



Human Rights Council Forum on Minority Issues:
"Minorities in situations of humanitarian crises"
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Recovering from a crisis: ensuring durable solutions

Thank you Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Asnawi Ali, and on behalf of the Acheh-Sumatra National Liberation Front or ASNLF, I wish to draw the attention of the forum on the situation in my homeland, Acheh in Sumatra.

For almost 30 years, between 1976-2005, Acheh was under massive Indonesia's military operations against members and followers of the pro-independence movement, that caused tens of thousands casualties and uncountable serious human rights violations. It is well documented, that most of the violations had been committed by Indonesian armed/police forces, in the form of summary executions, torture, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detention, rape and sexual assault, and property destruction.

On the 26th December 2004 Acheh was heavily damaged by the Indian Ocean tsunami, which claimed over 170 000 lives. The aftermath of the natural disaster, Indonesia and the Free Acheh Movement agreed to end the military conflict.

On 15 August 2005, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), mediated by the Finnish peace broker Crisis Management Initiative, was signed by the government of Indonesia and the Free Acheh Movement in Helsinki. The signing of the peace deal had been accelerated partly through the above-mentioned natural catastrophe, so that the international access for the humanitarian help in the region was made possible. The people of Acheh owed to international communities for all assistance and all of the delivered humanitarian reliefs.

Mr. Chairman,

Twelve years after the natural disaster and eleven years after ending of armed conflict, much of its infrastructure might have been rebuilt, but the people of Acheh is still desperately struggling for its fundamental changes in civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

There is only little attention has been paid to reviving civil societies, economic recovery and addressing past human rights abuses. On the contrary, the central government which has more power in the region has been busy dealing with the local government to safeguard its interests.



Many human rights organisations have also recommended prosecution of those responsible, compensation for the victims, restoration of civilian institutions, ending the culture of impunity within the military, a wholesale review of military law and education, and re-allocation of resources between the central and provincial governments. But, most of the above recommendations have not yet been addressed by the central government.

Relating to the economic issues, we want to express our concerns with regard to the inhibiting development in the region. According to the Central Bureau for Statistics, Acheh's economic growth was less than two percent during this year. It is far below the average Indonesian growth rate of more than five percent. The unemployment rate was at nine percent, well above the national average of six percent. The poverty rate was 18 percent in Acheh, well above the national average of 12 percent in Indonesia. While Acheh one of the richest regions in the archipelago, producing billions of barrels of oil, gas, etc. just for the benefit of Jakarta.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In finding a durable solution to the complexity of the problem, Indonesia should review its old “divide and rule” policy towards Acheh, particularly with regard to fundamental freedoms such as civil, political, economic, social rights, especially freedom of expression and the right to self-determination of the people of Acheh.

The ASNLF call upon international communities, especially the EU and the UN, to closely monitor the situation in Acheh and put pressure on Indonesia to end impunity by resolving the past gross human rights violations during thirty-year armed conflicts.

Therefore, ASNLF endorses the forum recommendations of articles 26 (g) concerning the promotion of employment via training, education as to ensure full recovery and protect minority from further marginalisation. And article 32 (d) which says partly that “Organisations or individuals responsible for human rights violations, including acts of discrimination, or neglect, must be held accountable”.

Thank you for your attention.
