

# **Aceh: Congress proceeds despite food poisoning**

Thursday 8 March 2007, by [BALOWSKI James](#) (Date first published: 3 March 2007).

Jakarta,

The first congress by the Preparatory Committee for the Acehese People's Party (KP-PRA) was disrupted on February 28 when around 75 participants were rushed to hospital with suspected food poisoning.

There was initial speculation that the poisoning was intentional, as there had been a series of earlier attempts to intimidate the congress, including the tearing down of the KP-PRA's flag outside the congress venue. However preliminary results of a police investigation suggested problems with food preparation were to blame rather than deliberate poisoning.

Most participants were released from hospital after treatment, but some remained in intensive care.

Attended by around 400 party members and supporters, the congress was held in the provincial capital of Banda Aceh from February 27-March 2. It discussed the new party's platform, principles, statutes, rules of association and program. The congress elected Aguswandi as chairperson and Thamrin Ananda as secretary-general.

Following the congress, the Acehese People's Party will be launched as the first local political party in Aceh. KP-PRA, which is campaigning on issues of poverty, unemployment and foreign domination of Aceh's economy and rich natural resources, has already established branches in 16 regencies and municipalities across Aceh.

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