

Aceh Conflict Monitoring Update

1st – 31st October 2007

World Bank/DSF



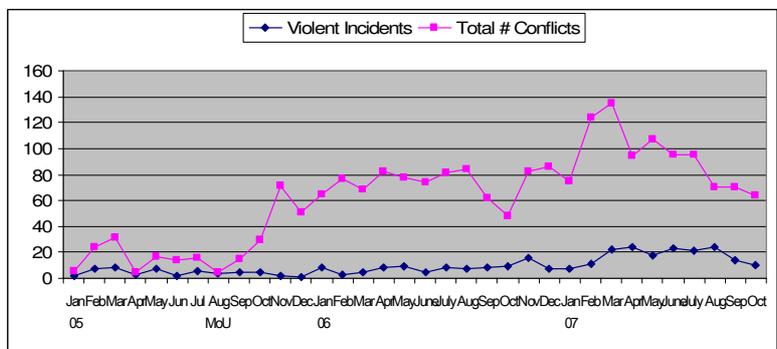
In October, the number of conflicts continued to decrease and violent incidents dropped to a low this year, with only nine reported cases.¹ This is likely due to the slowdown in activity during the last weeks of the fasting month and the Eid holidays. Nonetheless, a number of ongoing conflicts led to significant tensions. Disputes about the legalization of Partai GAM dragged on, showing the need for a proper institutional framework to mediate between GAM/KPA and Jakarta, and revealing increased divisions within GAM ranks. New incidents related to district-level conflicts showed how political stability in post-war Aceh is still fragile. KPA interference in local government affairs, as illustrated by the persisting tensions in Bireuen, could undermine the support ex-combatants have so far received from the wider population, thus threatening social cohesion. In Aceh Barat Daya, the protests against Bupati Akmal Ibrahim gained momentum, and there is a risk that the political deadlock will lead to larger-scale confrontation. Governor Irwandi Yusuf's controversial support to Abdullah Puteh also led to a clash with civil society. Finally, the grace period announced by authorities in September to surrender illegal weapons without prosecution ended on October 9th with poor results. There is little doubt that weapons are still in circulation. The disappointing outcome of the operation left unanswered the question of their number and of the degree of involvement of ex-combatants in violent crime. This Update also provides an analysis of the trends and geographic distribution of armed crime in 2007, based on data made available by the Aceh police headquarters.

Violence continues to drop during fasting month and Lebaran holidays

In October, the number of conflicts continued to decrease and violent incidents dropped with only nine reported cases (see Figure 1). This is likely due to the slowdown in activity during the last weeks of the fasting month and the Eid holidays.² No incident resulted in casualties.

The most prominent violent incident was a mass riot at a show of the comedy troupe “Empang Breuh” on October 16th in Aceh Timur, as the audience allegedly lost patience when the

Figure 1: Violent incidents vs. total # of conflicts, by month



¹ As part of an analytical support program to the peace process, the Conflict and Development Program, within the World Bank Office Indonesia, 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 analyzing the data, complemented by fieldwork where possible, in both English and Indonesian. Updates are available online at www.conflictanddevelopment.org. The dataset is available for those interested; contact Blair Palmer at bpalmer@worldbank.org or Adrian Morel at amorel1@worldbank.org. There are limitations to using newspapers to map conflict; see Barron and Sharpe (2005) “Counting Conflict: Using Newspaper Reports to Understand Violence in Indonesia”, *Indonesian Social Development Paper No. 7*. Jakarta: World Bank, available on the website.

² Serambi, one of the two newspapers used as a source for these Updates, interrupted publication during three days, from October 13th to 16th. This might also have affected the number of cases reported.

comedians did not show up on time. There are indications that the riot was orchestrated by ex-combatants because of Empang Breuh's unwillingness to pay for their "security". A number of incidents typical of Lebaran involved gangs of kids who celebrated the holidays by swarming the streets with toy weapons and stones, attacking rival groups and vehicles. Two of these incidents resulted in violence between adults, one leading to a collective fight between communities from two neighboring villages.

Jakarta opposes the legalization of Partai GAM

In October, the ongoing dispute about the legalization of Partai GAM dragged on. Although non-violent, this conflict illustrates persisting tensions between GAM/KPA and Jakarta, and has a potential to affect the peace process.

On October 1st, Andi Mattalata, the Minister of Law and Human Rights, announced to the Commission on Law of the national parliament that he opposed the legalization of Partai GAM. According to Mattalata, Partai GAM, by using GAM's name and emblem, is in conflict with the principles of the Helsinki MoU and the Law on Governing Aceh (LoGA), and represents a threat to the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia. These statements provoked an outcry from Partai GAM and KPA, who argued that the declaration was premature. Indeed, the Aceh office of the Department of Law and Human Rights, which has authority over the legalization of local parties, has not given any official opinion so far and was not consulted by Mattalata. Making a decision will be a sensitive task for the local branch of the department, as an attentive and impartial reading of the MoU and LoGA does not seem to provide a clear answer as to whether or not the use of GAM's name and emblem constitutes a breach to existing agreements (see Box 1).

Neither Partai GAM nor the central government has much to gain in the perpetuation of the stalemate. Denying the dominant GAM-affiliated organization the opportunity to express itself through democratic means would be a major blow to the peace process. At the same time, Partai GAM cannot afford to miss an opportunity to participate in the upcoming general elections. The issue underlines the current lack of a body to facilitate the resolution of post-MoU disagreements between the former conflicting parties.³

Box 1: The MoU and LoGA provisions on the use of emblems by local parties

The LoGA (Article 82) and the regulation on local parties (*Peraturan Pemerintah RI Nomor 20 Tahun 2007 Tentang Partai Lokal di Aceh* – Article 2) only prohibit the use of national symbols, Acehese regional symbols and emblems similar to pre-existing national and local parties. The MoU (Article 4.2) does prohibit GAM members to "wear uniforms or display military insignia or symbols". Nonetheless, whether the GAM flag qualifies as a military symbol is open to differing interpretations. In this respect, the debate reveals the wider issue of GAM and Jakarta's disagreements over the interpretation and implementation of the MoU.

The Partai GAM issue also indicates increasing divisions within GAM ranks. The use of GAM symbols is part of a strategy by Malik Mahmud and the historical leadership of the movement to present the party as the sole legitimate incarnation of GAM in the lead-up to the 2009 legislative elections. Although Partai GAM benefits from KPA's extensive mobilization networks, other parties might appeal to GAM constituents. Gabthat, a coalition of GAM religious figures led by Abi Lampisang, has only gathered limited support so far. On the other hand, the recently announced formation of Partai SIRA,⁴ probably led by Vice Governor Muhammad Nazar, seems to mark the failure of the efforts of some of the GAM "young turks", including

³ FKK (the Communication and Coordination Forum for Peace in Aceh) was established on April 18th of this year to fill the void left by the departure of the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM). Although the Forum has been successful in the handling of particular incidents, its mandate and capacity are too limited to efficiently mediate between the Government and GAM on broader issues.

⁴ SIRA (Aceh Referendum Information Center) is a student-led coalition that was formed in 1999, and advocated the organization of a referendum on independence in Aceh.

Governor Irwandi Yusuf, Amni Marzuki and Sofyan Dawood, to bridge the gap between the older and younger generations within the movement and to present a united front during the elections. Competition between GAM and SIRA is now likely to increase tensions and further split GAM ranks. Box 2 below provides a broad update on Aceh local political parties.

Box 2: Aceh local political parties

- The LoGA allows the formation of local political parties to contest the 2009 legislative elections. Local parties must register with the regional office of the Department of Law and Human Rights, which is responsible for verifying that they fulfill the proper requirements, as defined by articles 75 to 95 of the LoGA and the regulation on local parties (*Peraturan Pemerintah RI Nomor 20 Tahun 2007*).
- The main requirement is that local parties must have representative offices in at least 50% of Aceh districts and, in these districts, in 25% of sub-districts, with at least 30% of their representatives being women.
- The law stipulates that the verification process must start no later than 30 days after the party's registration. It has been delayed so far, mainly because the Department of Law and Human Rights did not allocate budget for this purpose in 2007. BRR has proposed to step in and provide the funds.

Table 1: Aceh local political parties (as of October 2007)

Name	Leader	Comments
<i>Parties registered to the regional office of the Dept. of Law and Human Rights as of October 2007</i>		
Partai GAM	Malik Mahmud	GAM-affiliated. Benefits from the support of KPA
Partai Gabthat	Abi Lampisang	Coalition of GAM religious figures
Partai Aliansi Rakyat Aceh Peduli Perempuan (PARA)	Zulhafah Luthfi	Civil society, with an emphasis on women's rights
Partai Rakyat Aceh (PRA)	Aguswandi	Civil society
Partai Serambi Persada Nusantara Serikat (PSPNS)	NA	NA
Partai Darussalam	Hasbi Bustamam	NA
<i>Parties that have not registered yet</i>		
Partai Aceh Aman Sejahtera (PAAS)	Ghazali Abbas Adan	Islamic party
Partai Aceh Leuser Antara (PALA)	Iwan Gayo	Advocates the formation of a separate province composed of Bener Meriah, Aceh Tengah, Gayo Lues and Aceh Tenggara districts
Other parties: PESAD, PIAN, PPRN, PADAN, Partai Lokal Aceh	NA	NA
<i>Organizations that have voiced their intention to form a local party</i>		
SIRA	Probably led by Vice Gov. Muhammad Nazar	Student-led coalition formed in 1999 to advocate the organization of a referendum on independence in Aceh
Rabithah Thaliban		Movement of Islamic students backed by a network of around 300 Islamic boarding schools

A number of issues could result in tensions between parties:

- **Competition between GAM-affiliated parties:** the probable competition between Partai GAM, Gabthat and SIRA to win the GAM vote might further increase divisions within the ex-separatist ranks.
- **Views on Islamic law:** Gabthat, PAAS and Rhabithah Talibhan promote a stricter implementation of the Islamic law, while Partai GAM is in favor of a more secular Aceh.
- **Geographic and ethnic divisions:** PALA, piloted from Jakarta by Iwan Gayo, promotes the old idea to split Aceh Tengah, Bener Meriah, Gayo Lues and Aceh Tenggara districts from Aceh to form a new province. However legitimate the arguments in favor of the administrative split (better access of these isolated areas to public services, etc.), the project is likely to raise controversy. During the conflict, some in Jakarta supported the division as part of a strategy to weaken GAM. It also has a potential to exacerbate ethnic tensions in the highlands.

Regional political conflicts continued

In October, political stability in Bireuen and Aceh Barat Daya was challenged by a number of incidents.

The September Update discussed the attack on Bireuen Vice Bupati Busmadar Ismail, and the underlying tensions between the local KPA and the GAM-affiliated Bupati Nurdin Abdul Rahman over the nomination of Nasrullah Muhammad as Sekda (District Secretary). Bupati Nurdin appointed the latter despite pressures from the KPA hierarchy who wanted to secure the position for their own man, Azhari Usman. On October 3rd, unidentified attackers threw stones at a convoy led by Azhari Usman, in Juli sub-district, east Bireuen. There is insufficient information to confirm the incident as a revenge attack by supporters of Nurdin or Busmadar. Nonetheless, it reveals the persistence of tensions. Regional affiliations play a role in the dispute: elements from west Bireuen are dominant in the KPA leadership,⁵ while Nurdin and Busmadar both originate from the eastern part of the district. However, the major issue appears to be KPA's dissatisfaction with their degree of involvement in the management of district government affairs. The KPA leadership has been insisting that government decisions, including nominations to key administrative positions such as the Sekda and the Heads of Dinas-es, should be taken through a consultative process involving the organization. Similar demands by KPA have been frequent in other GAM-led districts. While Bupatis have managed to resist or handle this kind of pressure so far, continuing demands for undue influence could negatively impair governance, may undermine the support ex-combatants have received so far from the wider society, and could lead to fresh conflicts.

In Aceh Barat Daya (Abdya), the ongoing protests against Bupati Akmal Ibrahim have been gaining momentum. On October 5th, 22 out of 25 members of the district parliament passed a vote of no confidence against H. Said Syamsul Bahri, Chairman of the parliament. Akmal's opponents have hinted that the vote of no confidence was a maneuver by the Bupati to hamper the investigation by the parliament of 208 projects allegedly attributed by his administration without proper tender processes. On October 29th, dozens of contractors under the banner of "Group 59" blocked access to the parliament for four days and three nights. The group, mostly composed of ex-combatants, demanded that the allegations be properly investigated. In the meantime, powerful enemies of Akmal were separately building support to remove him from his office. Ex-GAM commander Nasir Alue backed Akmal's campaign under the condition the latter would reward him with seats in the parliament and by supporting the formation of Partai GAM. Rafli Aris, a businessman with military connections, lent Rp. 4 billion (US\$ 440,000) to Akmal, who has failed to pay back the money (on Nasir Alue and Rafli Aris, see the September Update). Both are now plotting against the Bupati. In October, Rafli was involved in intensive lobbying in Banda Aceh and Abdya in preparation for anti-Akmal mass demonstrations, which were due to be held early November. Confrontation seems unavoidable, and might lead to violent clash between supporters. Most recent developments of the situation in Abdya will be a focus of the November Update. A World Bank study on the elections and their political aftermath, including consideration of several of the conflicts mentioned here, is due to be released early next year.

Irwandi Yusuf and the civil society clash over the former's support to Abdullah Puteh

On October 31st, GeRAK (People's Anti-corruption Movement) leaked to the press a copy of a letter sent by Governor Irwandi Yusuf to President Yudhoyono, requesting the pardon of Abdullah Puteh, former governor of Aceh. Puteh is currently serving a ten year sentence for corruption. Irwandi reacted emotionally to the leak and the ensuing protests by civil society. He personally called numerous signatories of a petition led by GeRAK, accusing them of acting irresponsibly. Ibrahim KBS, on behalf of KPA, accused civil society organizations of

⁵ Tgk Dedi, the current Head of KPA for Bireuen, and his predecessor, Darwis Jeunieb, two of the major opponents of Nurdin, are both from west Bireuen.

“disrupting peace”, and denounced a “conspiracy to undermine the legitimacy” of the Irwandi-Nazar government at a time when the latter “needs support rather than criticism”. Political considerations are likely to be at play in Irwandi’s support to Puteh. A prominent figure of the Golkar party with extensive connections in Jakarta and Aceh, Puteh could prove a powerful ally to the provincial government.

Whatever the rationale behind Irwandi’s decision, the case shows how the opening of a space for public debate and healthy democratic criticism in peacetime Aceh still faces challenges. As argued in previous Updates,⁶ these positive developments are still fragile and a lot will depend on the ways in which local authorities engage civil society. In this respect, the reaction of both Governor Irwandi and KPA in the Puteh controversy can be regarded as a significant setback.

Criminality: the authorities drive to collect illegal weapons shows poor results

The grace period announced by Aceh authorities last month to surrender illegal weapons without prosecution ended on October 9th with poor results. According to the police, only 35 firearms and several explosives were collected. All weapons were home-made (*senjata rakitan*), some of them mere air rifles modified to resemble an AK47. Moreover, most of the weapons (28) were surrendered by common villagers in Aceh Tengah and Bener Meriah, two of the districts with the lowest armed crime record (see section on armed below and the map in the annex). The expected harvest of military-type weapons in areas with a high criminal record, such as Aceh Timur, did not happen. The intensive sweeping operations planned by the police and the military after the end of the grace period turned out to be limited in scale and did not produce better results.⁷

The Communication and Coordination Forum (FKK) voiced its disappointment with the outcome of the operation. The Forum also voiced concerns over indications that more weapons were smuggled into Aceh after the decommissioning of the GAM arsenal in 2005, and that “some owners of fire arms have too little trust in the peace process to surrender them”. The police denied there was any reliable indication that new weapons were supplied from outside.⁸

Box 3: Armed robberies in October

Six armed robberies were recorded in October, including one that targeted an international NGO. On October 29th, a well organized group of as many as ten armed men raided the compound of the NGO Medair near Calang, Aceh Jaya, and left with the safe. There were no casualties. This is the third recorded armed robbery targeting an international NGO since the tsunami, after the January 26th robbery attempt on the ACF office in Teunom, Aceh Jaya, and the May 23rd hijacking of a CARDI car in Sawang, Aceh Utara.

KPA insisted again that GAM had surrendered all its arms after the MoU and that its members were fully committed to the peace process. There is little doubt that weapons are still in circulation. However, their number and the degree of involvement of ex-combatants in armed crime is still difficult to assess. Most of the few criminal cases that could be confidently attributed to ex-combatants involved rogue elements with no ties to KPA. Indeed, the high rate of criminality along the east coast may have as much to do with the high level of commercial traffic on the Banda Aceh-Medan road than with the conflict history of the area. The half-hearted sweeping operations performed by security forces also raised suspicions that the whole illegal weapons issue might have been exaggerated, possibly to justify troop augmentation.

⁶ See the August Update on the legal proceedings against eight members of the Aceh Legal Aid Foundation (LBH).

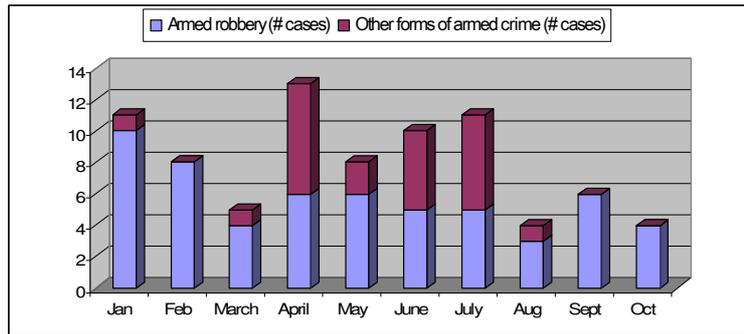
⁷ By the end of the month, the number of weapons collected had risen to 62 fire arms and explosives according to the police. Nearly all of them were home-made.

⁸ However, in an interview with ICG in September, Maj. Gen. Supiadin, the Aceh military commander, said that weapons were smuggled into Aceh from Thailand and other parts of Indonesia. International Crisis Group (2007), Asia Report No. 139, *Aceh: Post-Conflict Complications*.

Armed crime in 2007

Figure 2 shows the evolution of the number of cases of armed robbery and other crimes with use of firearms in 2007, based on data made available by the Aceh police headquarters.⁹ Other crimes with use of firearms include shootings and grenade incidents (the political violence and grenade attacks that occurred from April to July partly explain the high

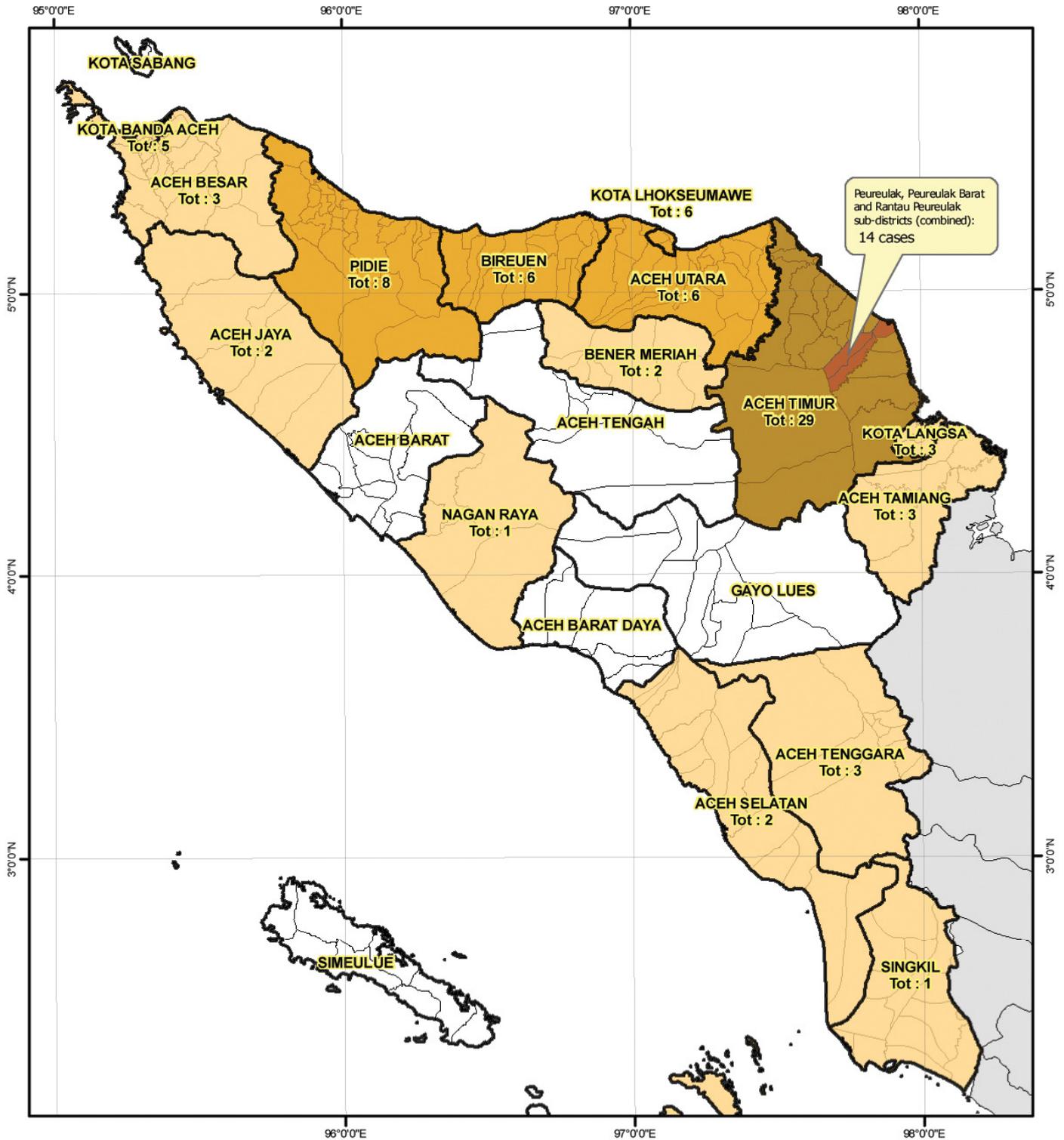
Figure 2: Armed crime in Aceh from January to October 2007



number of cases during that period). The number of armed robberies has remained fairly stable since March, ranging from four to six cases per month. Although the overall level of violence recorded in 2007 is clearly higher than that of 2006 (see Figure 1), Figure 2 does not support allegations that armed crime has been rising throughout 2007. It also indicates that the police drive to collect illegal weapons does not seem to have deterred criminal activity. The map in annex (p.7) shows the geographic distribution of cases of armed crime. Most incidents took place on the east coast along the Banda Aceh-Medan road. Aceh Timur has by far the worst criminal record, with 36% of all cases recorded by the police in the whole province this year (29 out of 80). 50% of the Aceh Timur cases (14) happened in the triangle formed of Peureulak, Peureulak Barat and Rantau Peureulak sub-districts.

⁹ Note that only data on armed robberies was made available for September and October. Furthermore, the October data is not comprehensive. Police recorded only four armed robberies this month, while six cases were reported by newspapers.

Cases of crime with use of firearms from January to October 2007



Map Scale 1 : 2,000,000
in A4 Size

Source:
Bureau of Operations,
Police Headquarters,
Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam
(Polda NAD)

Map Created on
15 November 2007 (AH & SUM)

Legend

North Sumatra

Number of Cases

- 0
- 1 - 5
- >= 6

Area with Most Cases

- Aceh Timur
- Peureulak
- Peureulak Barat
- Rantau Peureulak

Note :
Data available for the period from January to August
includes all kinds of crime with use of firearms - armed robberies,
kidnappings, murders, shootings, grenade attacks etc -
whereas data available for September and October only records
armed robberies.