Allah neubrie bijeh mata nyo bak jeut keu aneuk shaleh, bak ceudah, bak sijahtera jeut ditolong bansa droe jih watèe rayeuk teuma Inshaallah..." Du'a Cek Baka geu peu Amien le mandum ureueng.

"Saboh beurkah keu geutanyoe, ngon na acara nyo mandum geutanyo dari Mukém Makmu Beu Saré meusapat disinoe. Lon cok masa nyo untok lon peusampo makesud hatèe, adak meudeh jroh that meunyoe tanyoe siat jeut ta duek, ta meupakat. Meunyoe mandumsyedara-syedara na pakat, dak jeut ta peuget saboh wirid Mukém Makmu Beu Saree di Banda nyo..."

Akhe jih khauri meubah bacut jeut keu acara duek pakat. Mandum seupakat akan geu peuget wirid tiep buleun.

"Lon seunang that jeut ta meusapat sabee ngon na wirid tiep buleun..." kheun Bunda bak Nyak Wa Ti sira geutulong Nyak Wa Ti rah pingan lheureu khauri.

"Lon teumakot na Nyak Wa, Sakinah treptrep hanjeut le basa Aceh. Nyo tiep uro di rumah dimarit basa

meulayu ngon Siti, aneuk Bu Husein, ngon Bu Husein pih meunan."

"Asai droe keuh teutap ka marit basa tanyo ngon Sakinah, Inshaallah han tuwo," seu'ot Nyak Wa peu ek seumangat Bunda.

"Nyan keuh Nyak Wa, lon kalon Bu Husein ngon Siti nyoe saree keudroe-keudroe geumarit basa Palembang. Geu peugah le gobnyan ngat sabee tingat keu asai jih, indatu jeh pat di Palembang."

"Ka beutoi nyan, meusabab basa ta tupat pat asai...Aneuk-aneuk miet geutanyoe leupah ceudah Geubri le Allah. Nyoe jroh ta peuruno, awak nyoe akan leubeh carong dari geutanyo, awak nyoe Inshaallah jeut dibela naseb kawom teuma..."

"Lon sabee lon marit basa droe teuh Nyak Wa, sabab lon hana that meuphom basa Meulayu..." Po Khalidah geu khem sira geulap glah basah.

"Nyan han jeut chiet Dah. Ka meuruno chiet hai basa meulayu. Aneuk geutanyoe disikula dimeuruno ngon basa nyan, man so peuruno aneuk geutanyo meunyo tanyoe hama meuphom..."

"Hai ta peuruno lam basa droe teuh..."

"Betoi...nyan jroh. Tapi basa nyan peunteung...Jino tanyoe kon lé di gampông. Bak lingka geutanyo peunoh ngon ureueng dari bansa laen. Lagee si Kher, ie tinggai bak ureueng Palembang. Nyo hanjeut dimarit, geu yue tagun kua leumak entheuk ka ditagun kua ie..."

Po Khalidah teu iem geu pike betoi ciet peu yang geu peusampo le Nyak Wa. Bunda pih yang phon hana teupike pasai nyoe, jino jeut leubeh trang pikiran gobnyan.

"Nabi peugah, ureueng yang gét akhlaq, ureueng nyan pasti get ngon ureueng lingka. Man kiban ta meuh gét-gét meunyo tanyo hana meuphom peu yang ureueng lingka peugah, karna hanjeut basa awaknyan. Kon hana mungkn tanyoe nyang ureueng tamong ta yu aso lhok meuruno basa geutanyoe...Kon mudah pih..."

"Nyoe ciet lagèe droneuh peugah Nyak Wa... Meunyoe tanyoe mandum ta useuha, ureueng akan dikalon bahwa bansa tanyoe hana do tulo lagèe nyang lawet nyoe ta dengo. Kadang nyo hikmah geutanyo mandum geu grak hatèe lé Allah untok ta hijrah keuno. Lewat hijrah nyo akan teuhah saboh jalan, ta peu juang naseb kawom jeh pat di gampông. Lon sibena jih galak that nyoe jet lon gisa keudeh teuma..." kheun Bunda.

Lheuh mandum keumah Bunda pih geu lakee droe. Meunan pih Po Khalidah. Inshaallah mandum ureueng Mukém Makmu Beu Sarée bulen ukeu akan meurumpok teuma, peu sahoë langkah, peusama piké, peusaboh hatèe...Gampông lam prang sabee... lèh pajan jeut ta gisa.

From page 2 **Indonesia: US underwriting...**

human rights groups and even international aid organizations like UNICEF, the Red Cross, and the World Health Organization. Much of Aceh's civilian population has been moved into strategic hamlets and, according to Amnesty International; there is "widespread torture of detainees in both military and police custody."

As in East Timor, the military, with the blessing of Indonesian President, Megawati Sukarnoputri, has organized "civilian defense groups that are little more than death squads. According to the government-run National Commission on Human Rights, the military has been recruiting, training and arming such groups, which are then unleashed on the population.

The TNI has also been accused of aiding the right-wing Muslim organization, Laskar Jihad, which is associated with widespread violence in Maluku and is increasingly active in West Papua.

Ashcroft's indictment has stirred outrage among human rights groups, both in West Papua and the U.S.

An Aug. 4 joint press statement from three Papuan rights groups, ELSHAM, LEMASA and YAHAMAK, expressed "grave concern over the actions of U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft" and accused Ashcroft of "suppressing evidence" that the groups had supplied FBI agents investigating the ambush.

The groups say that Wamang, the target of the indictment, was "a business partner of Kopassus." The groups also charge that the Indonesian military "routinely uses civilians to stage attacks," and that the former Police Chief of West Papua, General Made Pastika, concluded the TNI was behind the attack.

In his statement announcing the indictment, Ashcroft said, "The U.S. government is committed to tracking down and prosecuting terrorists who prey on innocent Americans in Indonesia and around the world. Terrorists will find they cannot hide from U.S. justice."

But according to a 2002 study by the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, the TNI's links to groups like Laskar Jihad has made it "a major facilitator of terrorism."

As John Miller of ETAN points out, the Indonesian military carries out and sponsors terrorism throughout the huge archipelago. "Who," he asks, "are the terrorists here?"

### Droë keu droë teuh hai...

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Many thanks Deborah. Who's next? (TAB)

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## Agus, Kautsar & Nazar: The Trio Exceptional Leaders of Acehese Civil Society (1)

Talking about Acehese civil society movement is talking about a young, yet very vibrant and die-hard movement of young people in Aceh. Both the constituent and the leaders are young. Of course, like many other social and political movements in the world, the civil society movement in Aceh was also initiated and maintained by the young.

It is true that during its early days in 1999, just after the fall of Soeharto which opened public sphere in Indonesia, the young movement get a wide support from older generation in Aceh. Many old folks even "participated" in rallies and voiced the same demand: "give the Acehese a chance to express their political rights through a referendum." Later on, however, when public sphere becomes smaller as military grip on Aceh becomes tighter, the young Acehese are the one who continue fighting for what they believe as Acehese rights: peace, freedom, and justice in Aceh which can only be obtained through democratic and peaceful measures.



M. Kautsar (left) and Aguswandi (right), Acehese "twin-leader", two of most prominent civil society young leaders. They are for Aceh as Sukarno-Hatta for Indonesia fighting against injustice, colonialism, imperialism in their early age.

Aceh civil society is blessed by many talented young leaders. The oppression, the conflict and war, like it or not, has been bringing many young Acehese a realization that they got to safe their own future. They can not and will not rely on older generation promises. Among the young Acehese civil society leaders, three stand out as the most popular and very committed to Acehese civil society struggle: Agus, Kautsar, and Nazar.

**Aguswandi** was born on August 17th 1977 at the village of Sibreh, in the District of Aceh Besar, Aceh, Sumatra, Indonesia. Aguswandi or Agus is the second of 6 children of a farmer. Despite the rather unusual name for an Acehese, both his parents are Acehese.

Socially active since he was in secondary school (SMA), at 17 Aguswandi was elected president of the inter-secondary schools organization. He entered Law School of the Syiah Kuala University of Banda Aceh in 1995. In 1998 he was elected Secretary General of the University Student Senate. In the same year he was also elected Coordinator of SMUR, one of the most active student organizations in Aceh struggling for democracy and human rights.

Aguswandi has been the object of several terror and intimidation measures by the Indonesian army. In fact, on May 18 1999 the military authorities issued an official statement declaring Aguswandi an enemy of the State, for which he responded in the front page banner of the SMUR's bulletin, 'Lantak': 'I am proud to be an enemy of the State, if helping the people is considered being an enemy of the State'. Following which, several death threats were sent to him and some military officers have even said it openly in public. A week before he left for the US in November 2000 the office of SMUR was firebombed.

In February 2000 Aguswandi was elected coordinator for the Aceh office of the nation-wide Commission for Disappearances and Victims of Violence of Aceh (KontraS Aceh). KontraS Aceh is a non-governmental organization that worked to campaigns to stop the state violence in Aceh. With hundreds of volunteers throughout Aceh, this organization conducted regular monitoring and documentation of human rights violations, as well as advocacy for victims of human rights abuses in the province. In October 2000, KontraS Aceh worked together with various other civil groups in organizing Congress of Victims of Human Rights Violations in Aceh, which was attended by thousands of victims representing the different districts in Aceh. KontraS Aceh's progress in documenting facts and figures of violence committed by the Indonesian military and police forces (TNI/POLRI) in Aceh had incited increasing threats to Aguswandi and KontraS Aceh volunteers throughout the province.

Aguswandi has gained some experience in international relations, having been invited to speak in seminars on Aceh in Washington DC organized by the International Forum for Aceh (IFA) of New York, and at the Asia Conference on Aceh in July 1999 in Bangkok jointly organized by the Asian Forum for Development and Human Rights (Forum-Asia) and IFA. He was also the representative of the Acehese community in the United States to meet with President Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) during the Indonesian leader's visit to the US last November 1999.

While in the US, Aguswandi also spoke to university students and faculty at Fordham Law school and New School University in New York and helped build an international student network of support for Aceh. In December 1999 Aguswandi visited governmental and non-governmental parties in England, Holland and Germany as part of his campaign to bring international attention to the conflict in Aceh.

In late 2000, Aguswandi represented Aceh at the International Conference on Conflict Resolution, Peace Building, Sustainable Development and Indigenous People, held in Metro Manila, Philippines, December 6-8 2000. At the conference, Aguswandi gave a stirring presentation on the crisis in Aceh and drafted a resolution for peace in Aceh, which was unanimously supported by the 110 participants from all corners of the world, and is to be released in the conference declaration.

He also went to Geneva in March 2001 as Aceh NGO Representative for UN Human Rights Commission Annual Meeting. In Geneva, he made an intervention on human rights condition in Aceh.

In March 3, 2001 Aguswandi finished his studies in constitutional Law of Syiah Kuala University, Banda Aceh. He is also keen on philosophy, international relations and poetry.

From London, he has also been doing some lobby works to many governments representation from several countries in Europe, including European Parliament since 2000.

He got an MA in International Relations from London Metropolitan University in 2003 while working as TAPOL researcher in London. In November 2003, he spoke at a round table discussion on Aceh and Papua in regard to Indonesia struggling democracy at Cornell University where he argued that now Acehese movement is not only for Aceh only, but also for the good of Indonesian and the region. He keeps working at the international level for Aceh and found The Acehese Civil Society Institute (ACSI) in London in 2004. (to be continued)

## The Fearless Munir

by Aguswandi\*

"The most dangerous thing about the struggle for justice and human rights here [in Aceh] is not the threats, the repression, the blackmail, the arrests, the torture or other kinds of terror, not all of that, but the fear that we have in our heads. The fear that the system clouds over us. This fear is the biggest obstacle of the struggle. We should not let this fear be sewn in our heads. We have to remove it if we want our dreams of justice and democracy to become a reality."



"Teungku" Munir, is given a Teungku title by Acehese for his courage and steadfastness in fighting injustice in Aceh and Indonesia until his death.

This is from the speech by Munir in Banda Aceh when he installed me as the coordinator of Kontras Aceh in February 2000. People packed in to hear the speech because Munir had become very famous among the victims of human rights abuses in Aceh. He represented the hope that something could be done to help them. Whereas others saw people as simply as relatives of the rebels, Munir saw them as victims, victims on whose behalf he continued to advocate until the end of his life's journey. While many saw people as related of the separatists, Munir saw them as friends, friends who were struggling with him for a better system.

The last time I met Munir was a few months ago. He was the same Munir I first met in the early days of my work with Kontras. For many Acehese there are not many places we can visit in Jakarta to talk about Aceh. Munir's offices, Kontras and Imparsial, were the best places to go. Acehese who go to Jakarta don't have a lot of friends willing to listen to them. Munir was one of the best friends the Acehese could meet and he would listen intently.

Munir continued to tell the public that the problem of Aceh cannot be separated from the problem of politics in Indonesia. Aceh's problem is part of the politics of the military. Munir was endlessly trying to draw attention to the fact that the conflict in Aceh is about more than the battle between GAM and the TNI, it is also about the TNI using the conflict to justify an enhanced role in Indonesian security and political affairs.

Like many who understand Aceh correctly, he continued to advocate politics and not military power as the answer to the conflict. Now at a time when Munir is most needed by the Acehese, a time when Acehese need more Munirs and difficult to find it, we have lost the one who was so dear to us. ■

\*Aguswandi is a researcher for TAPOL the Indonesia Human Rights Campaign in London and was the coordinator for Kontras Aceh in 2000.

News on Aceh:  
<http://www.acehkit.com/en>

## Adat Aceh, Adat Orang Banyak

### II

#### Upacara Turun Tanah Anak Bayi

Upacara turun tanah bayi tidak sama waktunya di seluruh masyarakat Aceh. Turun tanah bayi pada masyarakat Gayo dilakukan pada hari ke tujuh setelah bayi lahir, bersamaan dengan upacara cukur rambut, pemberian nama dan hakikah. Pada masyarakat Aneuk Jamee turun tanah bayi disebut dengan *turun ka aie*, dilakukan pada hari ke empat puluh empat, bersamaan pula dengan cukur rambut, pemberian nama, kadang-kadang pula dengan disertai acara hakikah. Begitu pula di tanah Tamiang dan masyarakat Aceh lainnya. Dahulu ada kalanya turun tanah bayi dilakukan setelah bayi berumur satu sampai dua tahun, lebih-lebih bila bayi itu anak yang pertama. Karena anak pertama biasanya upacara lebih besar.

Dalam jangka waktu yang panjang itu tentunya orang tua bayi dapat menyediakan persiapan-persiapan kebutuhan dalam upacara. Pada upacara yang besar sering dipotong kerbau atau lembu. Pada hari upacara ini bayi digendong oleh seseorang yang terpandang, baik perandai dan budi pekerti. Orang yang menggendong memakai pakaian yang bagus-bagus. Waktu bayi diturunkan melalui tangga, ia ditundangi dengan sehelai kain yang dipegang oleh empat orang pada tiap-tiap segi kain itu. Di atas kain tersebut dibelah kelapa, agar bayi tadi jangan takut terhadap suara petir. Belahan kelapa yang sebelah dilempar kepada wali dan sebelah lagi dilempar kepada *wali karong*.

Salah seorang keluarga akan dengan bergas-gegas menyapu tanah dan yang lain menampi beras, bila bayi itu anak perempuan. Dan mencangkul tanah, mencincang batang pisang atau batang tebu, bila bayi itu anak laki-laki. Pekerjaan ini merupakan simbolik kerajinan bagi bayi perempuan dan kesatriaian bagi bayi laki-laki. Kemudian sejenak bayi itu dijejakkan diatas tanah dan akhirnya dibawa berkeliling rumah atau mesjid, sampai bayi itu dibawa pulang kembali dengan mengucapkan *Assalamu'alaikum* setibanya di rumah.

Pada masyarakat Gayo sebelum bayi diturunkan melalui tangga, terlebih dahulu Imam beserta peserta upacara membaca do'a untuk selamatan agar bayi panjang umur, mudah rezeki serta beriman dan beragama. Kemudian bayi dipangku oleh seorang *ralik* (kerabat perempuan dari pihak ibu bayi) sambil melekatkan pulut kuning ditelinga bayi, mengoles madu di bibir bayi dengan mengucapkan mudahlah rezekimu, taat dan beriman serta berguna bagi agama. Kemudian bayi itu dipangku oleh semua peserta upacara secara bergantian dengan mengucapkan ucapan yang sama, sehingga selesai. Kemudian barulah bayi itu dibawa turun ke tanah melalui sebuah tangga. Bayi ini dibawa ke tempat pemandian atau sungai untuk dimandikan dengan upacara tertentu.

Dalam masyarakat Tamiang turun tanah bayi disebut dengan *menyangke rambut budak*, disertai dengan acara cukur rambut, pemberian nama, kenduri dan *marhaban*, kadang-kadang dengan hakikah sekaligus, bayi diayun dalam ayunan seirama dengan irama *marhaban*. Kemudian anggota *marhaban* berdiri, bayi diangkat dari ayunan oleh seorang anggota keluarga untuk dibawa keliling anggota *marhaban* tadi. Dalam suasana ini bayi ditepung tawari oleh tuan guru *marhaban*. Rambut digunting kemudian dimasukkan ke dalam kelapa muda terukir yang telah disediakan dalam tanah. Demikianlah penguntingan rambut dilakukan oleh anggota *marhaban* secara bergiliran. Untuk menyelesaikan penguntingan rambut ini bayi diserahkan kepada bidan. Kemudian dilanjutkan dengan acara jejak tanah bayi. ■

## Hubungan Kekerabatan dalam Masyarakat Aceh

**Abang**: aduen; bang; cutbang; cutlém; dalém; polém; --bapak/ibu : ayahwa; kuwa; kuya; --bapak: paduen; paduen mama; wali; --suami/istri: parui

**Adik**: adék; adoe; cutadék; --laki-laki bapak/ibu: ayahcut; pacut; abucut; apatéh; --perempuan bapak/ibu: macut; cutma; ma'adék; matéh; téh; --istri/suami: parui

**Anak**: aneuk; --abang/adik: aneuk keumuen; --laki-laki abang/adik bapak: ôseubah; --aban/adik laki-laki bapak: taloe wali; --abang/adik ibu: taloe karông; --laki-laki abang/adik bapak dan ibu: sampèe; --angkat: aneuk geutueng (geuco', seubut); --sulung: aneuk boh ba' (phôn, ulèebar, ulèebeureu'ôh); --tiri: aneuk mo (ui); --bungsu: tulôt; --seumang aneuk duek keu bu

**Bapak**: abu; abi; ayah; tu; (kas); eumbah/mbah; ku (kas); du; --angkat yah seubut; --tiri yahmo; yah ui

**Besan**: bisan

**Cicit**: cèt; anak dari --: com, cong

**Cucu**: cucoe

**Ibu**: ma; mak; mi; umi; nyak; --angkat : ma seubut; --tiri: ma ui; mak mo

**Ipar**: parui; per--an: sibang parui

**Istri**: binoe; inong; peurumoh; porumoh; --abang/adik: teumuda; tumuda

**Kakak**: cutda; cutpo; cutkak; da; dapo; poda; kak; --bapak/ibu cutwa; makwa; makpo; makyek; Nyakyek; poma; --istri/suami: parui

**Kakek**: abuchik; buchik; chik; duha; kuchik; kunèk; nèkayah; yakchik, yahnèk

**Kemenakan**: keumuen

**Menantu**: meulintèe; beulintèe; beunintèe

**Mertua**: tuwan; tha; tuwantha

**Nenek**: nèk; nèkchik; ninèk; nèkni;

nèkja; --moyang: kuya; endatu

**Orangtua**: ureueng chik; maku; nangmbah

**Piut**: com

**Suami**: lakoe;(kas) agam; lintoe; --istri lakoe binoe; --istri kakak/adik perempuan: teumuda; --kakak/adik perempuan : sibang parui

Catatan: kas = kasar

**Sumber: Kamus Umum Indonesia-Aceh, M.Hasan Basry, Yayasan Cakra Daru, 1994**

**Congratulation on the publishing of Duta Aceh, a Malay-Achehese language Newsletter on Aceh issues. We wish it to be an independent "Achehese Voice from Abroad"**

Kruuu seumangat! Alhamdulillah, ka diteubiet saboh teuk media alternatif keu berita Aceh. *Duta Aceh* yang mengusung motto *Suara Aceh di Negeri Seberang* disebarakan secara luas lewat internet. Peminat dapat mengontak

[duta\\_aceh@yahoo.com](mailto:duta_aceh@yahoo.com)

(The Achehese Bulletin)

## Puisi

### Ka neu wo bak Po

Syakuna

*Teungkue meutuwah...*

*Keudeh bak Po*

*Dronneuh ka neu wo*

*Neu meulangkah sidroe*

*Neu tinggai kamoe*

*Awan hitam yang menyelubungi bumi Aceh*

*Tampak kian kelam*

*Bergulung-gulung di angkasa*

*Hingga dunia kian terlindung pandangannya*

*Dari segenap malapetaka dan kenistaan yang ada*

*Tears...*

*Fears...*

*That the system clouds over the Achehese,*

*Like you said one day...*

*Grows bigger and bigger*

*Teungkue...*

*If they think your death*

*Will take you away from the Achehese*

*The people you fight for with your soul,*

*For their right and dignity*

*That will be another big mistake*

*That they make over and over again*

*Cause we strongly believe...*

*"The one who died for freedom and justice...they never really die..."*

### Droekuh

Chairil Anwar

*Meunan droekuh trô' ba' had*

*Ku lakèe bè'na sidroe nyang neu'payu*

*Kon cit dikah*

*H'an peuna seumeundan nyan*

*Droekuh nyo meunatang jalang*

*Lam kawan ka teuhanyang*

*Bah peuluru kulét droekuh mbôh*

*Kurada' teutap kuteurajang*

*Kupubaplueng luka ngon bisa*

*Sampoe gadoh peudéh ngon peuréh*

*H'an jan lé ku pakoe*

*Kuneu' udép siribèethôn teu' lom*

Terjemahan dari "Aku" oleh M. Hasan Basry



## A reporter calls on his peers to tell Aceh's story

The Jakarta Post's Book Review  
Sunday, August 29, 2004  
**Indonesia's Secret War in Aceh**  
John Martinkus

Random House Australia, 2004  
326 pp

Using the word "secret" as a book title is bound to be a magnet for curious readers, the tease to draw them in to find out more about its promise of providing more information.

It's what we expect from John Martinkus, an acclaimed Australian journalist who wrote the tremendous accounts of the strife in East Timor, *A Dirty Little War*, and *Paradise Betrayed: West Papua's Struggle for Independence*.

His revealing account of his journey through the province fills in the gaps for Indonesia's long ambivalent press, as well as the increasing lack of attention paid by the international community to what is going on in Aceh.

The area's story is a long, violent and tragic one, marked by pitiful accounts of orphaned children, widows and traumatized villagers in remote corners of the province.

It includes the elderly whose sons and daughters take up arms for war and who are tortured and jailed for their parental connection. It is also the story of the mysterious mass graves found in the province.

Who has the most blood on their hands, the so-called rebels or the Indonesian Military (TNI)? In Martinkus' view from his travels and data, it is the latter in the effort to stamp out the independence movement.

Indonesia first made Aceh a designated area of military operation (DOM) from 1988-98, keeping the province under virtual martial law, sealing it off from the rest of the country and leaving the military to its own devices. President Megawati Soekarnoputri imposed martial law last year.

The Indonesian media, although championed as "free" in the reform era following Soeharto's fall in 1998, has not shown that boldness in its reports (or lack thereof) about Aceh. Martinkus' own "journalistic trip" can be an eye opener for the public and especially fellow journalists in reporting on the situation.

In one of his bus trips, Martinkus talks to one of the passengers, who boldly said: "Eighty, no, 90 percent of the people here support GAM."

His source was not a prominent figure nor a vocal student activist, but the proverbial man in the street, experiencing the trauma for himself on a daily basis.

While the world's media is occupied by "hot" news stories, from Baghdad to Kabul, and the hunt for Osama bin Laden, Indonesian media devotes a shamefully meager amount of space to the drama going on in its own backyard.

It would have been quite understandable during the repressive Soeharto era, but it appears incongruous today in the "anything goes" climate of journalism.

Perhaps, the lack of understanding about what is really going leaves media vulnerable to accepting and parroting the one-way directives and strong appeals made by the Indonesian government and its apparatus to revisit and redefine the word "nationalism and patriotism" in their daily reports.

What Martinkus writes are, in fact, the same type of field reports that Indonesian journalists also collect. He mentions numerous meetings with Indonesian journalists, but it's ironic that he presents such honest and clear reports, most of which never make it to the front pages of Jakarta's dailies.

### A Brief Profile

#### ACSTF: Acehese Civil Society Taskforce, Working for Greater Civil Society Role in Peace Process

ACSTF is a ten-member task force formed after a leadership meeting of 50 civil society representatives in Washington, D.C. on 5-8 October 2001. The "Acehese Brotherly Dialogue" was co-hosted by American University and International Forum for Aceh (IFA) where participants participated in workshops on principles of negotiation, guidelines for dialogue, and third party consultation.

The ACSTF is established to promote a sustainable and peaceful solution to the Aceh conflict. ACSTF believes this can be achieved using non-violent means including dialogue; supports involvement by the international community in the peace process; endorses efforts by international community to assist capacity building for civil society; seeks international solidarity to advance world peace based on democracy and respect for human rights.

The initial ten members of ACSTF consist a representative from different groups of Acehese civil society: *ulama* (Muslim scholars), humanitarian workers, women groups, human-rights defenders, victim groups, academics and student groups.

Early in his narrative, Martinkus begins his descriptive stories about the ongoing armed conflicts between the armed wing of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the TNI along with the National Police.

Martinkus writes that one must first be familiar with the history of Aceh, and its long history of conflicts, from resistance to the Dutch in the 19th century to the Darul Islam rebellion of the 1950s, to understand its present situation.

He makes it clear how the GAM liberation movement in their struggle to reclaim their identity as a free, independent nation. It rejects the long-standing contention of the Indonesian administration that the movement was fueled by injustice and the imbalance in revenue sharing between the local and central governments.

GAM fighters have shown, in Martinkus' view, a high resilience and growing tactical skills — itself a legacy of the fighters against the Dutch colonists. The TNI, shadowed by economic and political interests, is more concerned in beefing up its numbers.

No one knows what will happen next in Aceh but Martinkus astutely devotes his final two chapters to the independent East Timor and Papua, with its own burgeoning separatist movement.

Although opinions may be split about the value of the book according to the reader's own perspective of Aceh, with some pointing to the "partisan" view of an "outsider", Martinkus has definitely given a voice to thousands of Acehese whose stories have been denied by the Indonesian media. His parting hope is that there will be those brave enough to stand up and be counted, reporting on the reality of the situation in the province.

In his words, the international community has put Aceh on the back burner of priorities long enough. For this moment in history — with a tragedy going on far from the eyes of the world — may not seem very long to us, but is an eternity to those caught in the crossfire.

The chairman of the task force is Imam Syuja', a prominent Aceh ulama and chairman of Muhammadiyah of Aceh who is also member of Ulama Assembly of Aceh. Juanda, a humanitarian worker from People Crisis Center (PCC) of Aceh serves as its secretary. Other figures include Hasballah M Saad, former Minister of Human Rights under President Abdurrahman Wahid and Dr. Muchtar Aziz, a parliament member in Jakarta.

On its 20 February 2002 "Voice for Peace" to support the Geneva Talks, the ACSTF stated that the situation in Aceh could not be solved militarily and urged the parties to continue their talks and insisted that civil society have a greater role in the peace process. It also called for an immediate end to the violence.

Since then, the civil society groups have engaged in a more comprehensive and intensive talks among their different sectors to prepare for a greater role in the peace process while developing their own capacity. The ACSTF was about to expand to include more civil society sectors such as journalists, artists and different sub-ethnic groups in Aceh to strengthen its constituency when Indonesia decided to withdraw from the peace talks and launched its largest war in Aceh in May 2003. After that, ACSTF has been reducing its activities.

For further information on ACSTF, one can contact it at [jkagawasan@yahoo.com](mailto:jkagawasan@yahoo.com)

#### U.S. Groups Oppose U.S. Military Assistance to Indonesia, Tell Secretary of State that Military Remains "Unreformed" Rights Violator

Contact: John M. Miller 718-596-7668

September 15, 2004 — More than 70 representatives of U.S. organizations wrote to Secretary of State Colin Powell today opposing Bush administration plans to expand military assistance to the Indonesian military (TNI).

The groups are deeply concerned by reported administration plans to release military training funds under the IMET program this month and to request funds for weapons under the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program for 2006. The organizations said that Indonesia has yet to fully meet past and current Congressional conditions restricting Indonesia's access to the programs.

In a letter sent today to the Secretary of State, the groups called the Indonesian military "an unreformed violator of human rights...on a daunting scale" in Aceh, Papua and elsewhere.

"Moving forward with FMF and IMET would break faith with those struggling for democratic reform in Indonesia. It would additionally weaken the hand of the civilian government vis-à-vis an Indonesian military whose reputation would only be tarnished by increased U.S. engagement," the letter added.

As evidence of continued military impunity, the letter highlighted the recent appeals court ruling which overturned the few convictions of Indonesian military and police officers charged with crimes against humanity in East Timor in 1999.

The letter was sent just days before Indonesia votes for president in a run-off election on Monday, September 20, and at a time when the State Department appears to intend to move forward with plans to release IMET funds for Indonesia.

A copy of the letter, coordinated by the East Timor Action Network (ETAN), and a complete list of signatures is available at [www.etan.org/news/2004/09ngoltr.htm](http://www.etan.org/news/2004/09ngoltr.htm).

In addition to ETAN, signers include representatives of International Forum for Aceh (IFA) and West Papua Action Network.

*...the international community has put Aceh on the back burner of priorities long enough. For this moment in history — with a tragedy going on far from the eyes of the world — may not seem very long to us, but is an eternity to those caught in the crossfire.*