

The Acehnese

The Acehnese Society of North America

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Aceh 2004: Zero Prospect for Peace?

By: Aguswandi*

New Year, 2004, has been there for two months, but Aceh is as gloomy as ever. There is no sign of any significant change to the situation in Mecca's veranda in the forthcoming year. It is very obvious all the odds (violence and suffering) will continue as before. In fact the Acehnese started 2004 with the news of 11 deaths from a New Year's eve bomb blast. This closely followed the killing of one of Indonesia's best journalists, Ersa Siregar.

All of these odds actually started last year when Megawati decided to impose martial law in Aceh on 19 May 2003. Suddenly the Acehnese woke up to find themselves in the middle of Indonesia's biggest war since the time of Suharto's 'New Order'. The situation is now similar to that of five years ago when Aceh was a 'military operations area' known as DOM. Many Acehnese who have fled Aceh say it is even worse than DOM.

The decision to begin the new military operation was not unpredictable. What many cannot understand is the readiness of the supposed civilian government to give a blank cheque to the military in Aceh. Megawati is not Soeharto, yet she is the only civilian president in the post-Soeharto era to hand Aceh over to the Indonesian military again. She is the most militaristic president since Soeharto in terms of her policy towards Aceh. This is in contrast to Gus Dur, who was prepared to search for political solutions. His decision to open dialogue with the Acehnese and GAM transformed the conflict from a militaristic one to a political one.

Gus Dur's approach enabled many to talk about the root causes of the conflict. It also reduced the amount of violence. The main discourse of the conflict then focused on vicious injustice, impunity, militarism in Indonesia, and the centralistic character of the national government. It recognised the need for a constructive dialogue to tackle the underlying cause of the conflict. Under Gus Dur, the Indonesian people and the Acehnese at least had space to discuss the roots of the problem.

And then Megawati came. Through imposing martial law in Aceh, she is becoming the most responsible person for transforming the Aceh conflict back to one which was militaristic in character. This militarisation of the conflict has led to a shift of the main discourse of Aceh conflict. Whereas the conflict was basically a political one, now it is shifted to a military one in which GAM and the TNI are becoming the main actors.

As a result, news stories about Aceh now simply describe the death toll, the killing of GAM, the loyalty parade, the fantastic story of the military operation, the heroism of soldiers. And the war is becoming, or has become, self-perpetuating with the participants fighting because they have to fight. Jakarta's soldiers have to fight because their generals have sent them to Aceh, and GAM have to fight because they see no other option.

Militarism cannot solve the problem of Aceh. It cannot and it will not. In fact, Indonesian militarism in Aceh has been the main reason for the collapse of Indonesian nationalism in Aceh and provoke the rise of Acehnese nationalism. It is one of the main reasons for the rise of separatist sentiment among the Acehnese. It is the reason why many young Acehnese choose to fight and join GAM. The spectre of separatism was only a spectre, it became real only after Aceh was handed over to the military.

Unfortunately, Jakarta is turning a blind eye to this fact. Militarism has been the departure point for Megawati's policy toward Aceh. Now Megawati is forgetting the tears she wept during the previous general election when she promised to stop the bloodshed in Aceh.

In this militarised culture, the story being told is always a fantastic one. The generals promised a quick victory. They said it would take only a few months to deal with the small number of

armed separatists. But now more than seven months have passed and in military terms the operation is going nowhere. No GAM top commanders have been captured and there is no sign that the operation will end soon. But the generals still insist that the operation is very successful.

Even if all the present members of GAM are killed and the military establishes control, the problems of Aceh will not end. The underlying problem is not about those few thousand locals using guns and weapons and persistently demanded the independence for Aceh. It is much more than that, because it is the problem of Indonesia itself. The problem lies in the fact that Indonesia cannot give hope for the Acehnese. The present military operation has even further killed the hope that some people in Aceh still have. The conflict in Aceh is basically the problem of politics in Indonesia, the inability of Indonesia state to transform them selves to be more democratic and less militaristic state.

It is unlikely that the political transformation will happen in Indonesia soon. This is not even in this 2004. Although this is a general election year, Indonesia politics is still very messy. As the result it is no hope for the Aceh problem can be solved easily. Beside Aceh is too far away for many people in Jakarta to really care about. It is not a big deal for Jakarta and there is no hope that Aceh will become a big deal in 2004.

Now Aceh is the place where the deaths of 10-15 people a day are seen as normal and acceptable. At least 1000 people have been killed in Aceh since martial law begun. Jakarta is too busy to account for these deaths; they are too busy with preparing for the election. And since many of those who have died, and will die, are people who are not potentially to be the important voters in the general election, they are even less relevant to many in Jakarta. And I guess there will be no more tears for Aceh by politician in this year general election campaign.

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Peace, Justice, and Freedom for Acehnese

The Acehnese Bulletin

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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 halaman, 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, 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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Pemilu Indonesia 2004: Buah Simalakama Perjuangan Rakyat Aceh

Indonesia sedang demam Pemilu. 11 Maret sampai 20 April adalah masa kampanye. Sebanyak 24 partai politik dengan ribuan calon caleg-nya akan bertarung memperebutkan kursi-kursi legislatif di DPR Pusat, DPRD Propinsi, dan DPRD Kabupaten/Kota. Selain itu ada ratusan individu secara pribadi-pribadi akan memperebutkan kursi "senator" Dewan Perwakilan Daerah (DPD) yang hanya empat kursi per propinsi. Nantinya, bersama-sama anggota DPR dari partai politik, anggota DPD ini akan membentuk MPR (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat) RI.

Akan ada tiga kali pemilihan yang akan dilaksanakan pada rangkaian Pemilu 2004, yakni pemilu anggota legislatif (DPR dan DPD) pada 5 April 2004, lalu pemilihan presiden/wakil presiden secara langsung pada 5 Juli, yang mungkin dilanjutkan pada 20 September apabila putaran pertama tidak menghasilkan pemenang mutlak.

Ada banyak harapan yang disandarkan rakyat Indonesia dan negara-negara yang berkepentingan dengan Indonesia pada Pemilu kali ini. Sebuah pemilu yang diklaim akan menjadi pemilu paling demokratis dalam sejarah Indonesia. Pemilu yang menjadi harapan terakhir Indonesia dengan reformasinya. Namun banyak juga yang sudah kembali skeptis atau bertambah apatis terhadap prospek Indonesia dan Pemilu yang katanya akan bisa men-"jump-start" negeri yang sedang mogok ini. Seberapa besarnya prospek Pemilu dan hasilnya untuk mereformasi, *dus* memungkinkan Indonesia kembali bangkit? Apa dampaknya bagi Aceh dan rakyat Aceh, khususnya bagi prospek penguatan *civil society*?

Buah simalakama

Pemilu bagi rakyat Aceh ibarat buah "simalakama". Buah yang katanya kalau dimakan mati ibu tapi kalau tidak dimakan mati bapak. Hal ini karena hampir setiap pemilu di Aceh, sejak awal Orba sampai sekarang, suasana represif selalu menyertai.

Ada sebuah pola menarik: setenang apapun suasana Aceh setahun sampai enam bulan sebelum Pemilu, masa setelah itu pasti ada kekerasan dan suasana mencekam. Demikian yang terjadi paling tidak pada tiga pemilu semasa Orba 1987, 1992, 1997, dan pemilu saat euforia reformasi 1999.

Seperti direkayasa ada saja alasan yang memungkinkan Jakarta mengirim lebih banyak pasukan ke Aceh, atau paling tidak menimbulkan suasana mencekam dan represif menjelang pemilu. Setiap menjelang pemilu di masa Orba, tiba-tiba saja pertempuran antara TNI/Polri dan GAM kembali terjadi di sana-sini, setelah sebelumnya rakyat Aceh nyaris tak mendengar geliat GAM. Alasan bahwa GAM akan men-sabotase pemilu selalu menjadi pembena tindakan represif. Tentu saja yang diuntungkan dalam suasana represif adalah Golkar dan militer sebagai tulang punggung Orba yang berkuasa waktu itu. Dan kita pun tahu, tahun 1987 adalah saatnya Aceh berubah dari "hijau" (selalu dimenangkan PPP) menjadi "kuning" (Golkar).

Pemilu 1999 diwarnai dengan meningkatnya citra GAM hampir di seluruh Aceh. Gagap gempita reformasi di Jakarta telah mengubah peta politik Indonesia yang lepas dari dominasi Golkar. Namun tetap saja ada suasana mencekam yang luar biasa di Aceh menjelang dan saat Pemilu 1999. Syarifuddin Tippe, Danrem Teuku Umar waktu itu sampai mengerahkan pasukan "sniper" dengan perintah tembak di tempat. Alasannya: GAM akan mengacau. Namun suasana bebas pasca reformasi 1998 memungkinkan rakyat Aceh sedikit lebih bebas dibandingkan Pemilu sebelumnya. Menguatnya pengaruh GAM seperti identik dengan anjuran untuk tidak ikut mencoblos, walaupun GAM secara resmi tidak melarangnya. Sebaliknya, TNI/Polri dan partai peserta Pemilu sibuk menganjurkan rakyat Aceh ikut Pemilu. Bagi PPP dan PDI, seperti terbukti setelah itu, Pemilu 1999 adalah kesempatan mengalahkan Golkar/Orba dan beralih dari posisi sebagai sekedar partai pendamping Golkar. Bagi Golkar/militer di Aceh, inilah kesempatan untuk menyelamatkan diri dari "mati permanen" setelah dihempas reformasi, terutama di Jakarta. Orba/militer justru bangkit kembali dengan menjadi "free-rider" reformasi yang jauh lebih prematur di daerah-daerah, termasuk Aceh.

Demikianlah, suka atau tidak suka, Pemilu 1999 telah melahirkan anggota-anggota DPR dan DPRD di seluruh Aceh, walaupun jumlah suara sebenarnya tidak mencukupi dan Pemilu praktis tidak berlangsung terutama di Aceh Utara, Pidie, dan Aceh Timur. Solusinya, ala Abu Nawas: kursi di DPRD dibagi-bagi sesuai hati diantara sesama parpol berdasarkan jumlah suara minimal. Maka Pemilu telah identik menjadi mobilisasi. Partai-partai yang dekat dengan militer, yang sebenarnya tidak punya basis massa di Aceh seperti PKP-nya Edi Sudrajat punya kursi di sejumlah DPRD dan Golkar yang banyak dihujat pun masih tetap berkibar paling tidak di urutan kedua atau ketiga.

Wakil-wakil rakyat inilah yang kita baca tingkah polah KKN-nya setiap hari belakangan ini. Dari korupsi untuk beli mobil sampai minta "dana turun" berpuhul juta. Dan wakil-wakil rakyat inilah yang ternyata kemudian ramai-ramai mendukung Darurat Militer di Aceh!

Pemilu 2004

Pemilu 2004 akan lebih memperkecil kemungkinan bangkitnya kekuatan-kekuatan sipil yang berpihak pada rakyat di Aceh. Darurat militer telah dan akan membawa suasana yang jauh lebih mencekam dan represif. Hampir semua struktur sosial, ekonomi, dan politik rakyat Aceh telah berubah dan dirasuki unsur-unsur militeristik demi memenangkan perang melawan GAM.

Dengan dalih operasi terpadu, pihak militer akan lebih mudah melakukan mobilisasi, termasuk mobilisasi orang dari luar Aceh untuk mencoblos di Aceh seperti yang dilaporkan beberapa lembaga pemantau Pemilu di Aceh Timur pada Pemilu 1999. Juga ada sejumlah kasus anggota militer yang sebenarnya tidak berhak memilih, ramai-ramai membuat KTP penduduk sipil agar bisa memilih. Tentu saja ini akan lebih mudah terjadi saat ini karena militer lah yang bisa mengeluarkan KTP Merah Putih. Semua bentuk kecurangan akan lebih banyak terjadi karena lembaga pemantau independen dibatasi. Bahkan dari 12 lembaga pemantau yang sudah diakreditasi KPU, ada beberapa yang terindikasi diotaki Orba/militer.

Partai mana yang akan dipilih? Tentu saja partai-partai "milik" militer dan Orba yang merupakan 2/3 dari 24 partai peserta Pemilu 2004, termasuk Golkar yang Ketum-nya Akbar Tanjung baru saja "meminang" Megawati demi mematikan langkah para reformis.

Lantas, perlukan rakyat Aceh ikut Pemilu? Kalau rakyat memutuskan ikut, ikutilah semua, sebanyak-banyaknya sehingga tidak ada celah bagi Orba/militer memanfaatkannya. Inipun kalau memungkinkan. Kalau tidak ikut, jangan ikut semua. Tidak ada pilihan setengah-setengah. Karena kalau setengah-setengah, Pemilu 2004 di Aceh akan kembali menjadi buah simalakama! (Abu Sakinah, NY)

Haraih/Su (Soundings in Achehnese)

Language Corner

HARAIH/SU	MISEUEË	TJATATAN
a	agam, Atjèh	
'a	Ma'at, Djum'at	**
a'	ma'mu, la'nat	***
b	Banda, bibeueh	
ch	chaliphah, chaih	
d	daruèt, deungo	
dj	djarôm, Djinièb	
e	le, bet, tjhet	
'e	'eleumeë, 'et	**
è	bèk, Atjèh	* alt+138
é	buèt, beuèt	*alt+137
è	lisék, phét	*alt+130
eu	deuh, beutôi	
g	Gapui, glé	
h	hana, hi	
i	itam, bintéh	
j	jatim, njan	
k	ka, kon, kulam	
kh	akhé, kheun	
l	leumo, lantui	
m	meungah, mat	
n	nabi, angsa	
o	toto, took	
ò	thôn, phôn	*alt+147
'o	ma'op, tu'oh	**
o'	so'mo',	***
p	peugah, pajah	
q	qasidah, 'aqad	
r	rahsia, dara	
s	sungiek, sira	
t	tateh, teulat	
tj	tjarong, tjawan	
u	uteuën, busu, u	
'u	Ma'un,	**
u'	mu'jizat	***
w	wéh-weuëh, wa	
z	zat, ziraphah	

* Tjara tuleh ngui komputer, teugon alt dan bek peulheueh sampoe 'an abeh man lhee boh haraih njan neuteuon.

**koma biasa dilikot haraih

*** koma biasa dikeue haraih

source: <http://members.lycos.co.uk/kruegon/dl.php>

Sya'ban 1412 H

Keunarang: Nyakwa Ty

Ka bulat meukeusud Yasmin jak seutot Umi woë u gampông singoh. Nyoë kon watée pré kuliah, Umi pih hana geulakée jak intat. "Ka tréb that lôn hana lôn woë Mi, hawa lôn jak sigo nyoë" meunan jimeudalèh bak Umi. Han ék jitheun lé keu saboh masa'alah nyang seun-seun sigo muputa lam ulée. Jimita ilah pakriban cara beugèt glah masa'alah nyan. Jikeuneuk jök pulang taloëtakue nyan.

Ban trök awaknyan bak pageue ka kirôh si Kilat. Bagah that jiteupeue na ureueng trök, rasi that jih geuböh nan nyan. Asèe ngon mie di rumoh Nèk bandum geupeunan si Kilat. Awai nyang ka maté saban cit nanjih. Bungong kômkomma mirah muda ngon putéh mubanja di leuen rumoh, sang hantom piöh jimubungong. Sabé jipumeulia jamèe tamong atawa teubiet. Bak meulu bak ulée baréh, sikrèk sagai jimubungong.

Rumoh raya nyan mantong lagèe biasa. Tuha ngon deuh gab, sang gèt that teupiléh kayèejih watée geupeugèt jameuen, lom pih hana geupeujeuet-peujeuet bak geupeulaku kayèe. Ladôm teupat geuböh kayèe meu-uké, pah bandum ngon wareuna asai kayèe. Na sidroë aneuk miet meugantung lam hayön di yub rumoh, jijaga lé kakjih, jiduek bak rangkang toë tamèh. Mandua aneuk nyan cuco Téhcüt, awak toë rumoh nyang sabé jak peungon Nyakwa.

Nyakwa Atikah seunang that até ka trök jamèe di Banda Aceh. Ban saboh rumoh geuyue peugléh bak Téhcüt. Kasö ngon bantai geupeuteubiet nibak bungköh keureutah peulaseutik. Bieng ngon udeueng raya geupeusan laju bak Apa Raman sidéh di neuheun, eungköt rambeue meunyo na bak bang Taléb di pasi. Manok dara ka geuniet meusie lam dua uroë nyoë. Tréb-tréb sigo na geuwoë adék ngon aneuek keumuen geuh.

Ban lhèe awaknyan geu-éh bak jurée wie watée malam. Téhcüt jéh pat di seuramoë liköt. Seupöt that cit rumoh Nèk nyoë 'oh malam. Alèh pajan keuh ék ditamong léseutrék u gampông nyoë. Beuthat pih meunan hana masa'alah sagai keu Nyakwa ngon Umi. Trök 'an jula mantong cit mandua awaknyan geumarit-marit.

Bak malam meudua di gampông, jula malam beudoh Nyak Yasmin ngon panyot bak jaroë, jitrôn u dapu. Jijak tueng ie seumayang bak mon di binèh dapu. Jipeuceubeueh droëjih trôn keunan. Bak ramoë liköt na cit lueng ubit keu teupat tueng ie seumayang 'oh malam, ie pih ka geuseudia. Teuma hana mangat atéjih jak cok wudhuk di sinan, alèh pih na soë-soë aneuk miet jak töh 'iek sinan jameuen.

Téhcüt ka mangat teungeut, lam seupöt nyan di seuramoë liköt Yasmin jiseumayang tahajjud. Jiistikharah keu singoh uroë, beu-ék gèt meusampé bandum niet meukeusud lam atéjih.



Ku'uek manok ban saboh rumoh ka geujaga. Halöh teudeungo adan suboh di meunasah, dumna ék geutarék su lé ureueng mubang nyan. Mandua ureueng tuha nyan hana geujak ék u rumoh lé meungka uroë. Na balè cit sinan di rumoh dapu keu teupat seumayang.

Rupajih di Téhcüt ka mulai geupeukap apui. Bèe bara bubeue mangat teurasa ban saboh dapu. Yasmin jibuka tingkab seuramoë ngon jurée. Sijuek that jitamong hawa u dalam. Su cicém kiröh jipo-po lam lampöh nyan. Jipinah lé di bak pineung u bak jambèe bue. Alèh cit nyan nyang geupeugah beurujeuk balèe, batéjih. Tupé meulumpat-lumpat di cöng bak saöh. Deuh blang luah that bak binèh jalan. Mantong beungoh that uroë, seungue that, goh lom na deuh ureueng jak u blang.

Jikalon Nyakwa Atikah geubuka geurupöh manok. Meuhambö aneuk manok cut-cut teubiet u lua. Meucieb-cieb bak gaki Nyakwa. Yasmin jitrôn keunan. Siat ka habèh breueh ngon padé lam plök Nyakwa. Lheueh nyan Yasmin jijak keudéh u lampöh timu di keue rumoh. Pageue bak geurundong ngon kawat meuduroë ban saboh lingka lampöh. Na cit pintö ubit blah nan. Yöh banyak kon Yasmin galak jilingkeue-lingkeue pintö pageue ubit nyan. Payah jitarék dilèe dua plah trieng panyang keu pasak pintö 'oh jikeumeung teubiet tamong. Pah guruek pasak nyan, mangat bak jitulak-taré.

Matauroë ka jiteubiet, meukilat-kilat cahya bak ön u. Go nyoë Yasmin hana jiteubiet, jidong mantong di keue pintö. Jipeutimang lom sigo teuk keu nietjih uroë nyoë. Peue keuh ka beutöi niet lôn nyoë? Ho lôn mita Alhuda? Peue keuh jih mantong na bak alamat sot? Pakriban miseue hana meurumpok? Adak meurumpok pih, ék teujeuet lôn jök pulang taloëtakue nyan? Pakiban meunyo jih ka tuwo hana teuingat sapeue lé keunan? Teuingat Yasmin keu istikharahjih beuklam. Peue na gèt kong niet lôn 'oh lheueh istikharah nyan? Hana meunyum sapeue jirasa.

"Nyak, ka pèt boh limèng ngon campli ubit meudua boh lèh" su Umi di dapu. Yasmin jitamong u dapu. Jicang boh limèng nyan ngon bawang keu cicah keumamah nyang dang geukruet lé Umi. Jipéh boh sunti bacut ngon capli.

"Mi, lôn keuneuk jak meu'èn siat uroë nyoë u Sigli, beh" jipeugah leugat.

"Ho kajak, Nyak?" tanyong Nyakwa, "peue tahei si Wan bak keudè yu jak intat?"

"Hana peue Nyakwa, sayang si Wan teungoh jimeukat, bahlè lôn jak keudroë" seu'öt jih.

"Bah hai Cupo, ka biasa dijih jijak-jak keudroë beuthat di Banda. Bah jijak kalon Sigli sigo" kheun Umi, "man bèk jula that ka woë" geutamah keu Yasmin.

"Meunyo meunan bagah teuk jak meukeumah, moto Cék Lah biasa poh lapan ka jiliwat bak keudè" kheun Nyakwa, gobnyan muphôm that keu masalah nyan beuthat jareueng that na geujak saho.



Taloëtakue nyan kon meuh, kon pirak. Putéh mandum wareunajih, taloë ngon matajih. Beuthat imitasi, lagak that, meutumpök bungong-bungong halöh bak mata peuet sagoë. Limong thôn ka liköt leubèh kureueng geujök lé ngon jih Elya. Bak watée nyan Alhuda, abang Elya, geujak beurangkat sikula u tanoh 'Arab. Yasmin hantom jisök kalong nyan. Jikeubah mantong lam plökjih bak mari kaca. Lheueh nyan jih hana teuingat lé keu taloëtakue nyan. Meujan-jan mantong watée jipeugléh mari na deuh lom kalong nyan.

Sigo-go na tröh surat di 'Arab, na tom cit awaknyan meurumpok siat watée jiwoë u Banda Aceh. Had Uroë Raya nyang ka leupah, ka leubèh sithôn, Alhuda jak meu-uroë raya bak Yasmin. Yöh nyan jipeugah ka tamat sikula, na ngon jih peutaba buet bak dayah di Pidie, jih pih hawa jeuet keu gurée. Laén nibak nyan jameuen kon cit galak jih keu meukat, kadang jeuet cit jibuka useuha di sinan euntreuk. Hana tréb 'oh lheueh nyan Yasmin jiteurimong surat Alhuda di Pidie, nyan keuh keuneulheueh haba nibakjih.

Kira-kira dua buleuen ka leupah, hana jitukon jimeulumpoë keu kalong nyan. Rasa-rasajih kalong nyan na jisök sabé, teuma leubèh ubit. Mata kalong nyan kaca, ngon wareuna kunèng kunyèt. Teungoh jingui, kalong meu-ubah jeuet keu biru, ka rayek lom seunipatjih lagèe sot. Watée biru nyan keuh, kalong nyan gadoh bak takue Yasmin.

Yasmin han ék jipatéh that keu lumpoë. Teuma meujan-jan teuingat lé keunan, peu meukeusud lumpoë nyan? Teupiké jikeuneuk jök mantong taloëtakue keu ngon jih, han roh cit, hana sampé atéjih. Lom pih lheueh meulumpoë nyan kayém teuingat jih keu Alhuda. Pakon hana haba lé sagai seulawét nyoë? 'Oh dudoë teupiké teuk jikeuneuk jök pulang kalong nyan meungna langkah keudéh u Pidie sira jijak saweue sigo. Hantom nyang ka-ka na niet lagèe nyan lam atéjih, jak saweue ureueng agam, beuthat pih bak ngon sikula jih nyang toë sinan di Banda Aceh.



Poh lapan labi-labi Cék Lah ka teudong bak keudè di leuen rumoh Nèk. Yasmin jicok teupat duek di keue sabab moto mantong soh. Taloëtakue ka gèt teukeubah lam tahjih. Hana tréb jimarit-marit ngon Cék Lah, ka punoh moto. Cék Lah geujak beurangkat laju.

(Meusambông...)

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

**Maté aneuk na yang meupat jeurat,
Maté adat hana pat ta mita**

TAPOL & The Acehese Society of North America (ASNA)
URGENT ACTION APPEAL
19 February 2004

ACEH: UNFAIR TRIALS AND ABUSE OF PRISONERS

Since the start of martial law in Aceh on 19 May 2003, the Indonesian authorities have arrested and detained hundreds of alleged supporters of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM).

Over 500 have been convicted of crimes against the state (makar). Around 140 have been transferred to harsh conditions of detention in Java, far away from their homes and families.

Most of the prisoners were convicted after unfair trials and many are being subjected to torture or ill-treatment and systematic abuse of their rights as detainees.

The unfair nature of the trials and the fact that the prisoners have been detained because of their alleged political beliefs or allegiances means that they are political prisoners who should be released immediately and unconditionally.

*** Please act now to stop these
outrageous abuses of justice ***

ACTION

1. Call or write to your representative TODAY urging him or her to call upon the State Secretary Colin L. Powell to protest to the Indonesian government about the treatment of the Aceh prisoners and demand their release.

The Congressional switchboard number is 202-224-3121; ask for your Representative's office. Then ask to speak with the foreign policy aide. If you don't know who your Representative is, go to www.house.gov to find out.

You can also write to your representative on-line from <http://www.house.gov/writerep/> or send a mail to his or her address that can be found at <http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW.html>. A sample letter is below (or preferably use your own wording). Please send ASNA or TAPOL a copy of any reply you receive.

2. Write in similar terms to the Indonesian Government:
President Megawati Sukarnoputri,
President of the Republic of Indonesia,
Istana Merdeka, Jakarta 10110, Indonesia

3. Copy your letters and send it to the Indonesian Ambassador
Indonesia Embassy
2020 Massachusetts Ave.N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036;
Phone : (202) 775-5200; Fax. (202) 775-5365.
and the martial law authority in Aceh:
Brigadier-General George Toisutta,
KODAM Iskandar Muda, Jl. Ahmad Yani,
Simpang Lima, Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

4. Circulate this Urgent Action to your friends and networks and organize a campaign with public events in your locality.

Thank you for your support.
TAPOL & ASNA

TAPOL, the Indonesia Human Rights Campaign
111 Northwood Road, Thornton Heath, Croydon CR7 8HW, UK.
tel +44 (0)20 8771 2904 fax +44 (0)20 8653 0322
tap-@gn.apc.org <http://tapol.gn.apc.org>

The Acehese Society of North America
2030 South Bucnell St., Philadelphia, PA19145
tel +1-215 271 7342 (ask for Tjut Zahara)

Sample letter to your representative:

Dear [name]

Since the start of martial law in Aceh on 19 May 2003, over 1500 alleged supporters of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) have been detained and interrogated. Over 750 have been tried and convicted of crimes against the state (makar) and sentenced to terms of imprisonment varying from one to twenty years.

It is questionable whether many of those detained are GAM combatants. Most are likely to be Acehese villagers who may or may not have GAM sympathizers.

Most of the prisoners were convicted after unfair trials in emergency courts. The trials ended in record time and often verdicts were handed down after only a brief hearing. Very often the only witness presented was the arresting police or military officer and there was no other evidence against the accused. Most of the judges and prosecutors came from outside Aceh and were seemingly brought in by the authorities to 'clear' the large amount of prisoners in a 'legal' way. More than often a defence lawyer was not present. The Legal Aid Bureau (LBH) in Banda Aceh has limited capacity, has had to function under extremely difficult circumstances and has been able to handle only a few dozen cases.

According to local sources, many of the prisoners have been beaten, kicked, punched, assaulted with sticks or subjected to other forms of torture or ill-treatment, as well as suffering systematic abuses of their rights as detainees. A recent report received from Banda Aceh said that Muhammad Nazar, chairman of SIRA, that mobilized a popular support for Referendum on Aceh future, has also been tortured following the plan to transfer him to Java. He has been detained for his political belief since 2002.

A group of 143 prisoners have been transferred to jails in Central Java, including Nusakambangan, a prison island from the Dutch colonial period. Newspaper reports suggest that the prisoners were heavily shackled to each other. This scheme will soon include five GAM negotiators who were involved in the peace talks in Geneva. Families have not been informed. The men have been mixed with criminal prisoners and have been subjected to severe violence and intimidation.

The military authorities have said the prisoners were transferred to break their connections with their alleged separatist colleagues and, through the mingling with other prisoners, to dilute their strong ideological views on independence. The treatment of the prisoners and their transfer to locations far away from their homes and families is a flagrant breach of international standards concerning the treatment of prisoners.

Given the unfair nature of the trials and the fact that many of the prisoners have been detained because of their alleged or actual political beliefs or allegiances, it is clear that a large number of them are political prisoners who deserve to be treated according to this status.

We urge you to call upon the State Secretary to protest to the Indonesian government about the treatment of the prisoners and to demand their immediate and unconditional release.

We are grateful to you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,
[your name]

Tjatanan keu Ureung Atjeh: Maseng-maseng tanyo jeut chit ta pakat ureung Amerika di lingka rumoh, sikula, atawa teupat keureuja maseng-maseng yang ta turi, ta lakee bantu useha nyo. Tinggai ta peudeuh bulletin nyo, khusus jih on yang keu-4 nyo.

Ask your American friends to help this urgent action. Show this bulletin page, and appeal for his/her courtesy to call or write to his/her representative.

**Act for Peace, Justice, and Freedom in Aceh!
Act NOW for Aceh!**