

The Acehnese

For Peace,
Freedom & Justice
in Aceh

The Acehnese Society of North America

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Monthly Review

Gross Human Rights Violation in Aceh: KOMNAS HAM

The National Commission on Human Rights' (Komnas HAM) ad hoc team for Aceh has found indications of gross human rights violations in Aceh, most of them alleged to have been perpetrated by the military (TNI).

According to the team's report to the Komnas HAM plenary meeting, a copy of which was made available to certain local media on Wednesday (10/3/04), the indications included accusations of "attacks against unarmed civilians, including victims who were murdered, tortured, sexually abused or raped, or others who the court had not yet proved were rebels."

There were also indications of widespread attacks, either committed by the military or the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), through extra judicial killings, torture, kidnapping, sexual abuse, rape, child abuse, arson and robbery.

The military operation in Aceh was financed by the state budget and the report said, "the attacks were systematic. They (the perpetrators) had political or ideological goals and used public and private budgets."

"The attacks involved high ranking political and military authorities," the report said.

Last year, the ad hoc team uncovered mass graves in Aceh and indicated the involvement of the military, which later exhumed the graves without approval from the courts.

M.M. Billah, who led the team, declined to comment further, saying that the Komnas HAM plenary meeting had not yet given its approval to disseminate the report. (source: Laksamana.net)

Clash Over Aceh Roads (Ladia Galaska)

The development of the Ladia Galaska highway in Aceh created divisions in the government last week, with State Environment Minister Nabeli Makarim demanding it be stopped, and President Megawati Sukarnoputri saying it should go ahead.

The president backed the development of the highway during a visit to Aceh on March 7.

The Leuser Management Unit, which was formed by the government and the European Union to protect the Leuser National Park ecosystem, has suggested several alternative routes to protect the park from the impact the road is expected to create.

Aceh Governor Abdullah Puteh and Minister of Settlement and Infrastructure Soenarno are insistent that the road is necessary to end the isolation of rural residents of the province.

In Banda Aceh, a researcher said each kilometer of the road would incur financial losses of up to Rp74 billion, due to damaged water and forest resources.

Two days after Megawati said the project should go ahead, Makarim said the road could worsen illegal logging and lead to forest destruction. "If illegal logging happens the forest will be destroyed. If that happens — let's not talk about monkeys first but human beings — that area will become withered during the dry season and suffer flooding during the rainy season."

He said alternative routes to avoid the conservation area — an area almost the size of Belgium — have been proposed. (source: Laksamana.net, March 14, 10:06PM)

Deportees Held for Ransom, Activists Arrested

Aceh Solidarity in Malaysia reported that during the week of 15/2, an Acehnese asylum-seeker in Sg. Nibong, Penang received an SMS (text message) requesting ransom for the release of 17 Acehnese being held in Dumai. The asylum-seeker called the number and was able to speak with the caller, a recent deportee from Malaysia, who claimed that he and others were being held by Indonesian security forces and asked the Acehnese community in Malaysia to help secure their release by collecting Rp. 1.3 million per detainee. The 17 were among 40 Acehnese who were arrested in Sg. Nibong, Penang on January 25, 2004. After their arrest they were brought to the Bayan Lepas Police Station, and the following day transferred to the Langkap immigration camp, Perak.

According to Sg. Nibong residents, several of the detainees voluntarily returned to Aceh by ferry and plane, via tickets bought by friends, after less than a week in Langkap. It was reported that this group reached their hometowns safely and were able to contact friends in Malaysia to confirm their arrival.

The remaining detainees, whose numbers could not be confirmed, are reported to have been involuntarily repatriated to Indonesia on 8 February in two groups, one to Tanjung Balai and Dumai. There was no news from either group regarding whether or not they arrived safely in Indonesia, until the SMS asking for ransom for the 17 detainees in Dumai was received. There is still no information about who might be holding the 17 deportees in Dumai, and no way of verifying the reports. Solidarity for Aceh's source called the cellphone number from which the SMS was sent twice but there was no answer. We are still waiting to receive the text of the original SMS message regarding the ransom.

Another worrisome development in Aceh and Indonesia is the arrests of many Acehnese activists, students and human rights defenders. On 19 February Police Mobile Brigade (Brigade Mobil, Brimob) officers arrested Masrizal at his home in the NAD provincial capital, Banda Aceh. On 22 February at around 12.30 pm Iwan Irama Putra was arrested by Brimob at a friend's home in Banda Aceh. He is a member of the Network of Linge Students (IMPEL), based in Central Aceh District, whose work has included providing assistance to internally displaced people. Early on 23 February, police made a series of raids on the homes of members of the Acehnese Democratic Women Organization (ORPAD), which carries out activities for women education and empowerment throughout Aceh in Banda Aceh. They detained Harlina, a member of IMPEL and ORPAD, at around 4am at her home. They reportedly beat her and then took her away in a Kijang minivan. She was last seen approximately two hours later, when police took her with them to the house of another activist. Nursida was arrested at her home, together with Nova Rahayu, at around 6am. Both are members of ORPAD. (to page 2)



Source: Kompas

The Acehnese Bulletin

Address: 2030 South Bucnell St., Philadelphia, PA 19145

E-mail: aceh_bulletin@hotmail.com

Chief Editor: Eddy Suheri

Administrative Manager: Abdul Jalil

Editorial Board: Tjut Zahara, Machyar Kumbang

Redaksi menerima tulisan menyangkut masalah Aceh dalam *tiga bahasa*. Tulisan dalam bahasa Aceh dan berbagai bentuk tulisan dari kalangan perempuan Aceh sangat dianjurkan. Kirimkan tulisan Anda lewat e-mail. Max. 2 hal, 1,5 spasi ukuran font 12. Bulletin welcomes articles related to issues on Aceh in English, Acehnese, or Malay. Articles in Acehnese and articles from Acehnese women are especially encouraged. Please send articles in e-mail attachment. Max 2 pages, 1.5 space, font size 12.

Suggested participation: \$0.77 (fotocopy \$0.40 + 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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PUISI

They were taken away in two trucks. At around 5am the same day police arrived at the student dormitory looking for Syafruddin, an activist with the educational and human rights organization Student Solidarity for the People (SMUR). They did not find him, but reportedly questioned and beat other residents of the dormitory. Syafruddin returned to the dormitory a few hours later and was reportedly beaten before being taken away by the police.

Seven State Islamic University (IAIN Ar-Raniry) students were arrested after midnight on Feb 24. Five of them were arrested at the university's student center, and two others at their home. They are believed to be held at Jeulingke Brimob headquarter.

Thanks to Amnesty International, days after it warned that activists held by police in Aceh faced torture, the government released eight detained in Banda Aceh but said a further two would be charged with treason for allegedly helping Free Aceh Movement (GAM) rebels.

Ten activists were detained between February 21 and 25 but Col. Sayed Husaini of Aceh Police office said Saturday (28/2/04) there was no evidence of wrongdoing on the part of eight of them. Two others — Herlina of the Acehese Democratic Women's Organization and Iwan Irama Putra of the Lingce Students Network — would be charged with treason.

On Feb 27, however, two more activists from the pro-democracy organisation The Voice of the Acehese People (SURA) were arrested in North Aceh. Amrizal, 23, was arrested at his home in Meunasah Mee, Kandang, Muara Dua, North Aceh, by TNI-BRIMOB joint forces, at around 10pm. Azwar, 22, arrested by TNI-BRIMOB posted in Kandang, Muara Dua, North Aceh. It is believed that the two are being held in the TNI-BRIMOB post in Kandang.

Aceh Solidarity activists in Jakarta, Malaysia, Europe and in the US have expressed their concerns on the issues in writing, solidarity calls, and rallies. Australia's ABC radio suspected that the arrests of non-violent activists is aimed at preventing independent monitor on election in Aceh. A statement from US State Department (see below) has also criticized the use of military force. (source: Al Malaysia, Laksamana.net, ABC Australia, field report from LF, Aceh Solidarity in Malaysia, SURA, and SIRA)

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Call or fax to demand for IMMEDIATE and UNCONDITIONAL release of Aceh activists.
Embassy of Indonesia in Washington, DC:
Phone : (202) 775-5200; Fax. (202) 775-5365, or call/fax KAPOLDA Aceh (Aceh Police Chief)
Jl. Cut Mutia No. 25 Banda Aceh
Ph. +62-651-23466, 23670, 3881 Fax.+62-651-22488

US Opposes Military Force in Aceh Press Statement

Adam Ereli, Deputy Spokesman
Washington, DC
March 5, 2004

The United States is deeply concerned by the recent arrests of non-violent Acehese activists. This is the latest in a series of actions apparently intended to intimidate independent observers who would be in a position to monitor and report on serious human rights abuses in Aceh.

We are also concerned about reports that Muhammad Nazar, head of the Aceh Referendum Information Center (SIRA) was beaten during a February 19 interrogation at police headquarters. Since then, both his wife and his lawyer have been denied access to Nazar.

The United States supports the territorial integrity of Indonesia. However, we continue to believe that the Aceh conflict is not amenable to solution by use of military force, including the imposition of martial law. We continue to urge the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement to respect the human rights of all Acehese civilians.

We urge the Indonesian government to handle cases involving civil society activists with the utmost respect for their legal rights. All segments of Aceh civil society that support peaceful resolution of the conflict must form part of a political process to seek a lasting peace.

SELAMAT JALAN BANG JAFAR

Tjut Zahara & Nyak Anwar Hamzah*

Kematian adalah bagian dari kehidupan setiap makhluk hidup suatu hari pasti akan merasakan mati kematian hanya datang satu kali bila dia datang hari ini, maka dia tidak akan kembali esok hari namun seperti halnya kehidupan yang datang dari Tuhan maka hanya Tuhan-lah yang berhak menghentikannya tiada seorangpun manusia yang berhak merampas kemerdekaan hidup manusia lain, apa lagi dengan membunuhnya...

Aku tidak akan mempertanyakan tentang kematianmu, namun aku akan mencari jawab tentang siapa yang telah menculik dan membunuhmu

Saudaraku...

Tidak akan kami biarkan airmata kami mengalir lagi karena tangisan itu bukan maumu engkau telah menuntun kami untuk punya hati hati sekeras batu karang, yang selalu tegar menahan gelombang bukan hati selemah buih di lautan, yang selalu hadir, membesar namun kemudian menghilang

Engkau selalu membiarkan kami berkhayal karena keyakinanmu merubahnya menjadi impian engkaupun tahu kami punya berjuta impian kehadiranmu merubahnya menjadi harapan

Aku tahu bahwa kemarahan dan kesedihanku takkan dapat menghidupkan kembali orang-orang yang kucintai namun aku yakin suatu hari nanti kebenaran akan mengoyak kerudung air mata yang menyembunyikan senyumanku

Saudaraku...

kembali aku mendengar suaramu dalam tidurku, engkau berkata dalam mimpiku "Aku tidak mengharapkan tangisan kalian, karena itu tidak akan mampu merubah apa-apa, hanya satu yang ku harapkan dari kalian, lanjutkan apa yang selama ini aku perjuangkan, agar aku dapat beristirahat dengan tenang"

Saudaraku...

kuucapkan selamat jalan padamu dan terkutuklah para penindasmu kami akan selalu berjalan disisimu, walau kita tanpa bergandengan tangan kami akan selalu menemani siangmu, walau kita tanpa saling berpandangan kamipun akan selalu menyertai malammu, walau tanpa ada sinar rembulan

Kita telah mengisi dunia yang berbeda disana engkau telah menemukan kebahagiaanmu harimu disinari oleh cahaya-Nya, malammu telah diterangi oleh firman-Nya Pembaringanmu pun ditemani ayah bunda tercinta

Terimakasih atas segala yang telah engkau curahkan Cinta, kasih sayang, dan makna kehidupan

*Tjut Zahara & Nyak Anwar Hamzah adalah adik Alm. Jafar Siddiq Hamzah, pengacara and pejuang HAM asal Aceh. Tjut Zahara kini menetap di Pennsylvania, USA dan aktif melakukan kampanye masalah HAM di Aceh lewat IFA (International Forum for Aceh) yang didirikan oleh almarhum. Untuk informasi lebih lengkap tentang Alm. Jafar Siddiq Hamzah dan perjuangannya, lihat, misalnya pada: <http://www.etan.org/news/2000b/jafar3.htm>

Sya'ban 1412 H (bag. 2)

Keunarang: Nyakwa Ty

Teupat that jalan nyan, mangat bak dijak moto beuthat na mubatee bacut. Blang ngon lampoh dum sinaroe bak dua blah jalan. Hana that get jeuet padé bak darok nyan. Gampông-gampông jeuh deuh lam tumpok bak kayee. Yasmin hana piöh jieu gunong Seulawah sidéh bak binéh blang. Get that meusandéng dua Seulawah Agam ngon Inong leumah di jalan nyan. Seulawah Inong di keue, puncakjih bulat muplah bacut bak teungoh, nyang Agam tincu, leubéh manyang bacut teudong brat unéun di likötjih. Teungat Yasmin jikalón cit sabé di Banda Aceh, teuma Seulawah Agam mantong saboh nyang deuh di sidéh. Peuet blah kilo jarak u Sigli, lheueh nyan di Sigli jikeuneuk seumông lom peurjalananjih keudéh u Keumala.



"Masih jauh dari sin?" tanyong Alhuda.

"Tujuh kilo lagi kira-kira, masih jauh, saya pulang sendiri saja, itu ada labi-labi" seu'öt Yasmin.

"Mana ada jauh, saya sering kok ke daerah ini, ikut kawan ke neuheun".

Yasmin ji'iem droë, peue aléh geukheun lé Nyakwa ngon Umi eunteuk, ka jipuwöë teungku nyoë. Teuingatjih lom keu kalông, mantong na lam tahjih.

Uroë tarék that, poh seuteungoh duablah. Na krueng rayek sinan blah unéun jalan, bak trieng meuriti sipanyang binéh krueng, bubayangjih rhot bak jalan, get that meu-uké ön tincu-tincu nyan, teudöh teurasa lam moto pikap Alhuda. Ngon moto nyan keuh jipeugah jijak meuneukat keudéh keunoë 'oh lapang watée bak dayah.

"Itu rumahnya, di pagar yang ada orang keluar itu" kheun Yasmin.

"Mana?" le that bak kayee rumoh Nék, hana teujalok gob na rumoh sinan, meukon ka rab that, "wah, luas sekali, ya?" jikheun lom dudoë.

"Assalamu'alaikum" rôh meusigo saleuem mandua bak pintö dapu nyang teuhah nyan.

"Alaikumsalam, neutamong" seu'öt Nyakwa.

Mangat that teurasa di dalam rumoh, awak nyan geuduek piöh hék bak rangkang dapu. Umi teungoh geupatè beulacan, gobnyan ka get meuturi ngon Alhuda.

"Ék u ateueh lèh, panè na meu'oh jamée duek bak dapu" kheun Nyakwa ngon Umi, "ka leueng tika-tika Nyak, na sidéh meugulông di ramoë keue" geutamah lé Nyakwa.

Awaknyan jijak ék rot reuneun dapu. Yasmin ji-ék leugat, jiprèh Alhuda bak pintö seuramoë liköt. Alhuda tahe teudong bak teungoh reuneun, jikalón u yub reuneun bak tumpok boh saöh teuleueng sinan peunoh ateueh tika.

"Le that boh suku lagoë Nyakwa?" tanyongjih.

"Ban teupot hai aneuk, eunteuk meungna nyang masak jeuet taci rasa" seu'öt Nyakwa.

"Hati-hati kepalanya" kheun Yasmin.

"Apa?" bacut teuk rab meukhok ulèejih ngon pintö reuneun, cit ubit that pintö nyan. Meuhan ka meukhok lón, sabé na nyang jipeuingat aneuk inong nyoë, pikéjih.

Seungue that di ateueh rumoh, awaknyan ji-ék ateueh rambat, seupöt sabé sinan beuthat tarék uroë di lua. Trök u seuramoë reuneuen barö keuh trang, jeureujak beusoë teudong sipanyang bintéh keue, ditamong bandum cahya di lua, bah pih meunan diruy that sinan. Yasmin jileueng tika, bée ön seukée mantong beuthat ka jameuen tika nyan, halöh geu-anyeuem lé aruah Nék, meuwareuna-wareuni bak binéhjih. Alhuda ji-eue bintéh meu-uké, sira lam até jipiké keu Yasmin, sa that ngon nanjih bungong meulu nyoë.

Siat ka trök Nyakwa jak peungon jamée, ija sawak get geungui lé Nyakwa keupumeulia jamée. Yasmin trón u dapu jijak cok le jéb, siat ka jibalék lom, jiba ngon idang peunoh boh saöh lam pingan.

Awaknyan geumarit-marit, Alhuda meuri seunang that até, get that pah cit ka jimarit bahsa Aceh. Yasmin hantom jimarit lam bahsa Aceh awai kon ngon Alhuda atawa Elya, nyan keuh hayeu jirasa ban jiteupeu ka jeuet geuh jinoë.

"Pat gampông droëneuh?" tanyong Nyakwa.

"Lón awak Tamieng, Nyakwa, sidéh di Kuala Simpang gampông lón" kheun jih.

Yasmin jisék boh saöh, meunan jiböh lam ceupé habéh laju lé Alhuda.

"Nibak dum boh kayee, boh suku nyoë keuh nyang lón galak that, Nyakwa" kheun jih meu-ulang-ulang. Aléh pakon pih jipeugah

boh suku kon boh saöh, piké Yasmin, teuma hana ék jiteumanyong. Lam até jimeusyukö cit jih galak keu saöh, mangat bak jisék, adak meuboh aneueh, ka paloë lón nyoë.

"Neupajöh teuk, nyan nyang na mudah bak kamoë sinoë" seu'öt Nyakwa. Di leuen rumoh na lapan bak saöh raya, deuh bandum nibak teupat awaknyan duek.

"Bu ka masak, jak tapajöh bu ilèe, eungköt peue nyang na" pakat Umi, ka teudong gobnyan bak pintö rambat.

"Hana peue Mi, lón han jeuet tréb, mantong na janji lom uroë nyoë" kheun Alhuda.

"Beuthat, ék na ka jeuh neujak keunoë sigo hana tamakeuen sinoë, jeuet neuwoë laju lheueh bu eunteuk, hana peue" kheun Umi.

"Jak, jak, di dapu mantong tapajöh bu, bék tréb that bak tamée keunoë" geupeugah lé Nyakwa.

Awaknyan geupajöh bu bak mija di dapu. Seudeurhana makanan geutaguen lé Umi, bah pih meunan meukeunong that bak ureueng seumajöh.

"Le jamée jak saweue Umi beuno, hana seupat mumaguen" kheun Nyakwa.

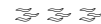
"Lón cit ka hawa that keu gulée rampoë, lón pèt laju bak lampöh Nyakwa" seu'öt Umi.

"Mangat that beulacan jih Mi" kheun Alhuda.

"Keu'eung bacut sang, leupah bacut lón boh campli".

"Hana Mi, ka pah nyoë, séb keu'eungjih" seu'öt Yasmin.

Adan leuhö ka teudeungo, 'oh lheueh bu Alhuda jiseumayang siat di seuramoë, lheueh nyan jilakée idin laju jijak gisa.



Ka sigo aleuhad Yasmin ngon Umi gisa u Banda Aceh. Le that buet kuliah payah jikarat lé Yasmin. Seupöt nyan jipiöh hék siat lheueh jipubuet seumbuet kuliah. Teungat jih keu keujadian di gampông baroësa, teungat jih keu Alhuda. Galak that jih keu boh suku. Boh suku? Oh..., nyoë keuh ban teujalokjih, teuma yakin that ka Yasmin, jih keuh nyan boh suku nyang jimeukeusud lé Alhuda. Teuma pakon cit mantong hana mangat até lón nyoë?

"Kriiing..." su taloëpön.

"Elya?...Alhuda?...Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un" Yasmin hana jiteupeue peugét lé. Leumoh dum badan ngon teut'otjih. Alhuda ka habéh umu. Sinan teulinteung bak binéh blang. Luka ban saboh badanjih, han peue tanyong soë nyang peulaku. Ajai ka tröh had ateuehjih. Ya Allah, Neupeutamong aruah jih keu asoë syeuruga...



Bandung, 3 Mo'löt 1422

(Nyakwa Ty tinggai di Kutaraja, na tom geu jak sikula di Amerika)

Droë keu droë teuh hai...

Haji Muhammad Zaini

Kruuu seumangat! Alhamdulillah syedara geutanyoë Bang Zaini ka leupah geu jak ék Haji u Baitullah bak thón 1424 H baroë. Ta meudo'a keu Haji Muhammad Zaini, Insya Allah, beu jeut keu haji mabrur. Amin. Who is next?

Niedal Barizky Jalil

Niedal Barizky ka umu sithön, baroë 11 Maret 2004. Do'a ngon khanduri ka geu peuna lé ureung syik geuh Abdul Jalil ngon Tjut Zahara bak uroë buleun 13 Maret. Beu jeut keu aneuk saleh, beu meutuwah, beu panyang umu, beu mudah raseuki, lagèe nan geuh "Ba Rizky".

Dana Evakuasi Aktivistis SURA (Suara Rakyat Aceh)

Na haba mangat na haba geumbira. Na chit haba seudéh dukacita, peu lom teu ingat nanggroë teuh lam beuncana raya. Dua droë syedara, adoë muda belia peureulèe bantuan dana evakuasi dari Medan u Malaysia. Teungku Fakriadi Al Kindi (27 thon) ngon Baromi (27 thon) aktivis SURA di Aceh Utara. Di peulét lé teuntra sabab geu bantu usaha demokrasi di nanggroë raya. Mèe na mudah ngon lapang, ta bantu seudeukah sibagoë amalan tanda setia. Neu hubungi Lilianne atawa Tjut Zahara (bulletin), dara meutuwah bela Aceh beu jaya.

Sila sampaikan berita keluarga komunitas Aceh lewat e-mail atawa surat untuk dimuat dalam Bulletin kita. Free!

ACEH: A LAND OF SILENCED AND MARGINALISED VOICES (part 1 of 2)

By: Teuku Samsul Bahri*

Introduction

The Indonesian province of Aceh, with a population of around 4 million, is located on the northern-most part of the island of Sumatra, about 1,000 miles from the Indonesia capital of Jakarta. Located strategically on the sea-lanes between South and East Asia, it became the centre of a powerful trading empire during the 16th and 17th centuries. The people of Aceh have a long history of resistance. From 1950s to 2003 the struggle for justice, peace and democracy has been a prominent feature of local politics in Aceh.

Period of time under tears from 1950s to 2003

"Where is peace, justice and democracy?", this is one of never ending daydreams of the Acehese; most expect these dreams will become reality as soon as possible - tomorrow would be better. Tomorrow however, has yet to come. Between the sixteenth century to twenty first century, different periods have come and gone. Despite some periods of peace, most of Aceh's history is flooded with the tears of her people.

From Aceh's civil war so called "Prang Cumbok" or Cumbok War in late 1940s between *Ulama* (religious groups who strongly supported by grassroots) and *Uleebalang* (aristocrat groups), that war was known as a social revolution in Aceh. And then, the Ulama led rebellion against central government in 1953, followed by Indonesian's national bloody tragedy, the "1965 massacre" over Indonesian Communist Party members and sympathisers in the new order era led by Suharto's regime: An estimated one million citizens were brutally massacred throughout the archipelago.

In 1976 in Aceh, the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh Movement) started open resistance to central government for an independent state. However, the central government responded with various military operations, with names such as Siwah Operation in late 1970s; Daerah Operasi Militer (DOM) or Military Operation Area with its bloody Red Net Operation from 1989 to 1998, and then Wibawa Operation in 1999. During these times massacres occurred, continuing to anger the Acehese as they felt central government was directly responsible. Following that, Operasi Sadar Rencong I, II and III from 2000 to 2001, then Operation Cinta Menasah, I and II in from 2001 to 2002 and at the same time also three presidential decree (INPRES No. 4 2001 and INPRES No.7 2001 and INPRES No. 1 2002) were introduced in Aceh, the latest one is "integrated operation" under martial law that was declared in 19 May 2003.

Martial law in Aceh is the biggest military operation since the Indonesian military's annexation of East Timor in 1976. The main approaches under those operations are military approaches and even getting worse with present martial law. From 1976, more than 12,000 Acehese civilians have been killed and under martial law the number of deaths, disappearances, arrests, tortures and rapes has rapidly increased.

Nevertheless, a little step for peace had been settled in Aceh since 2001 to 2002 through Humanitarian Pause in 2001 and The Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in 2002. Those steps were settled under fragile and incomprehensive peace process, because peace process were conducted without proper mechanism to keep the peace process running and did not give any space for civilians to enjoy democracy rights and peace itself.

Struggle to restore dignity in 1950s

The legitimacy of the newly independent state of Indonesia in 1945 was never accepted by the Acehese. In Aceh, during the colonial era, the Dutch appointed their fellows to benefit their interests in Aceh. The Dutch's fellows were known as *uleebalang* and occupied the land, economic and political power but enjoyed little support from the ordinary Acehese. In their quest for profit and material gain, the Dutch bankrupted the *ulama* who were supported by grassroots. The Acehese desire for self-determination emerged soon after 1945 when national revolution was quickly extended into a social revolution as Ulama groups 'confronted uleebalang. By 1946, the uleebalang had been decimated, and political, economic, and military power fell into the hands of Ulama and forces associated with it.' Since that social revolution, uleebalang - viewed as part of an aristocrat symbol and hegemonic - has no longer functioned or been recognised by the peoples of Aceh; the Ulama has become the symbol of Acehese struggle and has been respected because of its grassroots orientation.

'As early as 1953 a rebellion had broken out against the central government, Jakarta's disregard became more apparent once the centre was in position to extend its authority over the

region. Aceh was incorporated into the province of North Sumatra, and steps were taken to deprive PUSA (the ulama organization) of its control of the administration, army, and economy, and, more generally, to erode Aceh's effective autonomy.'

Dissatisfying solution and grassroots responses

The rebellion of 1953 resulted in the central government granting special autonomy to Aceh that allowed the province to enjoy special status on education, culture and religion. In addition, Aceh was granted special region status and named 'Special Area of Aceh', however, there was no real commitment to special autonomy by the central government, the role of ulama had become very limited and no longer occupied any place in the political hierarchy.

The economy of Aceh has undergone dramatic changes since new order government came to power. In 1969, when the first-five year plan was introduced, it was thought that province would be developed as an agriculture region, and moves were afoot to make it "the rice barn of Indonesia". This all changed in 1971 with discovery by Mobil Oil Indonesia of massive reserves of natural gas in North Aceh district. By 1977 a liquid natural gas (LNG) refinery had commenced production, and stage was set for the development of the Lhokseumawe Industrial Zone (ZILS).

In Aceh itself, the development of the industrial zone has had profound social and economic consequences, and autonomy status had been failed on implementation. Blatantly unequal distribution of revenue drawn from the exploitation of these resources contributed to more dissatisfaction among the population. The GAM was formed in 1976 in open resistance to Jakarta.

The separatist movement is the result of ideological disaffection, lack of welfare provision, and also due to a conflict over natural resources. Since 1976, in North Aceh was incorporated PT. Arun, a joint venture company carrying out Natural Gas and oil exploration in large scale. Mobil Oil Corporation, holds 35 percent stake in Arun, 55 percent is held by Pertamina (State-owned Oil Company), while the remaining stock is held by Japanese investors.

GAM's response to the perceived unfair exploitation of these multinational companies in Aceh was to lead a people's resistance. In turn, the Indonesian government's response was brutal: the military was mobilized against the Acehese. The extermination of GAM using repressive force carried out by Indonesian military in the period 1989 - 1998 was a desperate attempt by the Republic of Indonesia to retain its authority in Aceh. The importance of Mobil and PT Arun to the Indonesian economy is significant: the natural resources produced by Aceh contributed to central government is about Rp. 33 trillion per year, while the most revenue dispensed back to Aceh is only around 1 percent, which is Rp 600 billion in average per year.

Military operation, what for?

Military and security approaches have continued, and grassroots expressions and voices have been marginalised and silenced. During the DOM period (1989 to 1998), an estimated 1,321 people were killed; 1,958 disappeared; 3,430 peoples were tortured; 128 women were raped, and 597 houses were burnt by Indonesian security forces. In addition, 1,376 women were widowed, and 4,521 children lost both their parents.

It was obvious that the execution of DOM status itself was a 'shock therapy' to diminish the courage of Acehese people from expressing criticism, or from becoming more radical in their demands for economic, social and political rights. The method was by incessantly producing separatism issue along with military operation.

The DOM status gave the military an opportunity take political control in Aceh. Moreover, the status also provided the military with financial advantage as they were able to press the large companies operating in the province to pay for security services to protect against alleged attacks by GAM.

During the DOM era, a curfew was declared in Aceh. Between the hours of 7.00 pm to 6.00 am the shops and cafes were closed and the streets empty. A culture of fear became all pervasive that was part of every aspect of life. As an example, in 1996 I used to do camping activities when I was studying at senior high school. Sometimes the military would come to the area where we camped, and discriminated against me because I was Acehese. My non-Acehese friends were treated much better by these visiting troops: at those times, I would become afraid and angry.

The ever-ending violence and military operations in Aceh have changed the character of the people. There is now an underlying distrust of strangers, and increasing civil disobedience to any government institution - both local and central government. This is the result of a consistent effort by the security forces to bring about the disintegration of the cultural, economic and social fabric of Acehese society - fear and distrust have become almost a social norm.