

Resolving Nationality Conflict in Aceh

Friday 21 October 2005, by [Segera](#) (Date first published: July 2005).

A document from Segera, acronym for Solidarity of People Movement for Aceh.

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The conflict in Aceh has been going for a long time, precisely since the New Order came to power. At the time, using the reason to secure Aceh from the separatists, the New Order government sent troops to Aceh, and launched military operations on and off under several code-names. It started from Operation Siwa, Operation Red Net to Operation Rencong Aware, all of which are known as a package of military operations called the Military Operation Area (DOM); it is also the special status of Aceh that has been maintained up until today, the ruling time of the reformation regime. The deployment of large number of the Indonesian Armed Force (TNI) troops during the New Order were not actually meant to hunt the Free Aceh Movement or the Separatists (GAM/GPK), but mostly to secure the international capital (Mobil Oil) in Aceh. The industrial complex in North Aceh is the biggest capital-intensive territory in Aceh.

Since the mid 80s, Indonesia, including Aceh, started to develop its manufacturing industry due to the fall of international oil price and the decrease in oil and gas production. The percentage of oil, gas (liquefied natural gas - LNG), and other oil and gas products to the total export value did go down from 70.2% (1976) to 23.5% (1996), but the oil and gas industry is still the mainstay of Indonesian economy. Japan is the biggest importer of oil and gas from Indonesia, particularly from Aceh.

In 1971, the Mobil Oil conducted gas field exploration in Lhokseukon, North Aceh. Two years after, at the end of 1973, a transaction contract between the government of Indonesia and Japan was signed. In 1974, to build the gas extraction facility in Arun, the Japanese government gave 31.8 billion rupiah (US\$ 106 million using the exchange rate at the time) through the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund, Japan. To increase liquid gas production, Chiyoda Corporation and Mitsubishi Corp, signed a contract to build a factory in the 1980s. Most of the liquid natural gas (LNG) and all of the liquid petroleum gas (LPG) produced by PT Arun is exported to Japan.

In 1973 and 1974, Japan was hit by the "oil crisis". The price of crude oil went up so high that the use of new and alternative source of energy became necessary. Besides that, the Japanese capital did intend to make an investment or to export a giant plant facility by using fund resulted from the high economic growth caused by the Vietnam War. Therefore, it may be said that the building of LNG facility in Aceh was for the sake of Japanese capital, not the Indonesian people, let alone the Acehnese. For this reason, the Indonesian state had much interest to send troops to Aceh to secure their capital; thus they always find their justification to stay for long in Aceh by using security

reason.

Aceh, which is endowed with abundant natural resource, has been exporting its produce mainly to Japan; the export commodities are, among others, oil and gas, timber, shrimps, palm oil, and mangrove coal. It has been said that Aceh alone can contribute 10% the national budget. According to the Indonesian newspaper, Suara Pembaruan, (November 30, 1999) the Indonesian government receive state income devisa at least 31 trillion rupiah from Arun operation. The income is sharply in contrast with Aceh's provincial budget of 150 billion rupiah a year; or, to put it in another way, only half percent of Aceh's income contribution is returned by the central government. Therefore, the Acehnese young generation is faced with the question of whether the abundant natural resource in Aceh's soil is used for the welfare of the Acehnese people? That is, to increase the quality of education, health service, and other living standards?

Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (the current Indonesian president) spoke on an Australian radio show on November 14, 1999. He said that the TNI must always remain in Aceh to protect the LNG and oil extraction project, and that Aceh is the most important territory in Indonesia so that the TNI must be able to give guarantee to the foreign capital that their investment in Aceh is safe: this is the real and main reason behind the implementation of Military Operation Area (DOM) in Aceh.

Table of share ownership of PT Arun

Shareholder	Share Percentage
Pertamina	55 %
Mobil Oil Indonesia	30 %
Japan Indonesia LNG Co	15 %

The Military Operation Area (DOM) which had lasted for more than 10 years during the New Order's rule created various negative impacts on both economy and politics. The condition has completely shutted the door to democracy and crushed every possible political difference. Massacres and mass graves became common phenomena in Aceh. It was also worsened by the restriction of press under the press Law of the New Order regime.

Post-Reformation

For the Acehnese, the reformation period meant the uncovering of humanitarian tragedy and, as its peak, the revocation of Military Operation Area (DOM) on August 7, 1998. The province has been historically laden with dark records of violence and blood-shed. The Red Net Operation launched to fight the GAM - also labelled as the Brutal Troublemaker's Movement (GPK) by the government - since the 1989 had really physically and mentally paralyzed the Acehnese people. One by one people were missing and never to return. A decade under the Military Operation Area had rampaged almost the entire socio-economic and political aspects of the society and brought Aceh into a very backward position.

The reformation had forced the government to revoke DOM in Aceh, but that did not mean that Aceh had been set free by the yoke of militarism. A number of military operations were re-launched. Thus the government did not learn from the failure of DOM that had caused so many lives and that had instead awakened Acehnese nationalism and washed away Indonesian nationalism from the Acehnese people's heart.

The revocation of DOM had opened up more space for liberal democracy and provided the GAM a chance to consolidate themselves. The central state was weakened by intense political pressure of the Indonesian pro-democracy movement against the TNI. The GAM activists could then move more freely to consolidate and to create a political instability in Aceh; student protests became widespread; student organizations were mushrooming on every campus; the Acehnese people gained their courage to openly fight against the government. For the Acehnese, the reformation is like a drop of water amidst the hot desert. Students kept consolidating themselves by organizing the Congress of Acehnese Students and Youth (KOMPAS) which would later gave birth to the Information Centre for Referendum in Aceh (SIRA).

The facts on the awakening of Acehnese national liberation movement and the rise of independence demand could be seen from the success of two million people mass gathering in Banda Aceh, 1999, facilitated by SIRA; Anti-Military-Territorial-Command general strike that involved all sections of society like the ulamas (muslim clerics), students, peasants, workers, students and villagers and citizens; congress of Acehnese people and students; night of prayer in mosques and villages for the death of Safi'i Abdullah; and several other mass activities. In general, during the period of 1998-1999, almost all institutions and judiciary bodies in Aceh, especially in district and village level, experienced temporary death. All formal bodies left by Suharto's regime were practically disobeyed by the people. Along with it, came and returned the challenging self-governance institution of traditional governance bodies or village governance bodies to replace the existing governmental functions - dual power situation existed.

Suharto's fall did not only open up democratic space in Aceh, but also returned the ties of commonality and of collective experience (collective psyche) in the form of the rebirth of Acehnese people's national character and collective culture. Acehnese sentimentality strengthened while Indonesian nationalism no longer had place in the heart of the Acehnese people. The star and crescent flag identical with GAM's flag was accepted as a common identity and bond of the Acehnese people. All symbols related to Indonesia were seen as foreign culture and colonizer. The Acehnese seemed to regain their national entity in the form of language, religion, customs, and other cultural symbols. Acehnese Nationalism is a progressive nationalism because it became the energy that revitalized the stamina and the spirit to carry out a new resistance. The raising of star and crescent flag on all corners of cities, on the streets, at houses, on city walls was a common sight; while on the streets, graffiti demanding referendum and independence, were a common thing to be done by Acehnese youths. For the Acehnese, independence is near or according to the saying at the time "...after the end of a cigarette". That was the atmosphere and the people's belief. It got stronger when Timor Leste seceded and successfully declared itself as a separate country from Indonesia through the Referendum. The secession of Timor Leste inspired and strengthened Acehnese people's spirit to take to the street and to put forward the same demand for Aceh. The referendum demand was particularly carried out by civil society's elements such as students, ulamas, academics, that were supported by the Acehnese poor. The rise of democratic movement didn't only happen in district level towns but also to rural villages that were hardly reachable by the media & telecommunication network. Oral communication has proved to be able to overcome space & time.

This demand was later manifested by the Acehnese into a form of rebellion against the Indonesian government. The Acehnese rebellion could be divided into two: armed rebellion led by GAM and democratic rebellion carrying referendum demand led by the student movement and the people. The Acehnese people's resistance had never been met with democratic and peaceful means. Megawati-Hamzah Haz's government had instead collaborated with the military to deal with the conflict in Aceh. The use of military approach and solution became the second mistake committed by the central government in dealing with the conflict in Aceh.

The re-strengthening of the New Order forces in political and economic platform was noted by their success in consolidating the political forces in the parliament and in influencing policies in Aceh during the Abdurrahman Wahid's administration. New Order's style of violence-use was against used to suppress the independence demand. Military operation based on the presidential instruction, both legally and illegally, was conducted under such code names as Operasi Rajawali, Operasi Siwa, Operasi Sadar Rencong, Operasi Meunasah, meant to hunt down and kill the armed struggle and the pro-democracy civilian groups. In another way, the government also gave a concession of the manipulative special autonomy and the Islamic Syari'ah Law implementation, which is none other than an Arab-ization process.

The rise of Mega-Hamzah regime with the support of the reactionary old-political-forces (The military and Golkar party) and the fake reformists extended the list of massacre victims among the Acehnese workers and peasant. The First and Second presidential instruction, which reflected military domination under Mega-Hamzah's regime, was used as a means to regain the civilian elites' power in the parliament and to wipe out the armed struggle and the Acehnese civilian democratic movement. The high concentration of large number of troops particularly in capital-intensive territories and GAM's main territories had put back democracy face to face with rifle barrels.

The demand for independence and the rise of Acehnese democratic movement are not only an interesting topic of discussion on the socio-historic context of the birth of a "nation", but also imply political consequences. The minimal support of the Indonesian democratic movement in general to the Acehnese oppressed people's democratic struggle reflected the significant presence of chauvinist-nationalism among the democratic movement in general. The rising and widespread resistance of the Acehnese people cannot be explained solely by the formation of sense of nationalism and common character in the form of collective psyche; but, more importantly, on the socio-historic factors from which such collective psyche arises. It is impossible for such sense of nationalism and collective psyche (common culture) to suddenly come about from nowhere.

Records of civilian victims during the security operation after the revocation of DOM in Aceh

Number of Victims

Period	Murder	Torture	Arrest	Rape	Sexual Abuse	Arson
Operasi Wibawa	9	82	78	-	-	-
OSR -	446	608	192	3	-	1031
OSR - II	200	126	48	2	-	408
OCM - I	294	653	382	0	2	801
Total	949	1469	700	5	2	2240

Two years after the revocation of DOM, violence still became a part of Acehnese people daily lives. Precisely on June 2, 2000, the central government under Abdurrahman Wahid's presidency agreed to stop violent conflict in Aceh and to give humanitarian aid to victims of violence; thus the first and second humanitarian pause came about. The First Humanitarian Pause was effective for three months, from June 2, 2000 to September 2, 2000; followed by the Second Humanitarian Pause that was effective since September 15, 2000 to January 15, 2001. Humanitarian Pause I and II did not make significant contribution in stopping the violence in Aceh, this was due to the absence of agreement to withdraw non-organic troops (troops from outside Aceh) from Aceh. Therefore violences still haunted people's lives. Instead of reducing its troops, the TNI deployed more troops in Aceh and set up more military posts along the road from Aceh to Medan.

Record of civilian victims of violence and Human Right violation during Humanitarian Pause I and II

Period	Murder Victim	Torture Victim	Arbitrary Arrest	Sexual Abuse	Number of Victim	Number of Building Arson	Number of Armed Clash
Pause I	47	56	25	0	128	516	17
Pause II	211	480	340	2	1033	516	57
Total	258	536	365	2	1161	1032	74

In 2001, the humanitarian pause, which was expected to open the way for peace, were in a critical state. Many military top brass showed disagreement to the peace policy so that the Pause I and II was in practice sabotaged by the TNI/Police themselves. Finally, to accommodate the criticism of some figures in power who since the beginning showed their objection against peaceful solution, and along with the weakening political power of the president, Abdurrahman Wahid, the government passed a presidential instruction no. IV, on April 11, 2001 that regulated Comprehensive Steps toward the Resolution of Aceh's Problem. According to this instruction, the government must use an approach that takes into account some aspects; that is, politics, social, law, security, civilian order, and information and communication involving the society. In its implementation, of the six aspects mentioned in the instruction, only one - the security aspect - that was vigorously carried out; while the other aspects, such as the economic and social ones, which were closely related with physical and mental rehabilitation, were left behind. This Presidential Instruction no. IV was later continued by the Presidential Instruction no. VII, 2001, under Megawati's presidency.

Period	Murder	Torture	Arrest	Sexual Abus	Arson
Inpres No VII/2001	875	478	270	15	417

Period	Murder	Kidnapping	Arrest	Sexual Abuse	Torture	Arson
2000	529	115	421	2	699	1255
2001	1006	133	531	18	662	1853

Although Megawati's government had not ended the way to peace, those figures in power who were not happy with peaceful resolution in Aceh were getting stronger influence. Under the shadow of this agreement, the government little by little put forward the security approach that reached its peak in the reactivation of Iskandar Muda Military Territory Command which virtually covers the entire province of Aceh on February 2, 2002. This step taken by the government raised many questions. In one side the government conducted a campaign on the peaceful resolution of Aceh conflict through negotiation, while at the other side the government kept using security approach and military means by collaborating with the military. The latter was a concession yielded by civilian elites to the military that had helped the rise of Megawati to power.

Entering the end of 2002, precisely on December 9, the government returned to a peace agreement as agreed by both parties (GAM and the Government of Indonesia). The peace agreement was put into words in the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA). The peaceful situation was so cherished by the Acehnese; while the TNI/Police was still committing provocations to fail the agreement. During CoHA, both parties supposedly reduced their armament, withdrew their troops and military equipment. However, the TNI did not comply to this; it instead added its troops and repaired and constructed fortification on every newly built posts, including the military post at University Syiah Kuala campus in Banda Aceh and Al-Muslim campus in Bireun. Another kind of

provocation masterminded by the TNI is the mobilization of militias to burn down the Joint Security Committee's office; it happened in several places such as in Central Aceh, East Aceh - Langsa, and at other parts of the province. The peace only lasted until May 2003.

Martial Law

Before the government decided to implement Martial Law, both the TNI and Police had made some preparations - technical preparation, logistic provision, preparation of battle equipment and armament - for initiating a military operation in Aceh. While waiting for the instruction from above, several elite units of TNI had made "anti-guerilla guerilla warfare" as their main education material. In the Kopassus elite unit, for instance, about 15 companies were prepared and trained in Kopassus Education Centre in Batuajar. As many as 700 personnel were trained in Batuajar. The same applied to the Kostrad unit that introduced a new special unit, which had had anti-guerilla training near Karawang. Besides battle training, the TNI also prepared battle tanks to be shipped to Aceh.

Besides that, the TNI army had prepared a special unit to add their military power in Aceh. The special unit that has three-fold ability was named Raider. This unit had been prepared since a decade ago, but they were used firstly during the military operation in Timor Lorosae, and secondly, during the second Martial Law in Aceh. As many as 10 infantry battalions of Raider was sent to Aceh in stages. Preparations had also been made by the TNI navy that had been on the water off Bireun 5 days before the Martial Law. On the first day of the operation, amphibious tanks were landed on Samalanga-Bireun.

The Police had surprisingly prepared themselves ahead. As many as 4000 pieces of AK-101 and 102, the variants of AK-47, were bought from Russia with the total value approaching 17 billion rupiah. Meanwhile, 10,000 AK-2000s were bought from China with the total value of 33 billion rupiah. Those weapons were purchased to arm the Brimob (paramilitary) personnel that would be sent to Aceh.

The TNI air force had also prepared themselves with various kinds of fighters to be flown to Aceh. Some fighters, such as OV-10 Bronco, Hawk 100/200, T-33A-10T-Bird and F-86 Sabre can carry light bombs of 200 kilograms. The Air Force also used spy plane. It was the OV-10 Bronco that did the bombing on the first day of the Martial Law in Aceh Besar territory. Other aircrafts used in Aceh are carriers such as Hercules and Vocer.

On May 19, 2003, Megawati's governments passed a presidential decree no 28/2003 on the implementation of joint operation in Aceh under the Martial Law (DM) status as a response to the withdrawal from peace agreement (CoHA) in the Tokyo meeting. The Martial Law that lasted for a year had brought all kinds of social crises, of which the worse is the very large number of Human Rights violation in Aceh. In a report by the National Commission of Human Rights, within six months of the Martial Law, there had been a gross violation of Human Rights perpetrated by both the TNI/Police and GAM; besides that, gross violation of Human Rights had also happened against the humanitarian law.

Record of Martial Law Victims from May 19, 2003 to November 19, 2003

Period	Murder	Torture	Arrest and Kidnapping	Sexual Abuse	Rape	Building Arson
DM I	396	217	120	7	18	803
DM II	203	18	285	-	-	18
Jumlah	599	235	305	7	18	821

Thus, since the one-year implementation of Martial Law in Aceh, the number of victims of military violence or of Human Rights violation totaled 1164 lives. The number did not include victims claimed by the Regional Martial Law Authority (PDMD); as many as 2,879 suspected GAM were captured, 1,798 of them are war prisoners, while the rest 1,954 surrendered and were claimed as GAM.

Since the prolonged armed conflict, the number of poor people in Aceh reached 1.2 million, or 30.43% of 4.1 million Acehnese. In 2002 it increased to 1.4 million (33.43%). While within the period of 2003-2004 until the one-year implementation of Martial Law, the number of poor people rose to 44.32%, and it has not included the homeless kids whose number reach 150,000.

Before the conflict in Aceh, people who live below the poverty "only" range around 26.50% or 1.1 million people. There are three areas with the highest poverty; those are Aceh Utara Municipal with 413,935 people living in poverty, South Aceh whose 39.82% of its total population live in poverty, East Aceh with 26,797 poor people (42.34%), and Pidie with 206,179 (40.33%) of its population in poverty.

Since the implementation of Martial Law in Aceh, as many as 800 school building units were burnt down by unknown people. A huge amount of money is needed to rebuild them; approximately 800 billion rupiah was needed to rebuild based on the assumption of 1 billion rupiah for the rebuilding of one school unit. The large number of school arsons caused the neglect of thousands students; they were also neglected because of having to follow their parents whom were instructed by the Martial Law Authority (PDMD) to leave their home village.

The failure of CoHA and the strengthening of GAM's armed power were used as a reason by the government to implement the Martial Law. Government's campaign to reduce GAM's fire power with the Martial Law did not come into reality. Within a year of Martial Law, not a single GAM's commander had been captured or neutralized. TNI's massive presence in Aceh had close down the democratic space. Besides GAM, many student organizations, mass organizations, and NGOs were targeted by the military operations, as stated by the Martial Law Authority on the first day of the Martial Law: Student's Solidarity for the People (SMUR), Central Information for Referendum in Aceh (SIRA), Acehnese People's Democratic Struggle Front (FPDRA), and Kontras-Aceh were designated as target of operation. This situation left the military violence to hold sway without any control by anyone.

Large scale troop deployment in Aceh had made Aceh into a military city. Almost 45% of TNI's existing force were deployed to Aceh so that the ratio of Acehnese citizens to the TNI troops in Aceh was 20 to 5 of Aceh's total population of 4.1 million. In a short period of time, as many as 25 districts in Aceh that were previously administered by civilians were replaced by active TNI's personnel; this also happened in several villages. The restoration of military power was strongly felt in Aceh. Moreover, Aceh was also restricted for people from outside Aceh. The Martial Law Authority (PDMD) had also set up a media center as the only source of information in Aceh. The regulation of red-white identity card was also a way to isolate Acehnese wherever they were.

Under the Martial Law, civilian freedom to conduct political activity was banned based on security stability purpose. However, the condition did not stop the government from holding the national election for legislative and executive candidates in Aceh in 2004.

Post-Tsunami Aceh

The earthquake and tsunami that hit Aceh at the end of 2004, precisely on December 26, had taken away more than 300,000 Acehnese lives, not including the other hundred of thousands who were

lost. The tragedy had destroyed the infrastructure and superstructure of the Acehnese people. The biggest tragedy of the century had also created polemics amidst the public both in Aceh, national, and international.

Humanitarian aids that have continuously been flowing in from all over the world is based on the sense of humanity that breakthrough any barriers made by the ruling class of the country. Tsunami had also destroyed all kind of barriers among the lives of people in this soil: religious differences, race and ethnicity, politics, and nationalism were washed away and united under a common humanitarian spirit for the Acehnese people who have been suffering from such huge disaster.

Tsunami disaster is not actually a new thing in the world. Many countries had experienced it, Indonesia is a country that is prone to Tsunami, considering the many geological plates that meet in the Indonesian archipelago. Before the Tsunami hit Aceh, similar phenomenon had hit the island of Flores although with much less intensity than that in Aceh. However, the government seemed to not learn from what had happened in the territory and in other countries so that the dealing of tsunami disaster in Aceh appeared to be so slow or perhaps deliberately engineered by the government, particularly the local government that are practically dominated by the military. The Tsunami disaster, the one year martial law followed by the civil emergency status was substantially the same as the Martial Law. This situation creates a vacuum of power in Aceh.

Tsunami, Global Solidarity, and Responses of Imperialist Countries

The Tsunami disaster has raised global solidarity. People in developed countries urged and criticized their own governments, which they saw as being slow and thrifty in helping countries hit by the tsunami. This is one factor that put forward the idea of giving moratorium, grant, new loans, and other assistance to the disaster stricken countries.

Despite the positive aspect of people in developed countries pressuring their government to be "benevolent"; several empirical facts showed that this "benevolent act" must be assessed more critically. The experience of earthquake in Iran showed that promises of aid, either in the form of soft loan, grant, moratorium, or other kinds of assistance, are mostly lip services. Of the promised US\$ 1 billion dollar loan aid to the Iranian government, the actual realization hardly reached 10% of the promised amount. The same thing experienced by a number of Latin American countries that were hit by hurricane a couple of years ago. Worsely, this competition to be "benevolent" is laden with developed countries' political interest to avoid being seen as thrifty and to maintain their influence in the international politics.

Besides that, the offer is only for a short-term moratorium of 1-2 years, which actually does not mean anything to such countries as Indonesia that has been deeply trapped by foreign debt. The gesture further loses its significance when the imperialist countries like the US, the Netherlands, Japan, and England - that have exploited the Acehnese land for decades - took minimal stance similar to other creditors. The same applies to international financial institutions that have also enjoyed decades of profiting from its loan politics to Indonesia. Foreign aid in the form of grants from imperialist countries hardly contributes 20% of the total value of the promised aid commitment.

For the most part, the developed countries are more enthusiastic in giving new loans with some conditions. That is the essence of imperialist countries. For the Indonesian government who always obeys the imperialist countries' interests, the disaster in Aceh a long waited gift from imperialist countries. According to a research by Sritua Arif; of each US dollar of loan, as much as eight US dollars must be paid at the end of the loan period; other opinion stated that of each US dollar of loan value, five US dollars must be paid. This is the reality, although the entire loan package was labeled as low interest or interest free. The reason behind this is the fact that all foreign debt, except for IMF's loan, is in the form of aid program, of which the conditions are that the whole equipment, raw

material, contractor, and consultant must originate from the lending country. The price has obviously been marked-up from the market price. Moreover, IMF's loans do not contain any productive character because it comes in the form of stand by loan, which can only be used for monetary stabilization whenever the state's foreign reserve is insufficient. Fees and interests keep accumulating although the loan is not used. That is exactly what happened during the recent CGI forum, in which Indonesia was given a new loan of US\$ 3.3 billion.

Therefore, the government of US, the Netherlands, Japan, and England, as well as the international financial institutions (IMF, SB, and ADB) must cancel all foreign debts unconditionally! Other creditor countries must give debt moratorium until people's welfare is realized! The United Nations must also be pressured by the developed countries to give grants in the form of earthquake detection technology, which is very needed by earthquake-prone countries like Indonesia, Thailand, India, and Sri Lanka. To the international community, the governments of developed countries, and the UN, we demand your commitment to the Acehese people who have not only been victims of natural disaster, but also victims of war - we demand that you pressure the government of SBY and GAM to agree on an indefinite cease fire! This indefinite cease fire in the short term is very crucial in opening up the way for faster distribution of humanitarian aid in Aceh; while in the long term must be followed by another negotiation talk to yield a democratic resolution to the conflict in Aceh.

What's being faced today by Human Right defender in Aceh?

The human right activists often faced human right violence by the military and armed groups, such as; intimidation, arbitrary arrested, kidnapped, abduction, torturing, and even force elimination. The hoped for protection from these risks had been the main political problems faced by human right activists today. The separatists had been labelled toward any activists who got involved in human right activities and critically spoke out about Indonesian government's policies. International and Indonesia democratic movement's solidarity have been the only hope for widen the campaign about freedom of speech and activities in Aceh.

Referendum as the way out for the Acehese people

Basing our analysis on the socio-historical standpoint, we consider that the rise of national liberation movement and the demand of the Acehese people to secede from Indonesia are natural and logical. The demand for independence is a solution favoured by the Acehese people that have experienced being forced and threatened under the gun barrels to remain part of Indonesia during the New Order. The demand does not come from a handful of people but from the vast Acehese society consisted of peasants, workers, urban poor, ulama, and academics. It has been fought for by using democratic political means like Mass Gathering, mass action, and peaceful general strike. We even allow the use of armed struggle to fight against an anti-democratic regime that openly commits violence to its people, in order to avoid further massacres against the Acehese people.

The rise and the birth of a nation is a process of interaction among people that have common experience in struggling against the occupying force. This is the main foundation of the rise of Indonesian nation. When voluntary unity and mutual interaction is disturbed, the social contract of the unification has to be reassessed. Therefore, self-determination is a natural and logical outcome of this, and even one of the most basic human rights. We think that the rise of Acehese people's nationalism must be seen as a resistance by the exploited workers and peasants, the marginalized urban poor and middle class against an anti-democracy regime that oppresses and brutally takes away the political and economic rights of its citizens.

The Acehese people have the right to draw conclusion and to formulate a solution for their future as a nation, based on a voluntary concession because the past decision to unite with Indonesia was also based on a voluntary concession. Therefore, the Acehese people's right for self determination either through Referendum or Independence or Integration into Indonesia must be respected as a democratic practice that must be supported by all pro-democracy groups and individuals. Referendum is a democratic means to decide two political options in Aceh.

The rise of democracy in the center state - Indonesia - is an absolute condition to the feasibility of referendum in Aceh; because without democratic rights and with the existence of an anti-democracy regime, a self-determination right is almost deemed impossible. Therefore, both the national liberation movement in Aceh and the pro-democracy movement in Indonesia must fight for referendum as a practice of democracy; because the Acehese and the Indonesian people are facing a common problem that requires different solution; like two vessels in the sea that are dealing with one single pirate - the government of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono - Jusuf Kalla.

To uphold democracy in Indonesia, the Acehese must work hand in hand with the Indonesian people, and vice versa. Although the solutions between the two people differ at this stage, the unitary state of Indonesia is not final; and we hope that the Indonesian people will fight the chauvinist-nationalists.

To attain Referendum, the Acehese people urgently need to form a people's unity front that consists of various political elements in Aceh. The unity front will become a representation of the Acehese people, as well as a model for the alternative government towards referendum. Besides using front tactics, Acehese people's other urgent task is to form a political party as a means for Acehese's people political means. Therefore, unity front and political party will be the means of the Acehese people in conducting their political activity to fight for their ideal.

In the post Tsunami period, the Acehese people's urgent task has not changed. However, under very repressive condition after the implementation of Martial Law and Civil Emergency, the Acehese people must also demand the opening up of democratic space which had been suppressed in Aceh. The opening up of democratic space will happen if the Indonesia government revokes emergency status in Aceh, followed by the withdrawal of non-organic TNI/Police troops.

The revocation of emergency status may be realized if the GAM and the Indonesian government continue the peace talk while agreeing on an indefinite cease fire under international supervision. The involvement of international community in pressuring for cease fire in Aceh is very important, considering the destruction by natural disaster in Aceh, and government's decision to continue the war. Peace talk or negotiation is not an instant process that can satisfy both parties' political interest, but a simultaneous and continuing process to arrive at a peaceful situation and at a comprehensive resolution towards democracy - referendum.

The negotiation must involve all political spectrums in Aceh. The ideal negotiation would not only be held by the GAM and the Indonesia government, but also involve the civilians and its sectoral or professional representations. The Acehese civilians are not political object, but must be a subject, as a decision maker, that will determine the Acehese future. Therefore, their involvement in determining the aim of the struggle is very important.

Once again, to achieve referendum, the Acehese must fight hand in hand with the Indonesian people to uphold democracy and to form a unity front as a vehicle of Acehese people's struggle. They also have to forge solidarity both to the Indonesian people and to the international to gain support for the struggle in Aceh. In this chance, we hope the international community can actively takes role in supporting the demoratization process in Aceh; we also hope for your support for a

referendum in Aceh.

Aids and assistance for the reconstruction of Aceh that had just hit by Tsunami are flowing in from many international groups and individuals, including the United Nation. The United Nation and the international community have a responsibility to create a situation in Aceh that is conducive for the reconstruction process. The Acehnese people will very much hope that the international community can take part in pressuring the Indonesian government to stop military aggression in Aceh and to start resolving nationality conflict in Aceh through peaceful and democratic way. War and military aggression does not only happen in Iraq, but also in Aceh. We therefore hope that, amidst the many wars that are currently going on in the world, the anti-war movement will also put more light to the war in Aceh that have caused the loss of many lives.***