

# The Limits of DDR

## REINTEGRATION LESSONS FROM ACEH

A 2005 peace deal brought an end to 30 years of secessionist conflict in Aceh, Indonesia. The Helsinki agreement included provisions to disarm fighters from the rebel GAM movement and to reintegrate them into society. Three-and-a-half years on, peace is holding in Aceh. Yet while the Aceh post-war story is broadly positive, the experience of delivering reintegration support to former combatants and others is not. This, in part, is leading to an increase in localized violence in the province. The Aceh experience provides important lessons for international disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) theory and practice.

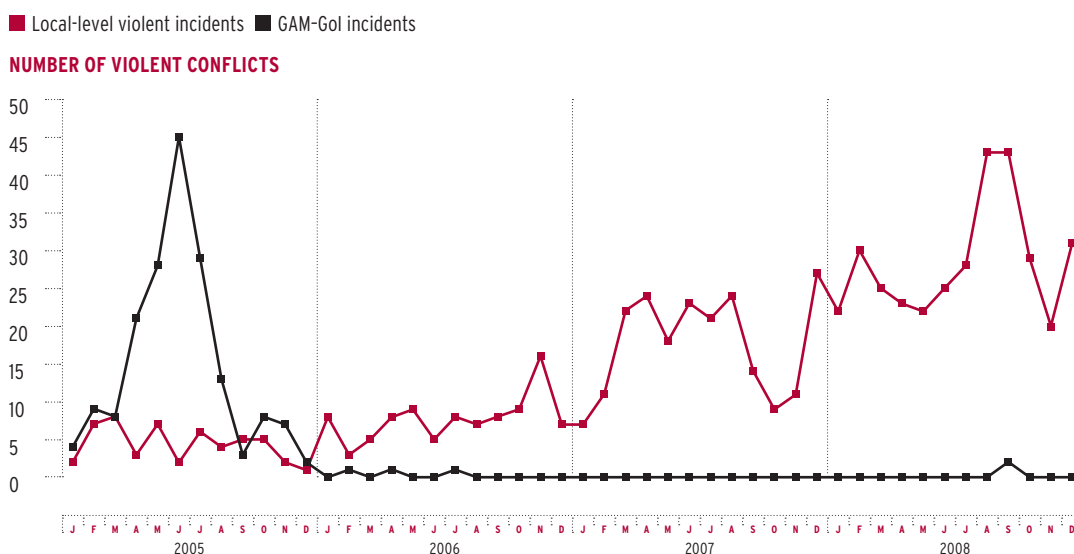
This chapter draws on a number of World Bank studies, including two representative surveys of former combatants (one of which entails interviews with more than 3,000 civilian households), ongoing conflict monitoring, a province-wide survey of infrastructure damage and social relations, and a poverty assessment. The chapter finds that Aceh is peaceful because of the high-level commitment of leadership on both sides and widespread support for peace in Aceh. Yet reintegration programmes for former combatants have not played a key role in supporting peace; at times, they have increased tensions. The reintegration programme in Aceh drew from a set of assumptions derived from other post-war settings that did not fit well with the Aceh situation.

### Misdiagnosing the situation: reintegration needs in Aceh

Many of the social, political, and economic challenges that reintegration programmes are designed to address were not present in Aceh. Such programmes aim to heal the divides between former rivals. In Aceh, however, there was no serious cleavage between former combatants and communities. Relationships remained strong between GAM fighters and civilians throughout the conflict and combatants often returned to their villages. The dividing lines between who was a combatant and who was not were fuzzy. As a result, there was acceptance—indeed, often celebrations—when combatants returned after the peace deal. Fewer than one per cent of former combatants reported problems in being accepted. Moreover, survey findings show high levels of community trust and combatants playing a large role in village associational life.

Reintegrating former combatants into political structures can also be challenging. Former combatants need to accept the legitimacy of state institutions; this can be difficult in post-conflict contexts where war has ended through negotiated settlement rather than an outright rebel victory. However, in Aceh there is a high level of political participation by former combatants, who

Figure 8.1 Violent conflicts in Aceh, January 2005–December 2008



Source: Correspondence with Adrian Morel, head of World Bank conflict monitoring work, February 2009

**Table 8.6 Work situation: GAM vs. civilians, mid-2008**

Which option best describes your employment situation?	Men		Women	
	Ex-combatant (n=1,024)	Civilian (n=1,794)	Ex-combatant (n=29)	Civilian (n=1,237)
Full-time employment	85%	78%	45%	29%
Consistent part-time/contract work	6%	6%	7%	5%
Some part-time/contract work	6%	4%	14%	6%
Unemployed	1%	3%	0%	1%
Student	0%	5%	0%	4%

Source: ARLS (2008)

were more likely than civilians to vote in the 2006 provincial elections and who are also more likely to say they will vote in the next Indonesian presidential elections.

**While post-war challenges in Aceh are not unique, they differ from those the reintegration model aims to address.**

An assumption of the reintegration model is that former combatants will face significant barriers to work and that targeted assistance is thus necessary. In Aceh, however, fewer combatants are unemployed than are civilians. This is not a result of reintegration programming: those who received support from donors or the government were no less likely to be unemployed than others. Rather, broader growth associated with improvements in security increased work opportunities. With former combatants no less educated than the general population, and with combatants linked to those in power, the vast majority have not had problems getting jobs.

### **Problems with individual targeting**

Many important issues must be addressed if peace is to be consolidated in Aceh. But these are not the types of problems that reintegration programmes can affect in any significant way. Programmes for former combatants in Aceh have sought to target individuals and have provided compensatory cash. Yet these approaches have had minimal impact in improving the prospects of former combatants or in satisfying them, and at times have fed disillusionment and contributed to tensions. Individually targeted assistance has been counterproductive, in part because it has been difficult to identify who was a combatant and who was not. Combatants have spread cash they receive widely, limiting positive welfare impacts. The provision of cash without technical assistance has also prevented the productive use of funds. Furthermore, the lack of transparency in fund distribution has increased dissatisfaction with the local government. Given that a lack of state legitimacy drove the conflict, the approach could accentuate risks of conflict resumption.

### **A 'maximalist' approach to reintegration**

Increasingly, the goals of DDR programmes have expanded to focus on linking short-term assistance with longer-run development and wider security promotion. In Aceh such an approach was vital: lack of economic growth, large reconstruction needs, and weak institutions call for broader strategies. The presence of vast tsunami recovery funds provided opportunities for pursuing a 'maximalist' approach. However, reintegration programmes and post-war strategies were separated from those aimed at tsunami reconstruction and broader development. As a result, relatively few resources made it into war-affected areas, leading to inequalities. Conflict-affected infrastructure is being built back at half the speed of that affected by the tsunami; allocations for tsunami houses are double those for houses destroyed by conflict. More than 40 per cent of surveyed people say that inequality in development assistance is a leading source of division.

The 2008 budget was USD 1.4 billion, six times that of 1999, and is likely to remain at that level in the years to come. This creates big opportunities to deal with post-conflict needs. Yet given weak capacity of local government institutions, there is also a risk: if the vast resources do not translate into economic growth and improved living standards, disillusionment and violence may escalate once more. ■