

An Evolving Model for Conflict Transformation And Peacebuilding in Aceh

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Executive Summary

The Helsinki Accord, signed on August 15, 2005, was a historic turning point for the Acehese Peace Process, marking the end of an almost thirty year conflict between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI). The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the two parties is undoubtedly an important tool in the peace process. However, more has yet to be done to assure that sustainable peace, the ultimate goal of the Helsinki Accord, can be fully realized.

The arrangements emerging from the Helsinki Accord can be grouped into three categories; the special autonomy arrangement, security arrangements and arrangements involving the legal, political, economic and social environment in Aceh. This study focuses on analyzing each segment of the peace process. For a lasting peace in Aceh there will need to be success in every phase of the conflict transformation process.

Considering the relevance of theoretical frameworks of conflict resolution to Aceh, a framework can be developed to assess which areas of the peace process need improvement. The concept of multi-track diplomacy is specifically applicable as it reminds us to focus on a variety of issues that go beyond security and politics. Considering the peace process from this theoretical background the author identifies the successes and failures of the peace process in Aceh. Referring back to the three elements of the peace process, this study concludes that while the special autonomy arrangement was well negotiated and effectively applied, the short term vision of the security arrangements and failures to address broader legal, economic and social issues have created obstacles on the path to sustainable peace in Aceh.

Aceh's special autonomy arrangement was implemented through the Law on Governing Aceh and the 59 Special Regulations that provided a legal basis for the peace negotiated in Helsinki. The Acehese government was the main implementing body and while some specific provisions have not yet been acted upon, thus far the autonomy arrangements have helped the peace process move forward.

Security arrangements emerging from Helsinki were coordinated around the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM). This institution involved a variety of actors including the CMI, EU, GAM and the Government of Indonesia. AMM focused on DDR efforts while monitoring the effective functioning of mediation bodies. AMM's mandate ended after only 18 months. This ended the active intervention of the International Community. AMM not only was short lived, it also had not created an effective exit strategy before it left.

Following the end of AMM's work there was a void in DDR and reintegration efforts.

This void eventually led to the creation of the Reintegration and Peace Fund (BRA). BRA started mostly as a civil society initiative, but it was eventually co-opted by the government. BRA has been involved in new DDR efforts first through the Coordination and Communication Forum (FKK) and now through a new body called the Commission on the Sustainability of Peace in Aceh (CoSAP). The BRA has also attempted to extend the peace process in order to address the social, political, legal and economic legacy of the conflict. The BRA has addressed the economic legacy of conflict by providing financial support to former combatants and conflict victims, but has not created any other programs to support the peace process. In general the BRA has failed to evolve into an institution that can do more than just distribute funds.

It should be noted that each of these three processes has been implemented by different actors. This reality has led to questionable linkages between the different elements and poor coordination of peace-building efforts. This problem of coordination has contributed to the weaknesses demonstrated by certain aspects of the peace process. These shortcomings have contributed to the development of serious problems now facing the Acehnese including:

- The growth of the “*Komite Peralihan Aceh*” (KPA) or the Aceh Transitional Committee. This body grew out of GAM informally and purported exists to ensure the proper treatment of former GAM combatants. Recently the KPA has been linked to violent criminal acts and political intimidation.
- Internal friction within the ranks of the GAM.
- The Acehnese government’s inability to deliver basic services.
- BRA’s failure to construct a long term peace building plan.
- Lack of inclusion of the CSOs in the peace process.
- Failure to coordinate the efforts on actors from the international community.
- The push by the regional government of the Barat-Selatan (ABAS) Provinces to separate from the existing province of Aceh.

Considering these problems from the perspective gained through his analysis, the author makes a series of recommendations on how to revive the peace process and ensure its success. In order to effectively move the process on to the stage of peace building the author suggest the following actions are taken:

- BRA must be reevaluated to ensure that it is not merely a disbursement agency. It must lead the progression of reconciliation, reintegration, and sustainability of a peace program.
- Aceh needs a comprehensive strategy to combat serious crime.
- The role of KPA needs to be made clear. KPA needs to be removed from politics and either disbanded or reformed into a genuine civil society organization.
- The role of international actors needs to be studied and their efforts fit into a cohesive, unitary peace process.
- Local civil society organizations need to be brought into the peace process by the BRA, international donors, the Indonesian Government, and the GAM/KPA to ensure that the local communities have a voice in the transition to peace.