

VERANDAH OF VIOLENCE

The Background to the Aceh Problem



Editor

Anthony Reid

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Edited by

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In Memoriam

M. Isa Sulaiman, 1951–2004

Only one contributor to this volume lived through the events described in it, as a home-grown Acehnese historian of his people. Tragically, he shared the fate of many thousands of his countrymen on 26 December 2004. His home was near the coast in the northern suburbs of Banda Aceh, and few residents there survived when the giant tsunami carried everything before it. This book is dedicated to him, and to the many thousands of his countrymen who died on that day.

Mohammad Isa Sulaiman was born on 30 June 1951 in remote Manggeng, Southern Aceh, and had all his early education in the province. He took his masters (S2) degree from the teacher training (IKIP) section of the state university of Aceh (Universitas Syiah Kuala or Unsyiah), in 1977, having joined its faculty the year before. In 1979 he was chosen to participate in the innovative field research training station funded by the Ford Foundation in Ujung Pandang (Makassar). There, under the direction of the French ethnologist and Bugis specialist Christian Pelras, he wrote an exceptionally interesting and much quoted report on the principal Bugis ironworking village of Massepe, in Sidenreng. This led to a scholarship to Paris, mastery of another language, and a doctorate under the supervision of historian Denys Lombard. The dissertation covered the crucial struggles for power in the 1940s, with the title “*Les ulèebalang, les ulémas et les enseignants de madrasah: la lutte pour le pouvoir local en Aceh de 1942 à 1951*” (EHESS, 1985).

Returning to Banda Aceh he continued to teach in his alma mater and became a model of the engaged historian of his people. In 1997 he published the first comprehensive professional history of twentieth century Aceh — *Sejarah Aceh: Sebuah Gugatan terhadap Tradisi*. Three years later he accomplished an outstandingly balanced survey of the independence movement (GAM) — *Aceh Merdeka: Ideologi, Kepimpinan dan Gerakan* (2000). His chapter in this book is his last completed work and the first substantial piece to appear in English. It demonstrates well his concern to show the continuities in the various Acehnese resistance movements

of the twentieth century, and the roots of Hasan Tiro's movement in a much longer past.

His work reflected his roots in a rural Acehnese society far from the elite centres of power. He was interested always in the apparently marginal and the marginalised. His first (bachelors) thesis documented a pesantren in his native south Aceh district; and a later research project was on an even more remote community in Gunong Kong, West Aceh. The offer of a visiting position in Singapore caught him on another research project in Simeuleu island off the west coast. His newest project sought to recover the history of the left in Aceh, a vital element in all the conflicts of pre-1965 Aceh which was first suppressed in the 1965 bloodbath, and then expunged from national memory.

Although a quiet achiever who did not frequent the international conference circuit, he gradually built a reputation as the most reliable and knowledgeable of Aceh's historians. When the negotiations between GAM and Jakarta appeared to be facing breakdown in October 2002, he was one of six neutral Aceh intellectuals and NGO representatives flown to Geneva by the HDC intermediaries, to convince the two sides how strong was the popular demand for peace. In 2003 he was invited to Leiden to take part in a KITLV project on "Access and Identity in post-Suharto Indonesia". Between March and July 2004 he was a Visiting Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, writing his chapter for this book.

He was co-convenor of the May 2004 Conference which gave birth to this volume. All of those who knew him came to treasure his quiet dignity, erudition, and good sense. As with so many of Aceh's finest who died with him, his loss will be irreparable.

Selamat jalan, Pak Isa. *Poteu Allah peuseulamat, la'en handjeuët ma'nusia.*

Preface

This book originated in a Singapore conference on 28–29 May 2004, at a time when the prospects for a negotiated consensual solution to the long-standing problem of Aceh appeared particularly dark. The short-lived Cessation of Hostilities Agreement had broken down just a year earlier, a military solution was being attempted yet again, and plans for Acehese autonomy were further than ever from being implemented.

As the book was being prepared following this conference, Aceh suffered an unimaginable tragedy. The giant earthquake and tsunami of 26 December 2004 made everybody in Aceh a victim, with colossal losses to all sides in the dispute. Some chapters were updated as peace talks were again being conducted, and final editing was taking place as the 15 August 2005 Memorandum of Understanding between the warring parties was signed. This set of events represents the best opportunity in decades for Aceh to be reconstructed in a peaceful atmosphere of democracy and reconciliation, but nobody should expect it to happen without heroic efforts from all sides.

Experience has made Acehese deeply sceptical about paper agreements between civilians to which the men with the guns were not committed. A very small number of civilian leaders on each side was responsible for negotiating the Helsinki Agreement. Peace and democracy will only come to Aceh if the international community, now with a huge stake in tsunami reconstruction, uses the peace actively to support those people on the ground who are committed to democratic and consultative outcomes.

The deep distrust built up over decades will not readily be overcome, particularly when Acehese society is on its knees from the brutalising effects of war and tsunami. Previous agreements for regional autonomy in 1950, 1959 and 2001 have never been effective in a climate of military dominance, bureaucratic centralisation and personal corruption. Can autonomy and democracy become realities after a devastating natural calamity when the local administration was weaker than ever? This book does not predict the future, nor offer a blueprint for peace. It represents a plea for listening to the people of Aceh and involving them democratically in the search for solutions.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge in the first place the support of the Asia Research Institute (ARI) of the National University of Singapore in funding and coordinating the 2004 conference, and galvanising the authors into writing and rewriting their chapters. ARI's Lynn Tan was a tower of strength in organising the conference. Muhammad Nur Djuli and Wiryono Sastrohandoyo also wrote valuable papers for that conference, though they were not able to attend in person. The input of a number of discussants, including M.C. Ricklefs, K. Kesavapany, Jamie Davidson, Marcus Mietzner and Mark Hong, was also valuable to the authors.

In preparing the book for publication, a major role was taken by Jiang Yang, too briefly a research assistant at ARI before departing for Canberra to pursue her own academic career. She edited the chapters for consistency, formatted the book and prepared or collated the combined bibliography, maps and illustrations. Jiang Na took over for the last stage and coordinated the final shape of the volume.

An initial translation of Isa Sulaiman's conference paper was undertaken by Zuraidah Ehsan. Mok Ly Yng drew the elegant maps. Connie Teo Eng Sook contributed her efficiency to much of the correspondence. Billie Nessen provided many striking photos. Michelle Miller did an outstanding job on the index to a tight deadline. At Singapore University Press we thank Lena Qua for her copy-editing and Winnifred Wong for the cover design.

Spelling and Usage

Aceh has been spelled in numerous ways since the Portuguese introduced *Dachem* and the Arabs and Italians *Assi*. English usage was most commonly *Achin* before the twentieth century but thereafter usually *Acheh*, in deference to what Acehnese themselves call their country. The Dutch consistently romanised the same word as *Atjeh*, as did Indonesians in the first years of independence. In 1974, however, the common spelling agreement between Indonesia and Malaysia accepted the letter *c* to represent the English sound *ch* or Dutch *tj*, and *j* to represent Dutch *dj*. Since then Indonesia called its province *Aceh* and the world has in general followed suit. That is the usage followed in this book, as with all other place names such as *Calang*.

The older leadership of GAM, however, has rejected Bahasa Indonesia as the language of Aceh (though accepting the long-term use of Malay as lingua franca), and consequently rejected also the new spellings since 1974. In quotations from GAM statements, therefore, the older English usage *Acheh* continues to appear.

The capital of Aceh has been called Banda Aceh since 1962, and on the whole was called either that or simply “Aceh” before 1873. The Dutch, however, introduced the term Kota Radja or Kutaradja (the city or citadel of the king) for the fortified capital they captured in 1874, and this remained the name of the town until changed in 1962. This book accepts the usage Kutaradja during the period it was official (1874–1962), as it does Batavia for the capital of the Indies between 1619 and 1942. Before and after these dates we use Banda Aceh and Jakarta.

In order to capture the diphthongs of spoken Acehnese, Snouck Hurgronje and Hoesein Djajadiningrat (author of the first scholarly dictionary) introduced a complex pattern of diacritics on vowels. As this system has never been formally updated or overturned, we follow it for Acehnese words, but not for place names which now have a simpler orthography.

Contributors

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Edward Aspinall is Fellow in the Department of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University. He previously taught at the University of Sydney and University of New South Wales. His publications include *Opposing Suharto: Compromise, Resistance and Regime Change in Indonesia* (Stanford University Press, 2005) and (with Harold Crouch) *The Aceh Peace Process: Why It Failed* (East West Center, 2003).

Aleksius Jemadu has been Head of the Department of International Relations, Parahyangan Catholic University, Bandung, Indonesia since 2004. He obtained his PhD in Political Science from Leuven in 1996. His publications include: “Democratization and the Dilemma of Nation-Building in Post-Soeharto Indonesia: The Case of Aceh”, *Asian Ethnicity* 5, 3 (October 2004) and “Seeking a More Participatory Approach in the Resolving of the Aceh Conflict”, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 5, 3 (2004).

Damien Kingsbury is Director of International and Community Development, Deakin University, Victoria, Australia. His books include *The Politics of Indonesia*, 3rd edition (Oxford University Press, 2005), *South-East Asia: A Political Profile*, 2nd edition (Oxford University Press, 2005), and *Power Politics and the Indonesian Military* (RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

Lee Kam Hing studied at the University of Malaya and Monash University, Melbourne, and taught at the University of Malaya, eventually as professor of history. He is presently Research Editor at Star Publications in Kuala Lumpur. His publications include *The Sultanate of Aceh: Relations with the British 1760–1824* (Oxford University Press, 1995).

Lesley McCulloch collaborated with Damien Kingsbury, at the time their joint chapter was prepared, in a Research Project on the Indonesian military at Deakin University. Her publications include *Trifungsi: The Role of the Indonesian Military in Business* (Bonn, 2000).

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E. Edwards McKinnon was Visiting Fellow at Asia Research Institute (2004/5) after a career in Indonesia for over 30 years in plantation agriculture and development work. His Ph.D. (Cornell) in Archaeology concerned the north Sumatra site of Kota Cina. His interests in Aceh stem from conversations with the late H. Mohammad Said (*Waspada*) and his publications include "Beyond Serandib, a Note on Lambri at the Northern Tip of Aceh" in *Indonesia* (1988).

Michelle Ann Miller is completing her PhD on Aceh at Charles Darwin University, where she also previously taught. She has tutored at Deakin University. Her publications include "The Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam Law: A Serious Response to Acehnese Separatism?", *Asian Ethnicity* 5, 3 (October 2004), and "From reform to repression: the post-New Order's shifting security policies in Aceh", *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 38, 2 (2004).

William Nessen is a freelance journalist, photographer and documentary film-maker. He has written for numerous publications in Europe, North America, Australia and Asia. He specialises in Indonesia and the South Pacific. His forthcoming film, *The Black Road*, is about the conflict in Aceh.

Anthony Reid is Foundation Director of the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore. He was previously Professor of Southeast Asian History at the Australian National University (1989–99) and UCLA (1999–2002). His books include: *The Contest for North Sumatra: Atjeh, the Netherlands and Britain, 1858–1898* (1969); *The Indonesian National Revolution, 1945–1950* (1974); *The Blood of the*

People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra (1979); *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680*, 2 vols. (1988–93); *Charting the Shape of Early Modern Southeast Asia* (1999); *An Indonesian Frontier: Acehnese and other Histories of Sumatra* (2004).

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M. Isa Sulaiman, victim of the tsunami, is described in the memorial tribute.

Glossary and Abbreviations

ABRI	<i>Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia</i> ; The Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia
<i>adat</i>	customary law
ASNLF	Aceh-Sumatra National Liberation Front
<i>bangsa</i>	nation, race
<i>BKI</i>	<i>Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde</i> , issued by KITLV
BPK	<i>Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan</i> ; National Audit Agency
Brimob	(paramilitary police) Mobile Brigade
<i>BSOAS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
<i>bughat</i>	revolt against a legal government; rebellion
<i>bupati</i>	district head
Bulog	<i>Badan Urusan Logistic</i> ; State Logistics Agency
CoHA	Cessation of Hostilities [Framework] Agreement, signed by GAM and government, 9 December 2003
<i>Daerah Istimewa</i>	Special Region; status granted to Aceh in 1959
<i>dakwah</i>	preaching, proselytism
Darul Islam (Ar)	House of Islam; Indonesian Islamic rebellion of 1948–63
<i>dayah</i> (Ac)	Acehnese religious school of the highest level, boarding school
<i>Dewan Repolusi</i>	Revolutionary Council; Darul Islam Aceh leadership under Hasan Saleh
DI	<i>Darul Islam</i>

DOM	<i>Daerah Operasi Militer</i> ; Military Operation Zone
DPA	<i>Dewan Perwakilan Aceh</i> ; Aceh Representative Council
DPR	<i>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat</i> ; People's Representative Council
EMOI	ExxonMobil Oil Indonesia
Florin or guilder	pre-war currency
<i>fardhu'ain</i> (Ar)	religious obligation
<i>fatwa</i> (Ar)	legal ruling by a Muslim Jurist
<i>firman</i> (Turkish)	decree
GAM	<i>Gerakan Aceh Merdeka</i> ; Free Aceh Movement
Golkar	<i>Golongan Karya</i> ; Functional Group (Suharto-era government party)
<i>hari raya</i>	(great day), holiday
<i>hari raya puasa</i>	<i>idulfitri</i> ; feast at end of fasting month
HDC	Henri Dunant Centre
HGU	<i>Hak Guna Usaha</i> ; Land Concession
hikayat	chronicle; Acehnese verse epic
HPH	<i>Hak Pengusahaan Hutan</i> ; Forestry Exploitation Concession
HPS	<i>Hikayat Perang Sabil</i> ; Tales of Holy War
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HUDA	<i>Himpunan Ulama Dayah Aceh</i> ; Association of (Traditional) Acehnese Ulama
IAIN	<i>Institut Agama Islam Indonesia</i> ; State Islamic Institute
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
<i>imam</i>	leader of the Friday prayer, in Aceh head of <i>mukim</i>

<i>infaq</i>	war fees
Inpres	<i>Instruksi Presiden</i> ; Presidential instruction
ISEAS	Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore
<i>jihad</i> (Ar)	struggle (popularly equated with holy war)
<i>jihad fi sabilillah</i> (Ar)	struggle in the way of God; holy war
<i>jilbab</i> (Ar)	Muslim women's headscarf, concealing hair
JMBRAS	<i>Journal of the Malaysian Branch, Royal Asiatic Society</i>
JRAS	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
JSBRAS	<i>Journal of the Straits Branch, Royal Asiatic Society</i>
JSC	Joint Security Committee (established under CoHA)
JSEAH	<i>Journal of Southeast Asian History</i>
<i>kadi</i>	religious official or judge
<i>kafir / kaphé</i> (Ac)	unbeliever; infidel
<i>kapur Barus</i>	<i>Dryobalanops aromatica</i> ; camphor
<i>keistimewaan</i>	special-ness
Kepres	<i>Keputusan Presiden</i> ; Presidential Decree
<i>Khedive</i> (Ar)	viceroy
Kodam	<i>Komando Daerah Militer</i> ; Regional Military Command
<i>Kolakops Jaring Merah</i>	Operation Red Net (1989–98)
Komnas HAM	<i>Komisi Nasional Hak Azasi Manusia</i> ; National Commission for Human Rights
Kontras	<i>Komite untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Tindak Kekerasan</i> ; National Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence
Kopassandha	(predecessor of Kopassus)
Kopassus	<i>Komando Pasukan Khusus</i> ; special forces

<i>Korte Verklaring</i> (D)	short agreement
Kostrad	<i>Komando Cadangan Strategis Angkatan Darat</i> ; Army Strategic Reserve Command
KRA	<i>Kongres Rakyat Aceh</i> ; Aceh People's Congress
<i>Kraton</i> (D/Javanese)	fortified citadel
<i>Ksatria Unit Penegak Pancasila</i>	Noble Warriors for Upholding Pancasila
KSBO	<i>Komando Sektor Barat dan Oetara</i> ; West and North Sector Command (Medan Front)
<i>kubah</i>	dome
LBH	<i>Lembaga Bantuan Hukum</i> ; Legal Aid Foundation
Linmas	<i>Perlindungan Masyarakat</i> ; People's Protection
LIPI	<i>Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia</i> ; Indonesian Institute of Sciences
<i>madrasah</i> (Ar)	Islamic school
M.A.E.	Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (Paris)
<i>Mahkamah Syari'ah</i> (Ar)	Islamic court system
<i>Majelis Penimbang</i>	Advisory Council
Majelis Ulama	Council of Ulama
<i>meunasah</i> (Ac)	communal hall
MPR	<i>Majlis Permusyawaratan Rakyat</i> ; the People's Consultative Assembly
MUI	<i>Majelis Ulama Indonesia</i> ; Islamic Scholars Council
<i>mujahidin</i> (Ar)	warriors of God

<i>mukim</i> (Ar)	parish; in Aceh a territorial unit of a few villages
<i>murtad</i> (Ar)	apostasy
NAD	<i>Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam</i> ; State of Aceh, Abode of Peace; name of Aceh province following Law No.18 of 2001
<i>nanggroe</i> (Ac)	state (cf Malay <i>negeri</i>); domain of an <i>ulëëbalang</i>
Negara Islam Indonesia	Islamic State of Indonesia
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NKPM	<i>Nederland Koninklijk Petroleum Maatschappij</i>
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid
OIC	Organisation of the Islamic Conference
<i>oknum</i>	rogue elements
OKPH	<i>Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Penegakan Hukum</i> ; Security Recovery Operation, 2001–2
<i>Operasi Terpadu</i>	Integrated Operation (of TNI from 19 May 2003)
ORPAD	<i>Organisasi Perempuan Aceh Demokratik</i> ; Organization of Democratic Acehnese Women
OUP	Oxford University Press
<i>panglima</i>	war-leader; commander
<i>panglima wilayah</i>	regional commander
PDIP	<i>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan</i> ; Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle
PDMD	<i>Penguasa Darurat Militer Daerah</i> ; Regional Military Emergency Authority

PDSD	<i>Penguasa Darurat Sipil Daerah</i> ; Regional Civilian Emergency Authority
<i>pembinaan</i>	guidance
<i>pemuda</i>	youth
<i>penghulu</i>	head
Peperda	<i>Penguasa Perang Daerah</i> ; Regional War Administrator
<i>Perang Beulanda</i> (Ac)	the Dutch War
<i>perang sabil</i>	holy war
<i>perikatan</i>	federation
<i>perlawanan rakyat</i> (wanra)	civil defence groups
<i>Perusahaan Perkebunan Negara</i>	state-owned plantations
Pesindo	Indonesian Socialist Youth
PKI	Indonesian Communist Party
PKPB	<i>Partai Karya Peduli Bangsa</i> ; Concern for Nation Functional Party
PPN	<i>Perusahaan Perkebunan Negara</i> ; state-owned plantations
PPP	<i>Partai Persatuan Pembangunan</i> ; United Development Party
PPRC	<i>Pasukan Pemukul Reaksi Cepat</i> ; Quick Reaction Strike Units
<i>prahu</i>	sailing vessel
PRI	<i>Pemuda Republik Indonesia</i>
PUSA	<i>Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh</i> ; all-Aceh union of Islamic Scholars
pungli (<i>pungutan liar</i>)	wild fees; extortion
<i>Qanun</i> (Ac)	Regional regulation