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The Role of European Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) in Indonesia Case Study Disarming Aceh Separatist Free Movement

Zulham

Junior Lecturer, Department of Political Science,
Faculty of Social Science and Political Science, Malikussaleh University, Lhokseumawe, Indonesia

Abstract:

The article discusses the involvement of European Union in Indonesia's intra-state political conflict. It is difficult for foreign states to interfere the country's domestic affair. Many national and local arguments refuse external actor existence to play inside one of this South East ASEAN region. However, the peace accord took place on 15 August 2005 between the government of Indonesia and the Free Separatist Movement which is well known as GAM. Further, the peace agreement called as Helsinki (Finland) memorandum of understanding, after more than 32 years the political conflict took place. Eventually GAM ready to be disarmed as authorized by the signed Helsinki regulation agreement. Therefore, GAM disarmament is new entering gate for European countries to interfere within the county and across in the form of Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM)

Keywords: European, AMM, disarmament, Aceh and Indonesia

1. Introduction

Up until the late nineteenth century, Aceh had been an independent sultanate that had continued as a sovereign state for almost 500 years. From 1641 to 1824, the Aceh kingdom was at the center of a British-Dutch tussle and finally in 1824, Aceh was granted and independence under the Anglo-Dutch treaty (Iyer, 2003). Then, the Dutch colonial achieved control of the archipelago only after a continuing war between 1873 and 1903. That led to the death of some 10.000 colonial armies and Aceh remaining unoccupied. In 1949, the republic of Indonesia was created from the Holland East Indies. Indonesia, as Java-based government, attempted variously to consolidate control over Aceh region, labeling it as a part of Indonesia to the target of national and post-colonial unification and made Aceh as a new special province of the new country. Aceh agreed to join the Republic of Indonesia at time of independence much due to the promises of President Sukarno that Aceh would gain autonomy within the Republic which followed by the special region status. Yet this promise was subsequently broken and Aceh was instead incorporated into the North Sumatra province (Bjornehed, 2003).

Disappointed by this status, the Acehnese have since then demanded separation from Indonesia by announcing themselves independent in 1953. Hasan Di Tiro, an Acehnese American educated background descendant of the sultan of Aceh who posted as the Acehnese ambassador to the United Nations during the house of Islam rebellion (*Darul Islam*) movement in the region, then their separatist movement quickly turned into an armed struggle, finally formed the organization in 1976, despite Hasan treated as the symbolic president of Free Aceh Movement (GAM) while exiled in Sweden since 1980 and delegating authority for routine operating group to Abdullah Syafei'I (killed by the Indonesian military) and replaced by Muzakir Manaf at present. Initially GAM rebels started at low level guerilla in 1970s, but in 1980s GAM advantaged support from Libyan government in assisting weapon and training, the military equipment supply, which encouraged the movement escalation till challenged the war with the government of Indonesia between 1989 and 1990s (Rabasa & Chalk, 2001).

Geographically, Aceh lies in the northernmost tip of Sumatra, across the Straits of Malacca from the border between Thailand and Malaysia. The Acehnese have long conducted a celebration of proud independence, after long fought against the Netherland colonialist occupation and afterwards by the Javanese (ICG, October, 1999). This North-western region trip of Indonesia, almost 40.000 Indonesian armies, Javanese military and brigadier mobile police have deployed in this region, raping, torturing, and killing the innocent, and referendum on self-determination demanders became part of daily pictures in this archipelago. Acehnese war for independence started in 1873 when, in negotiation to arrange the rest of archipelago, England shifted its hesitation to the Netherlands integrating the territory of sultanate into East Indies occupation. For almost 32 years war which caused loss of many Acehnese and Dutch colonial troops, finally Banda Aceh (Aceh province capital city) came into fall under Dutch control. But it didn't reduce the assault of Acehnese attack on colonial fighters. In adaptation to the situation, the Acehnese changed, it is war aggression from open

battle to guerilla war in the forests, mountains and remote villages. The indigenous society kept offensive battle on Netherland till Japan colonized Indonesia in 1942.

Winning their war over the Dutch, Daud Beurueh (Acehnese guerilla leader) achieved the Aceh revolution. Owing to their sympathy to Indonesia which was still under the rule of colonial Dutch, the Acehnese assisted the Indonesians by giving free aircraft known as a DC3 in the form of neighboring solidarity colonial victims to fight the remain of Dutch troops in Java. But the Acehnese's dream to be federation of state was disappointed in 1950, by the government in Jakarta. Sukarno unilaterally declared the removal of the federal system as form of government and replacing it by a unitary form of state based on Jakarta's centralization and Java administration. Jakarta's provocateur decision made the emergence of secessionist movement in Aceh. The separatist movement started in 1976 in which the Acehnese announced it is desire to be separated from Indonesia through it is organization famously known as the Aceh Free Movement (GAM, Gerakan Aceh Merdeka) and officially sometimes it called as the Aceh Sumatra National Liberation Front (ASNLF) (Kingsbury, 2003). The Sukarno's negative decision treated as betrayal by the largest of Acehnese and this territorial sovereign dispute has been becoming main grass root of conflict reason up to now between Jakarta and Aceh. Every Indonesian President has been challenging to make certain political approach in countering and problem solving over Aceh. The policies generally assumed the form of repression rather than persuasion. Military action is often used instead of political-social approach. During President Yudhoyono's election campaign, he created resolving the conflict in Aceh a core priority should he win the presidency. Particularly, he argued that he would resolve the Aceh trouble within three years of being in regime. They were not humble promises. President Yudhoyono has been in the background and at times, at the forefront of the Aceh peace process since the Wahid administration. He has seen the conflict resolution at its ebbs and lows, He has realized its success and studied its downfall (Djalal and Dini Sari Djalal, 2006).

2. European AMM Establishment

During the third of five rounds of negotiation between the government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), both parties sought to identify a suitable monitoring body for the eventual agreement. An Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) was to be established by the European Union (EU) and five countries with a mandate to monitor the implementation of both parties commitment (Feith, 2007). During the peace talks, it became clear that a credible neutral outside body was needed to monitor the implementation of the peace deal and to verify that a series of tracking points had been reached (Kirwan, 2008).

GAM pushed for greater international peace keeping responsibilities, where as the government of Indonesia may have originally wanted a mission consisting only of neighbouring Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) states, but GAM insisted on European Union (EU) involvement in addition (Burke, 2008). At the peace talks the representatives of the government of Indonesia specially pointed out that it would not accept any traditional United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations in Aceh. Instead of the UN peacekeeping option, both parties considered regional organizations as potentially acceptable. As GAM was keen to have the European Union join the monitoring and after some negotiations the government of Indonesia was also ready to accept them too (Lahdensuo, P.10). The UN's position has been determined in part by its standing in Indonesian society. Following the intervention in East Timor, many Indonesians disputed the UN's independence and impartiality, the government of Indonesia (GoI), therefore, has been doing all it can to ensure that the Aceh process is perceived as a wholly domestic affair. Due to the stance and perception of the parties involved, the UN has not been viewed as the optimally neutral third party (Peterson, 2005). To mark the historic event the government made the deal signing in Helsinki (Finland) viewable by teleconference to all the parties involved: in Banda Aceh (Aceh provincial capital city) and in Jakarta (Djalal and Dini Sari Djalal, 2006)

Immediately after the signing of peace agreement, an unprecedented joint mission between EU member states and ASEAN was launched to monitor the peace (*Jakarta Post*, 9 December 2005). In the end, the EU Council Joint Action 2005/643/CFSP established the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) on 9 September 2005. Under this arrangement, the EU led AMM, associated ASEAN countries take part through the frame work provided by EU. Although, the Joint Action constituted the legal authority for the EU's involvement in the AMM, the mission's mandate is taken almost verbatim from the peace agreement itself (Peterson, 2005).

The preparations for the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) begun with the Technical Assessment Mission (TAM) which visited Jakarta and Aceh. TAM consisted of civilian and military personnel from a mixture of European Union (EU) member states (Schulze, 2007). Later the Technical Assessment Mission (TAM) became the Initial Monitoring presence (IMP), which was not a legal European Union formation and it addressed concern that without an immediate visible presence on the ground, the peace deal might unravel. The Technical Assessment Mission as well as the Initial Monitoring Presence deployed and operated under the diplomatic umbrellas of its respective embassies (Kirwan, 2008).

An Initial Monitoring Presence (IMP) was put together by the European Union (EU) and ASEAN states and deployed on 15 August 2005. The Initial Monitoring mission was to bridge the period between the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and the final establishment of the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) on 15 September 2005. With this measure, the EU and ASEAN states wanted to demonstrate their engagement with regard to the peace process on the one hand, and to contribute towards confidence-building measures within the population of Aceh in the period immediately after the implementation of the MoU on the other (Beeck, 2007). From 3-14 August 2005, this term was called as pre-Initial Monitoring Presence (IMP) period entailed familiarization with the condition and field actors, forecasting a range of scenarios and detailed planning. It also included preparations to demonstrate a presence in Aceh when the MoU was signed on 15 August 2005 (Sinen & Sami, p. 25).

The Initial Monitoring Presence (IMP) was established because it was legally impossible for the European Union to set up the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) any earlier than it did. The IMP, consisting of a mix of 80 monitors from EU and ASEAN countries, was definitely set up in just 12 days (Beeck, p. 20). During the IMP period, many piratical preparations took place, including:

- Developing the concept of operations
- Working through a range of technical methods and procedures
- Preparing procedures and appropriate documentation
- Devising the structure and organization of the mobile decommissioning team
- Recruiting European Union and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) monitors as well as administrative positions
- Procuring and preparing the necessary equipment, tools and vehicles
- Preparing and receive and train personnel (Sinen & Sami L, p. 25)

Although, the IMP mission was illegal under the European Union, some European countries, such as Finnish and Swedish governments were heavily engaged in support of the IMP members, Finland, for instance, provided a group of technical specialists who made up the component of the decommissioning planning team, it also provided the team with a financial for expenditures incurred during the Initial Monitoring presence (Kirwan, 2008).

Switzerland and Norway, though were not a member of European (EU) were fully engaged in IMP and AMM, in which both of these countries had offered Indonesian Aceh peace process financially and field expert apparatus (*Jakarta Post*, 9 September 2006). The Swedish government made available the service of the Swedish Rescues Agency, which is a technical assistance organization capable of providing integrated logistical, communications and IT support for international operations. It also financed its rescue agency financial budget as well (Kirwan, 2008).

Although, the Aceh Monitoring (AMM) did not officially commence until 15 September 2005, this 80 EU and ASEAN observers were dispatched one month earlier, following the signing of the MoU. This Initial Monitoring Presence (IMP) were requested by the government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), and was seen as an early demonstration of the EU and ASEAN commitment to the peace process, and an important confidence-building element (Peterson, 2005). The members of IMP had received little background information on the Aceh conflict, no external briefings and very little information on why the previous Humanitarian Pause (HP) agreement and the Cessation on Hostilities Agreement (COHA) failed. Many of IMP Members felt that this part of the mission could have better prepared. Once in Indonesia, they met the Indonesian government and ASEAN monitors in Jakarta (Schulze, 2007).

The IMP member engaged in a number of activities to prepare the launch of the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM). Eleven district offices (DO) were opened and preparations made for the arrival, training, equipping and deployment of the main body of almost 240 mission staff. The main training event was carried out during 12-14 September 2005 in the city of Medan just outside of the mission area, with monitors arriving under their own government auspices, because European Union was still an able to support IMP under the EU' budget, unless the AMM was established (Kirwan, 2008).

The training program was consisted of human rights, that is social, political and cultural issues; health, that is safety and security; and communication systems operation. Briefings for the IMP members were given by a mixture of mission specialists, experts brought in form of Europe and significant Indonesian social and political figures, both from Aceh and Indonesia (Kirwan, 2008). "District office teams were formed during this period and they were deployed directly to their areas of responsibility from Medan or via Banda Aceh depending on the most sensible road access" (Kirwan, 2008, p. 133).

Eventually, the AMM was legally formed on 15 September 2005, and replaced the IMP position. The Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) is designed to respond maximally to the needs of the former adversaries. It is intended to make available the most credible verification possible without exacerbating tensions over a possible internationalization of the Aceh conflict (Peterson, 2005).

3. Function and Objection to the AMM

The AMM will monitor the implementation of the commitments undertaken by the government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) under the MoU. In particular, the AMM will:

- Monitor the demobilization of GAM and monitor and assist with the decommissioning and destruction of its weapons, ammunition, and explosives.
- Monitor the re-location of non-organic military forces and non-organic police troops
- Monitor the reintegration of active GAM members
- Monitor the human rights situation and provide assistance in this field in the context of the tasks set out in the above points
- Monitor the process of legislation change
- Rule on disputed amnesty cases
- Deal with complaints and alleged violations of the MoU
- Establish and maintain liaison and good cooperation with the parties (Council of the European Union Press, 2005, p. 2).

Seeing the above AMM's power, the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) was awarded far more authority than any of the foreign monitoring team involved in the previous Aceh peace process through its mandate to investigate and rule on alleged violations of the peace process and on disputed cases like amnesty (Miller, 2009, p. 159). On the top of that, it is also clearly stipulated that the head of the AMM is authorized to rule on any dispute and that is ruling is binding on all sides (the government and GAM). It even says that if eventually the two parties can not agree on the ruling by the AMM head, the chairman of the Board of Directors of the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), in this sense Martti Ahtisaari, will make a ruling which will be binding on the parties (*Jakarta Post*, 27

September 2005). There were worries in Jakarta about concessions in the MoU that could lead to support for separatist tendencies elsewhere (ICG, 15 August 2005, p. 1).

Criticism about the contents of the peace accord between the government and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) came up, with legislators questioning the role of foreign monitoring mission that the parliament said was too powerful and was an "internationalization" of a domestic conflicts (*Jakarta Post*, 20 August 2005). Legislator, such as Sutradara Ginting from the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) commented that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) had given the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM), which comprised of peace monitors from the European Union (EU) and five ASEAN countries, excessive powers to settle possible conflict during the implementation of the peace deal. The mission's tasks show that it doesn't only monitor, but rules on disputes and on complaints and alleged violations. The mission's decision is binding and cannot be vetoed (*Jakarta Post*, 20 August 2005).

Ginting further added "While looking at the former conflict facilitators in other countries, like in Moro, Cambodia, or Vietnam, they didn't get such great authority. Didn't the government think it is too much to give such overwhelming authority to people the government does not know? People whose real intent the country doesn't know...people who don't grasp the spirit of Indonesia?" (*Jakarta Post*, 20 August 2005). Another PDI-P party legislator, Aria Bima Prihastono argued "it would be naïve of the House not to seek clarification of the content of the MoU as it concerns in the House. Yet the parliament has been completely excluded from the process". Bima commented that the MoU damaged Indonesia's sovereignty, especially with the presence of the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM), which has consisted of around 200 unarmed observers from the EU and Southeast ASEAN countries, and claimed was the excessive powers granted to Aceh (*Jakarta Post*, 26 August 2005).

The former speaker of the Indonesian parliament, Amien Rais, warned the Indonesian government of the huge power interests in Aceh and Papua and felt that involvement of foreign countries could open access to these powers, which might have an agenda in disintegrating Indonesia (Kivimaki, 2006). Therefore, a number of Representatives law makers were seeking to summon the government to explain the Aceh peace agreement to the House, this motion was initiated by the Indonesian Democratic party of the Struggle (PDI-P) and focused on disappointment among some legislators over the signing of the MoU, which they claim neglected the role of the people's representatives in the House (*Jakarta Post*, 26 August 2005).

The government didn't engage with the parliament on it until after the signing of the MoU. The president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), as well as the vice president Jusuf Kalla never informed the House about the subjects of the negotiations, nor a single paragraph of the agreement. Parliament wanted to know what the government was deciding about, but the government refused to inform so. If the government had informed the parliament, they would have opposed the government. The parliament insisted that if there was a peace process or war announcement, it should be approved by the parliament. The government responded, yes, if it is peace or war with other countries, but Aceh is not another country, they are Indonesian people and the government doesn't need parliamentary approval (Kalla, 2008, p. 83).

Following the debate between the parliament and the government over the role of the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM), in favour of the parliament, the military was opposing the government concerning this issue. For example, former army chief of staff Lt. Gen (retired) Kiki Syahnakrie said the government could not guarantee that the foreign mission would be fair in its dealings. No one's monitoring the AMM, the AMM can monitor and decide and cannot be vetoed, but who can ensure their independence? Who can ensure that what happened in East Timor wouldn't recur? (*Jakarta Post*, 20 August 2005). This was the considerable suspicion and hostility in elements of the government of Indonesia, especially in the parliament and Indonesian military to suspect foreign intervention in separatist conflict (Aspinall, 2005a, p. 22).

There was a widely held belief that the international community, especially international non governmental organizations (NGOs), is engaged in a conspiracy with separatists to break Indonesia apart. Preventing internationalization remains an article of faith in sections of the national political elites (Aspinall, 2005b, p. 22). There were signs that the government of Indonesia is beginning to develop a difference perception of the role of the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM). President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) briefed the military top brass on the substance of the peace agreement, he convinced that they should not worry about the role of the AMM as the body was not authorized to rule on any dispute between the government and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). Such authority belonged to the central government (*Jakarta Post*, 27 September 2005). For their part, president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) and vice president Yusuf Kalla were ready to take the political risks required to push the peace initiative through the Jakarta political scene and to face down those nationalists opposition who were ready to exploit the condition should the process run into hindrances (Kirwan, 2008).

Minister of Foreign Affairs Hassan Wirayuda argued "there is an opinion that the AMM comprising foreigners from EU and ASEAN will internationalize the Aceh problem. The Indonesian people have to first understand the nature of the AMM's presence in Aceh, the AMM is invited the Indonesian government to help the country to implement the MoU. This is something that everyone has agreed upon, or in other words, the AMM's presence is in line with the government's interests, which are stated in the MoU and later in the Status of Monitoring Agreement (SOMA). Therefore, the Indonesian people don't use the term 'internationalization' just because they are foreigners" (*Jakarta Post*, 20 August 2005).

Legislator from the Golkar party, Theo L. Sambuaga, who chaired the House's Commission I, argued the presence of the mission was nothing unusual. When there is a conflict, it is normal to have a third party that is deemed as a neutral as a facilitator. It needs to have powers to make sure that neither parties cheat or stray from the agreement (*Jakarta Post*, 20 August 2005). Moreover, the past efforts, initiated with as much candor and goodwill, failed to produce results. The longest that peace lasted was a couple of months, this was the case with the Humanitarian Pause (HP) agreement under former president Abdurrahman Wahid in 2000, and another truce

brokered by the Henry Dunant Centre (HDC) in December 2002, which was known as Cessation on Hostility Agreement (COHA) under the former president Megawati Sukarnoputri (Jakarta Post, 20 December 2005).

The following agreements were failed due to the limited power of the Monitoring Mission. In this globalised world, this is the kind of support that the government expects to come from the international community. Indonesian parliament members and other related politicians should not perceive the international involvement as interference into it is domestic issue (Wanadi, 2006). However, the internationalization mindset has and will continue to constrain the ability of international actors to engage in peace building work. As mentioned above that only a limited foreign presence was allowed in Aceh, particularly from 2000 to 2003 (Aspinall, 2007c, p. 22).

In the contrary, the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) was very enthusiasm, particularly, is the wide authority given to the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM). The agreement sets out a list of the AMM's duties. Of particular importance is the fact that the AMM is authorized to monitor changes in the legislation and launch investigations if such changes deviate from the principles of the agreement (Jakarta Post, 27 September 2005). The Free Aceh Movement (GAM) emphasized that the international involvement was critical as they did not want to hand over weapons to the Indonesian army. They needed dignity, respect and safe methods to collect and destroy their weapons (Sinen and Sami Lahdensuo, p. 24)

4. Composition and Task of the AMM

Following an official invitation by the government of Indonesia, and supported by the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), the AMM was officially launched on 15 September 2005 which covers an initial period of 6 months (Lahdensuo, p. 10). The AMM was headquartered in the capital of Banda Aceh. The AMM is a civilian, not a military mission, its monitors do not carry weapons, despite it does have personnel with a military background, needed particularly for the disarmament of weapons, The AMM's personnel have expertise in a whole range of competencies needed to fulfill its works (Issues & Insights, 2006, p. 8). Following operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia, Georgia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Peterson, 2005, p. 5), the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) was a first for the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) in several regards. It was the first program developed in Asia, the first one launched in partnership with other regional organization and the first one required to be fully operational one day one of it is mandate (Kirwan, 2008).

Besides that, Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) is also involved in the implementation phase of the agreement through being part of the dispute settlement mechanism agreed upon in the Memorandum of Understanding. This states that the chairman of the Board of the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) will be called upon to rule on the disputes if they can not be settled between the parties (Government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement) and the head of the Aceh Monitoring Mission (CMI, 2005, p. 7).

While the AMM was launched, the Mission was consisted of 240 unarmed monitors from the EU states and five ASEAN states as well as from Norway and Switzerland. The mission had 10 district offices (DO), which were located throughout Aceh. Ten to twelve AMM monitors were stationed at each of these offices. They patrolled the surrounding area, were in contact with both the government and GAM and provided information on the content of the MoU and the concrete tasks of the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM). Furthermore, they conducted inspections and investigations when necessary (Beeck, 2007).

The AMM staff is equally distributed between the ASEAN and the EU, although there was slight surplus EU staff due to the fact that the mission was funded by the EU and so financial matters were dealt with by EU staff (Issues & Insights, 2006, p. 8). Due to the critical situation in the ground, later became eleven district offices (DO) covering all of Aceh. They were based in Sigli, Bireuen, Lhoksumawe, Langsa, Lamno/Calang, Meulaboh, Blang Pidie, Tapaktuan, Kutacane and Takengon (Schulze, 2007, p. 10).



Figure 1 : AMM District Offices

Source: http://www.aceh-mm.org/english/amm_menu/organisations.htm

Dutch diplomat Pieter Feith of the European Union (EU) Council Secretariat led the AMM. Lieutenant General Nipak Thonglek, former deputy director of the policy and planning division of Thailand's Ministry of Defense, acted as a principal deputy (Peterson, 2005). It is a part of history that the Dutch waged a long painful war from 1873 to 1903 in the territory. It was a war the Dutch never really won, and, instead, became a critical reference point for the Acehnese anti-colonial struggle. So for Feith, who has maintained a personal approach to dealing with conflicting parties, and has maintained the approach of negotiation as the best philosophy, such a mandate is also considered a test as to whether his Dutch roots will contribute to turning a series of ordeals in Aceh into a lasting piece (The Jakarta Post, 19 September 2005).

5. Conclusion

So far, the implementation of the recent peace agreement bet between the government and GAM has opened the space for international involvement, most obviously through the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM), but international community/organizations will continued to be suspected by elements of Indonesia political spectrum (Aspinall, 2007, p. 22). After having successfully dealt with initial suspicion, fear of hidden agendas and reluctances to provide any kind of information to the AMM, the mission created a first dialogue with both the government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) by establishing the Commission on Security Arrangement (COSA) mechanism (Beeck, p. 20).

In order to enhance confidence building measures between the government and GAM, the AMM created regular meeting through this Commission on Security Arrangement (COSA) where both parties discussed and try to solve security issues. To handle conflict at a lower level, the AMM created District Commission on Security Arrangement (DiCOSA) involving local authority and public figures (Maharani & Saiful Haq, 2007, p. 4). The COSA meetings were held weekly at the headquarters level in Banda Aceh, chaired by Pieter Feith (Head of AMM) and attended by senior representatives of GAM and the Indonesian government, police and military. At the district level, District Committee on Security Arrangement (DiCOSA) meetings were held on a weekly basis and, after April 2006, every two weeks (Shulze, 2007).

Meeting at district level also helped to disseminate the contents of the MoU while giving local leaders on both sides (GoI and GAM) ownership and responsibility of this process it further ensured that local problems were solved at local levels rather than at Banda Aceh level. All decisions taken during COSA meetings were on consensus. It was in this forum that the exact procedure for the decommissioning of GAM arms and reintegration mechanism were decided (Beeck, p. 20). The COSA enabled both parties and the AMM to raise issue relating to the peace process and to discuss the interpretation and implementation of the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding. At the meetings, practical arrangements of how it is stipulations were to be carried out were agreed and detailed with a view of mitigating the risk of misunderstanding between the parties and their personnel deployed in the field (Kirwan, 2008).

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