



## Learn more about Aceh

### **Introduction**

The Aceh province, located on the northern tip of the Indonesian island of Sumatra, has been the scene of violent conflict for nearly 30 years. This is a brief history of the conflict.

The majority of Aceh's population has long opposed the rule by the Indonesian government in Jakarta, and in 1976 Gerakan Aceh Merdeka— the Free Aceh Movement—(GAM) was established to lead a struggle for Aceh independence.

In December 2002 a peace agreement was signed by the Indonesian government and GAM, but shortly after, in May 2003 the peace talks collapsed when the government issued an ultimatum to GAM: renounce the goal of independence or no more negotiations. There had already been resistance to the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA), when many prominent actors preferred a military solution to the conflict. Thus, with the end of the ceasefire, martial law was introduced and Aceh was under full control of the military. During this time an estimated 2,000 people were killed.

With the 2004 tsunami, however, the Acehnese natural *and* political environment changed. A new dialogue was opened between GAM and the Indonesian government and on the 15th of August 2005 a new peace agreement was signed. Here both parties commit to a peaceful, comprehensive and sustainable solution, and that the road to reconciliation will ensure that human rights are upheld.

### **References:**

#### **Fear In The Shadows: Militia In Aceh**

Eye on Aceh, 2004

**Eye on Aceh:** [www.aceh-eye.org](http://www.aceh-eye.org)

### **Some Books from the Dev-Zone Library:**

#### **Between Life And Death: Surviving Aceh's Tsunami**

Eye on Aceh, 2005

This book comprises of interviews of those who survived the 2004 tsunami. Thousands of people of Aceh remain displaced in camps and temporary housing and in the greed for power and money.

### **Aceh: Then And Now**

Lesley McCulloch, Minority Rights Group International, 2005

The tsunami in 2004 has opened Aceh up to outside involvement and scrutiny. This could represent an opportunity for change in Aceh, with regards to the police and military's violations of human rights and, just possibly, an opportunity for progress towards an end to the conflict.

### **We Are The Victims And The Witnesses: Women Of Aceh**

Eye on Aceh, 2004

This book is dedicated to the women of Aceh whose lives are burdened by a violent conflict, but whose pain goes largely unnoticed. It describes the impact on the Acehnese women and the outcome - rape, sexual abuse, displacement and "disappearance" of women.

### **Aceh: Logging A Conflict Zone**

Eye on Aceh, 2004

Aceh's environment is becoming a zone of bitter and protracted armed conflict as logging is used to help finance the Indonesian military operations in the province. Local communities are left to bear the social and environmental scars.

### **Some Links from the Knowledge Centre:**

#### **Aceh: an interview with Allan Nairn**

A ZNet interview providing analysis of the effects of the tsunami in Aceh, Indonesian military and government involvement, and background to the situation in Aceh.. (ZNet, 2005)

[www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=44&ItemID=6954](http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=44&ItemID=6954)

#### **The Aceh Peace Process: Why it Failed**

A preliminary analysis of the history and dynamics of Aceh's abortive peace process conducted between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian government. (East West Center, 2003)

[www.eastwestcenter.org/stored/pdfs/PS001.pdf](http://www.eastwestcenter.org/stored/pdfs/PS001.pdf)

#### **Peace and reconstruction in Aceh**

In Aceh,, two closely related issues demand close scrutiny. One is reconstruction in the tsunami's wake. The other is implementation of the August 2005 memorandum of understanding. (CSMonitor, 2006)

[www.csmonitor.com/2006/0501/p09s02-coop.html](http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0501/p09s02-coop.html)

#### **Eye on Aceh**

Comprehensive website containing news, reports, information on the Indonesian government as well as NGOs, and on the issues surrounding the conflict in Aceh.

[www.acheh-eye.org/index.asp](http://www.acheh-eye.org/index.asp)

#### **Aceh Sumatra National Liberation Front**

This is the official website of the Free Aceh Movement that works towards regaining Aceh's right of self-determination from Javanese/Indonesian governance.

[www.asnlf.net/topint.htm](http://www.asnlf.net/topint.htm)

## **Take Action!**

### **Indonesia Human Rights Committee New Zealand (IHRC)**

IHRC is a solidarity organisation which distributes information and organises activities such as letter writing and petition campaigns, meetings, and film showings and.

**[ihrc.revolt.org/](http://ihrc.revolt.org/)**

### **Aceh Support Group (ASG)**

ASG is a Wellington NGO with the purpose of raising awareness in New Zealand of the situation in Aceh.

**[achehsupportgroup@gmail.com](mailto:achehsupportgroup@gmail.com)**

### **Aceh Human Rights Online**

Here you can join the Urgent Action mailing list or click on the Urgent Appeals to take action now.

**[www.ahro.info](http://www.ahro.info)**

### **Action in Solidarity with Asia and the Pacific**

ASAP is a network of activists who supports movements for social justice, genuine democratisation and self-determination in the Asia Pacific region.

**[www.asia-pacific-action.org](http://www.asia-pacific-action.org)**

**July 2006**