



Forbes Damai/DSF

The *pilkada* (local executive) elections are a crucial part of the Helsinki peace process. The electoral process and outcomes also provide insights into what Aceh’s longer-term transition from violent conflict to peace will look like politically. As part of a joint UNDP-World Bank elections study, sponsored by the Decentralization Support Facility (DSF), *Forbes Damai* (Aceh Joint Forum for Peace) will disseminate regular updates as a way of summarizing and documenting *pilkada* dynamics and developments. This Update presents findings from UNDP/World Bank field visits to nine districts on polling day, *pilkada* conflict monitoring of four local newspapers (Aceh Kita, Aceh Rakyat, Serambi, and Waspada) conducted during December, as well as information from local observers on location.<sup>1</sup>

The number of *pilkada*-related conflict incidents almost doubled in the first two weeks of December from 31 in the last two weeks of November to 57 incidents. This dramatic increase largely consists of incidents between individuals/groups and electoral institutions, the majority of which took place on or the day after election day. Positively, the dramatic increase in *pilkada*-related incidents did not result in a corresponding increase in violent incidents and did not seriously disrupt election day. Indeed, with the exception of some relatively minor administrative issues and disorderliness in some polling stations in the east coast districts of Aceh Utara, Bireuen and Pidie, Aceh’s first direct executive and post-MoU elections went remarkably smoothly.

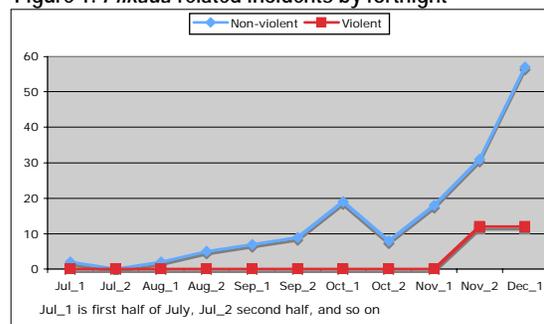
Dynamics surrounding the results have been more varied. To the surprise of many, the KPA/GAM-affiliated independent candidates Irwandi-Nazar won a landslide victory. Preliminary results indicate KPA/GAM-affiliated independent candidates have won in six districts, Golkar in six, and PBR/PAN, PAN, PKS, and PPP in one each. Run-off elections will be necessary in three districts: Aceh Barat, Aceh Barat Daya, and Aceh Tamiang. There have been serious challenges and indeed demands for repeat *bupati/walikota* elections in nine districts: Aceh Barat Daya, Aceh Singkil, Aceh Tamiang, Aceh Tengah, Aceh Tenggara, Bener Meriah, Langsa, Nagan Raya, and Simeuleu districts. These district challenges will put pressure on many local KIP and Panwas offices, which, in many cases, have preferred to gloss over problems in the name of a “peaceful election” rather than handle them directly. Although at this stage it is difficult to assess with any certainty the implications of the elections, this update ends by flagging some issues related to center-periphery relations, conflict cleavages within Aceh, and policy directions.

### I. *Pilkada* Conflict Dynamics

#### ***Dramatic increase in pilkada-related conflict incidents, but violent incidents remain low***

The number of *pilkada*-related conflict incidents almost doubled in the first two weeks of December (see Figure 1). 21 of these took place

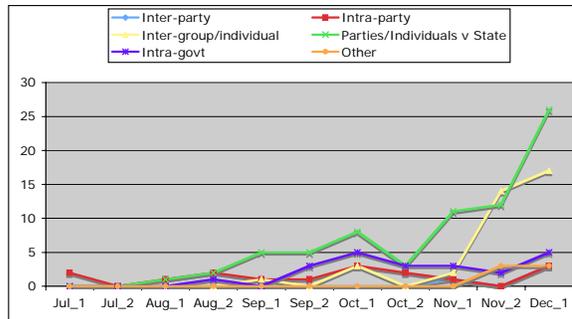
Figure 1: *Pilkada*-related incidents by fortnight



<sup>1</sup> The *Pilkada* conflict monitoring dataset tracks conflict incidents as reported in regional newspapers. There are limitations to using newspapers to map conflict, for more analysis of the methodology see: Patrick Barron and Joanne Sharpe (2005). “Counting Conflict: Using Newspaper Reports to Understand Violence in Indonesia”, *Indonesian Social Development Paper* No. 7. Jakarta: World Bank.

during the final campaign days (up until 7 December), 13 during the non-campaigning period (8-10 December), 7 on election day itself, and 16 immediately following election day. This dramatic increase largely consists of incidents between individuals/groups and electoral institutions (see Figure 2), the majority of which took place on or the day after election day. These disputes mostly consist of challenges to district-level results based on accusations of government and election officials favoring one of the candidates, of money politics, of poll booth irregularities and of voters being prevented from casting their vote. As discussed below, the management of these conflicts will be important in order to maintain the legitimacy of the election process and results.

Figure 2: Main actors involved in *pilkada*-related incidents by fortnight



### **Violent *pilkada*-related incidents remain low and relatively minor**

Positively, the dramatic increase in *pilkada*-related conflicts did not result in a corresponding increase in violent incidents. As shown in Figure 1, 12 violent incidents occurred in the first week of December.<sup>2</sup> With the exception of one potentially serious incident in Sawang, Aceh Utara, where a

bomb exploded, most incidents were relatively minor involving reports of intimidation, the destruction of campaign attributes, and scuffles between supporters. No deaths and only four injuries were recorded.

## **II. Election Day Dynamics**

### ***Election day build-up: Increasing competition as the big day approached***

Unsurprisingly, there was a significantly higher number of *pilkada*-related incidents reported during the last days of campaigning than in previous weeks. The build-up in momentum was reflected in more large-scale public events that had been conspicuously absent in the early days of campaigning. Golkar supported its candidates in Aceh Tengah and Bener Meriah (Mahreje and Tagore respectively) by bringing out a “top gun” campaign spokesman, Agung Laksono, the Deputy leader of the national parliament. During the *masa tenang*, the quiet period for three days before polling day, there were cases of *serangan fajar* or “dawn raids” in Aceh Barat, Aceh Tengah and Aceh Tenggara where “brokers” engaged in vote-buying on the behalf of candidates. In both Aceh Tenggara and Aceh Tengah, brokers distributed an average of Rp. 2 million per village with each voter receiving between Rp. 50,000 to Rp. 100,000. Particular groups were targeted; in Aceh Tengah, youth leaders were asked to “deliver” quotas of first-time voters, whereas in Aceh Barat, the broker offered cloth to women prayer group members. Many of these violations subsequently led to candidates challenging the validity of the results in these areas.

In Pidie, Bireuen, North Aceh and Lhokseumawe on the east coast, what drew most attention was the effectiveness of the KPA network who outperformed rival *tim sukses* in reaching out to villagers and who seemed to be “everywhere”. GAM/KPA-affiliated candidates’ campaigns focused on door-to-door meetings with villagers using the KPA and SIRA networks. GAM/KPA-affiliated candidates made public appearances in traditional Acehnese dress and made their appeals for change in Acehnese, which made an impact. Villagers interviewed said that they believed that such candidates would better represent Acehnese interests compared to other

<sup>2</sup> In the previous update we noted nine violent incidents in the last two weeks of November. However, this did not include three additional incidents that occurred in November but were reported in December.

candidates and were willing to “try” them out for five years. Rival *tim sukses* admitted that they found it difficult to compete with KPA in terms of access to villages as well as being able to convene meetings with villagers at all hours. There were reports of intimidation relating to rival *tim sukses*’ access to “GAM/KPA stronghold” villages, particularly between GAM/KPA factions supporting different gubernatorial candidates in Bireuen and Pidie. Whilst villagers did not report any overt intimidation, many villagers interviewed said that KPA members had influenced them. They said that they while they were voting for change, they also believed that they would encounter fewer problems if they voted for GAM/KPA-affiliated candidates. Isolated

***Election day: Generally positive, but isolated issues on east coast***

Overall, Aceh’s first direct executive and post-MoU elections went remarkably smoothly. There were few technical problems on elections day, only one incident of violence was reported in the newspapers, and the police and military continued the professional behavior they had shown throughout the election process. Similarly, the election day tactics of those running for office and their *tim sukses* were mostly benign. Indeed, the EU election monitoring mission reported that intimidation was present at less than 1.2% of polling stations.<sup>3</sup> However, without wanting to detract from the overall positive experience, there were some isolated problems that are worth highlighting. Particularly on the east coast, in Pidie, Bireuen, Aceh Utara and Lhokseumawe, observers noted that many polling booths appeared chaotic with no cordoned-off area for people casting their votes. *Linmas* officials who were supposed to maintain order within the polling area appeared unable to do so and did not prevent people who had already voted from remaining in the polling area to tell others how to vote. In some cases, election officials asked voters to open their ballot papers outside of the polling area to show them how to open and re-fold the ballot papers. The surrounding crowd would then tell the voters which numbers to mark. On the east coast, supporters of GAM/KPA-affiliated candidates wore badges with the photos of the candidates and their numbers. They lined the streets leading to the polling booths calling out the numbers of the gubernatorial and district candidates from GAM/KPA. This was effective because many voters revealed that they did not know who the candidates were or whom to choose and tended to listen to the people lining the streets or circulating in the polling areas wearing badges with candidate photos. To some observers, the atmosphere in these polling areas did not support a free and confidential vote.

### **III. Results Dynamics**

***Irwandi-Nazar wins a landslide victory, KPA/GAM and Golkar fair well in districts***

To the surprise of many, the KPA/GAM-affiliated independent candidates Irwandi-Nazar seem to have won a landslide victory. Prior to the elections many commentators predicted that a second round for the gubernatorial race would be necessary. The IFES Survey conducted between 20-26 November revealed that no candidate would receive more than 15 percent of the vote, well below the 25 percent required to win.<sup>4</sup> However, the results of two quick counts indicate Irwandi-Nazar have received approximately 39 percent of votes (see Table 1).<sup>5</sup> Preliminary results indicate KPA/GAM-affiliated independent candidates have won *bupati/walikota* contests in six districts, Golkar in six, and PBR/PAN, PAN, PKS, and PPP in one each.<sup>6</sup> Only five incumbents and three

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<sup>3</sup> Nani Afrida and Ridwan Max Sijabat, ‘Irwandi still in lead, monitors issue report’, *The Jakarta Post* (15 December 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Nani Afrida and Alti Nurbaidi, ‘Candidates receives a boost from former GAM official’, *The Jakarta Post* (7 December 2006).

<sup>5</sup> The LSI and NDI quick counts respectively sampled 331 and 335 of 8967 voting booths. They claim accuracy of  $\pm 1-2\%$ . KIP has stated publicly that these results correspond with their preliminary counts.

<sup>6</sup> Golkar and some of these other parties are in coalitions with other mostly smaller parties, see Table 2.

prominent office-bearers are expected to return to office, with new leaders set to win in seven districts.<sup>7</sup> Table 2 summarizes preliminary district results.

Table 1: Gubernatorial quick count results

Candidates	Quick Count (NDI)
Irwandi-Nazar (KPA/GAM)	38.57%
Human-Hasbi (PPP/KPA)	17.04%
Malik/Sayed (Golkar)	12.96%
Azwar/Nasir (PAN/PKS)	10.40%
Ghazali/Shalahuddin (Indep)	7.97%
Iskandar/Manaf (PBB)	5.08%
Tamlicha/Armen (PBR/PKB)	4.58%
Djali/Syauqas (Indep)	3.39%

Table 2: Preliminary mayoral results

District	In front	Incumbent
Aceh Barat	2R: KPA/GAM v Indep	-
Aceh Barat Daya	2R: PAN v PKB/PM	-
Aceh Besar	PAN	New
Aceh Jaya	KPA/GAM	New
Aceh Singkil	Golkar	Incumbent
Aceh Tamiang	2R: PD/PBR v PAN/PKS	-
Aceh Tengah	PBR/PAN*	Incumbent
Aceh Tenggara	PKS*	POB
Aceh Timur	KPA/GAM	New
Aceh Utara	KPA/GAM	New
Banda Aceh	PPP*	Incumbent
Bener Meriah	Golkar*	POB
Gayo Lues	Golkar*	POB
Langsa	Golkar	N/A
Lhokseumawe	KPA/GAM	New
Nagan Raya	Golkar*	Incumbent
Pidie	KPA/GAM	New
Sabang	KPA/GAM	New
Simeulue	Golkar*	Incumbent

\* Denotes a coalition of mostly smaller parties; 2R = second round

### ***Gubernatorial results accepted, bupati/walikota results contested***

Both the losing gubernatorial candidates and the general public largely seem to have accepted the Irwandi-Nazar win. One candidate (Azwar Abubakar) was reportedly prepared to accept the quick count results as early as the night of the election. Indeed, such a large win confirmed by two independent and respected organizations is difficult to contest. In contrast, there are reports of challenges including demands for repeat *bupati/walikota* elections in Aceh Barat Daya, Aceh Singkil, Aceh Tamiang, Aceh Tengah, Aceh Tenggara, Bener Meriah, Langsa, Nagan Raya, and Simeuleu districts. These protests are mostly directed at those institutions responsible for election implementation, particularly KIP and Panwas, urging them to disqualify winning candidates for electoral violations and requesting that they conduct repeat elections. How these institutions respond to these protests will determine whether they escalate or peter-out. This response will challenge many local KIP and Panwas bodies who, in many areas, have preferred to gloss over problems in the name of a “peaceful election” rather than handle them directly.<sup>8</sup> Table 3 presents a summary of district dynamics. Box 1 presents a more in-depth analysis of Aceh Tengah.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Incumbents’ refers to winners who had previously held the position of *bupati* or *walikota*. ‘POB’ (prominent office bearers) refers to those who have not been *bupati* or *walikota*, but who have had held other senior positions in local government, for example, former leaders of the DPRD (local parliament), district secretaries (*sekda kab*), or line agency heads.

<sup>8</sup> These district challenges are dynamic and evolving rapidly. We have endeavoured to include the latest information at the time of writing. UNDP and the World Bank plan to investigate the handling of some of these disputes as part of a second round of field work in January 2007.

**Table 3: Summary of district challenges**

District	Summary	Current Status
Aceh Barat Daya	KPA/GAM is reportedly preparing to protest based on various administrative anomalies. The other losing candidates are also demanding a repeat election and disqualification of the winning candidate due to money politics	KIP appears to be focused on second round.
Aceh Singkil	One candidate has filed a protest with KIP and approximately 1000 participated in a rally held by the Democratic Concern Forum.	KIP reports they will follow the legal process.
Aceh Tamiang	Separate demonstrations with backing from different losing candidates have demanded that KIP repeat the election due to vote buying and campaign irregularities in Bendahara, Seruway and Manyak Payed sub-districts, as well as reported ballot box tampering in Kejuruan Muda sub-district.	Round two elections to be held, as well as some individual polling station re-elections. Police pledge to take action.
Aceh Tengah	Seven candidates jointly rejected the results of the district elections and demanded another election be run within six months	See Box 1.
Aceh Tenggara	All six losing candidates are rejecting the results. They demand a repeat election and claim election irregularities ranging from bias on the part of the local police, vote buying in Babul Makmur sub-district, to corruption implicating KIP officials in the printing of ballot papers.	Thousands participated in a demonstration outside DPRD (local parliament) on 20 December.
Bener Meriah	The second and third-placed candidates have refused to sign-off on the results and demanded that no official announcement of the results be made until police have investigated allegations of money politics against the winning candidate.	Hundreds of demonstrators hold a rally in front of the DPRD demanding a repeat election.
Langsa	Five losing candidates have signed a joint declaration demanding a repeat election on the basis that at least 29,000 voters were unable to vote because sub-district and village election officials failed to send out letters of notification to them.	Not clear.
Nagan Raya	All seven losing candidates have registered their rejection of the result based on money politics and violations committed by the winning Golkar candidate.	Panwas has stated they will investigate if protestors insist on legal action.
Simeulue	Supporters of five losing candidates planned a week of public demonstrations from 18 – 22 December involving 5,000 protesters from eight sub-districts. They are demanding that KIP conduct a repeat election and that Panwas investigate six allegations of money politics in Simeuleu Tengah and Teupah Selatan and ballot tampering in Simeuleu Barat. In the event, about 200 people showed up on the first day and the demonstration ended on the second day.	The district police chief was able to mediate and all parties agreed to give KIP and Panwas time to investigate.

**Box 1: A case example of mounting tensions after polling – Aceh Tengah**

Polling day began relatively quietly except for a few incidents. At first, a complaint was lodged by the GAM/KPA-affiliated candidate who claimed that as many as 500 of his supporters had not received letters enabling them to vote. Then, in separate incidents in Lut Tawar and Takengon Timur sub-districts, witnesses detected that several ballot boxes already contained marked ballot papers favouring the Nasaruddin-Djauhar ticket. As counting began in polling booths across Aceh Tengah, the result was the same: a landslide victory for Nasaruddin-Djauhar everywhere except in Bintang sub-district. By the end of polling day, the losing seven candidates had determined to join forces to contest the results alleging significant irregularities throughout the electoral process,. These included: allegations that 11 of 14 *camats* (sub-district heads) were partisan; that government officials had intimidated candidates; that money politics was rife; that voting cards were pre-marked; and protests about campaign schedule irregularities.

For one week after the elections, the seven candidates and their supporters held public demonstrations outside KIP, Panwas and the DPRD. They demanded that no results be announced and that a repeat election be held within six

months. In a move reflecting how widely accusations of bias were shared, the district chief of police removed the police representatives from the district as well as four sub-district *Panwaslihs*. As a result, in the first two weeks following polling day, no results have been displayed in sub-district election offices and neither KIP or Panwas officials in Aceh Tengah have dared to comment on the situation. The district parliament has been convened to debate the issue and most members have stated that there is no budget allocation for a repeat election. However, they are being subjected to heavy lobbying by Golkar and Democrat members (the candidates leading the protest were fielded by these parties). After intensive consultation involving KIP Banda Aceh as well as the Governor, KIP Banda Aceh ruled on 20 December that the winning candidate would be disqualified if police can find evidence of irregularities, but there will be no repeat election. Given allegations of police bias, this is unlikely to assuage the other candidates who have warned that their supporters will “react”. The latest twist to this election tale has been the disappearance of the head of Panwas Aceh Tengah since 20 December, who has probably fled the scene in the wake of numerous death threats via phone and text messages.

### ***Second run-off round required in three districts***

The preliminary results indicate run-off elections will be necessary in three districts: Aceh Barat, Aceh Barat Daya, and Aceh Tamiang. In Aceh Barat, the KPA/GAM-affiliated candidate is reportedly in front but just short of the 25 percent (24.3%) required to prevent a second round. Currently in second place is the Iskandar-Chudri pair running as independents. In Aceh Barat Daya two candidates, Akbal-Syamsul from PAN and Sulaiman-Munir from PKB in coalition with Partai Merdeka, are reported to have received approximately 20 percent of the vote. The KPA/GAM candidate is in third place with approximately 17 percent of the vote. In Aceh Tamiang, Hamdan Sati-Iskandar Zulkarnaen and Abdul Latief-Awaluddin will contest the second run-off.

These second round elections have the potential to be more conflictual than the first for two reasons. In these three districts the results are much closer. In close races, administrative mistakes and shortcomings are perceived to affect the final results and therefore the incentive to protest such incidents is much higher. Indeed, candidates who are likely to miss out on the second round are already contesting the results. This is apparent in Aceh Tamiang where police are currently investigating nine allegations of money politics made by supporters of losing candidates against Hamdan Sati-Zulkarnaen as well as Abdul Latief-Awaludin, the two run-off candidates, in addition to other irregularities (see Table 3 above).<sup>9</sup> The second round is also likely to result in significant polarization, both between the two remaining candidates and amongst losing candidates. There is likely to be a flurry of tense dealing-making as the second round candidates attempt to secure the support of those who lost in the first round.

## **IV. Some Implications**

At this point, in the immediate aftermath of election day and before official results have been announced, it is difficult to ascertain the implications of the election results. It is worthwhile, however, flagging a few of the potential implications and issues, many of which have already been discussed extensively in local media.

### ***Will the election results strengthen or weaken center-periphery relations?***

It is difficult to know whether the elections will strengthen or weaken center-periphery relations between Jakarta and Aceh. Indeed, the Irwandi-Nazir gubernatorial win can be, and indeed has been, interpreted in many ways. For some it is a vote against the past—a rejection of Jakarta’s heavy-handed military offences over the years—but not necessarily a vote against a future Aceh within the Indonesian state. For some Indonesian nationalists, however, it is seen as a vote for

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<sup>9</sup> See ‘9 Kasus “Kadaluarsa” di Panwaslih Tamiang’, *Serambi Indonesia* (22 December 2006).

GAM's independence ideology and some factions within the DPR in Jakarta have stated their concern that the result will more easily result in foreign intervention in Aceh. In contrast, key leaders from both Jakarta and Aceh seem to be making more moderate noises. The President and TNI Chief have thrown their support behind the results and interpreted them as a "vote for the people of Aceh". Similarly, Irwandi has allayed fears by reaffirming his commitment to working within the terms of the MoU. Another interpretation shifts the focus away from former ideological differences and emphasizes instead Acehnese rejection of national political parties. Indeed, the victory of independent candidates is a good indication that alternative local parties will also do well in the 2009 legislative elections.<sup>10</sup> What these interpretations or "noises" actually signal is difficult to determine at this point. There are bound to be disagreements over interpretation of the LoGA and the extent of Aceh's autonomy. Given the uniqueness of post-MoU Aceh's status, and the additional challenges of a former rebel movement coming to power so quickly, the place of Aceh within the Indonesian state is likely to be continually informally negotiated, with compromises necessary from both the center and the province if an effective working relationship is to be established.

### ***The impact on conflict cleavages within Aceh?***

The local competition for political power that elections naturally bring to the fore does not seem to have inflamed past vertical conflict cleavages within Aceh. Security personnel performed professionally and were implicated in very few incidents. Similarly, no incidents between GAM and anti-separatist fronts have been reported. In both Aceh Tengah and Bener Meriah, KPA/GAM candidates have not been the targets of former anti-separatist front leaders in ongoing *pilkada*-related disputes. In fact, the *pilkada* appears to mark the end of the anti-separatist front as a significant political force to be reckoned with in the central highlands. Ethnic politics was significant in areas of high(er) ethnic heterogeneity, including in Bener Meriah where voters tended to vote along ethnic or *putra daerah* lines, but these cleavages do not seem to have strengthened the position of anti-separatist fronts. Despite some early concerns, the ALA/ABAS issue (relating to the proposed splitting of Aceh into three provinces) was also not prominent during the elections. It remains to be seen whether the KPA/GAM's dominance in the north-east and relative weakness in the south-central highlands will strengthen this debate amongst political elites. It is unclear what the fall-out of the previous split within GAM will be, but it appears there have been at least some attempts at reconciliation between the old faction (which backed Human-Hasbi) and the 'young turks' (who supported Irwandi-Nazar). The effect of the split on the rank and file particularly in the east coast districts where internal tensions were more pronounced will also be more difficult to gauge.

### ***Policy priorities are likely to shift, but implementation may be difficult***

More substantively, there is much speculation on the policy and governance implications of having a GAM governor at the helm. During the campaign period and over the past few days Irwandi has spoken quite strongly and directly, particularly compared to other candidates, about his views on reintegration assistance, the state implementation and enforcement of *sharia* law, the BRR's role and effectiveness, as well as more general views on eradicating corruption and the Aceh bureaucracy. These issues are all likely to receive increased or renewed attention once Irwandi and Nazar take office. Of course, their ability to act on their policy ideas will very much depend on nurturing a cooperative relationship both with the provincial legislature, the line agencies (*dinas*), and the district governments, many of which will be led by non-KPA/GAM people.

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<sup>10</sup> There are, however, opposing voices in Jakarta contesting the validity of local parties contesting national legislative elections on constitutional grounds. Some suggest that had the result gone the other way, with the Acehnese backing national parties, those opposed to local parties could have argued that the Acehnese were satisfied with national parties and that there was no need to allow for local parties.

The new governor and GAM/KPA-affiliated district heads will in effect be “minority” governments facing parliaments filled with representatives from national parties. Some also question whether the duo—as well as some of the new regional *bupatis*—have the governing capacity to actually implement their policy ideas. Again, except to note that fresh policy ideas are likely to be on the agenda, it is difficult to know what directions these developments will take. What is clear is that the onus will now be on victorious GAM/KPA-affiliated candidates to deliver on their campaign promises in order to prove that GAM, as a future local political party, can indeed make a difference.