

Impacts of Violence and Prospects for Peace

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Over the last generation or so, both the nature of war and our understanding of war have changed. First, there has been an increase in “asymmetric” conflict between states and secessionist organizations and other disaffected groups who use “terrorist” strategies and tactics to realize ideological ends. Second, there has been a dramatic increase in the involvement of civilians in war. While civilians comprised 14% of those killed in WWI, 67% in WWII, and an overwhelming 90% in the conflicts that occurred during the final decade of the last century. (Crawford, 1998). Finally, an increasing proportion of violent conflict occurs within states between groups of differing cultural identity. While intrastate wars between forces defined by ethnic or religious difference accounted for just over half the world’s violent conflicts during the period 1945–60; from 1960–90 the share jumped to 75%. (Rapoport, 1996).

A prototype of these new forms of warfare can be found in the “Maluku Wars” that raged in the Indonesian provinces of Maluku and North Maluku from January 1999 to February 2002. In an attempt to better understand this conflict, its ethno-religious dimensions, and impacts on combatants and non-combatants, an international group of scholars and activists gathered in Honolulu in May of 2003 for a conference on “Violence in Eastern Indonesia: Causes and Consequences”, sponsored by Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Hawai‘i, and the the East-West Center. This special issue of *Cakalele* presents a selection of papers given at this conference. A forthcoming monograph will gather those conference papers that sought to unravel the causal puzzle, while the papers collected here direct their analysis at impacts of the violence and prospects for sustained peace.

Jon Goss’s paper provides an overview of the causes of the communal violence and progress towards peace by way of setting a con-

text for the other contributions. Although we know little about the individual motivations that led to sustained and intense violence between neighboring communities of Muslims and Christians, observers have speculated on the historical conditions and contemporary circumstance that might have caused a sense of resentment and feelings of insecurity among the people of Maluku, which were then exploited by political interests and turned towards the religious Other. Goss identifies four broad categories of explanation: first, is organized provocation by strategic players at the national level; second, is the increase in sectarian politics during the collapse of the New Order regime and subsequent political reforms; third is the intensification of socio-economic competition between immigrants and indigenous populations following the economic crisis of 1997; and finally is the deepening of religiosity under conditions of economic and political uncertainty, and particularly following the break down of law and social order. The paper also provides a brief description of the process of reconciliation and prospects for future peace.

While the impact of the Maluku Wars was pervasive, a select few communities were able to avoid the harshest consequences of the communal violence. Roy Ellen profiles one such group, the Nuaulu of south Seram. Isolating the unique set of circumstances that effectively placed the Nuaulu beyond Christian-Muslim violence also brings to the fore the conditions which led their neighbors to kill and intimidate one another. The set of conditions highlighted here relate to the intersection of social identity and natural resource management. Immigration and heightened resource extraction were causal drivers for escalating social tensions in Seram and elsewhere, and the Nuaulu were increasingly connected to these dynamics by certain Reformasi social policies. Nevertheless, Nuaulu were resilient to these pressures. Among the important insights provided by Ellen, are the social and environmental “coping” mechanisms employed by the Nuaulu that proved protective.

In contrast, Hermien Soselisa examines the breakdown of community and resource management strategies in neighboring vil-

lages in West Seram, where common ancestors and shared problems of feral pigs seemed to provide a means to unite Muslims and Christians. Sospelisa, in fact, originally predicted that the strong collective traditions here would protect them from communal violence, but that did not prove to be the case as younger generations are less invested in local adat and the authority of village leaders has been compromised. She argues the need to strengthen adat and remains hopeful that cooperative resource management will provide opportunities to strengthen inter-community relations and restore relative harmony in Maluku.

Chris Duncan's contribution explores one of the most serious consequences of the Maluku Wars, the displacement of people and, often, entire communities by violence, persecution, or fear. In the years following the collapse of the New Order, conflicts throughout the archipelago displaced as many as 1.3 million Indonesians. The central government put forth a policy attempting to address this crisis in October of 2001. Duncan takes the 200,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from North Maluku as a case study to examine the implementation of this policy at provincial and local levels. This case sheds light not only on the effects of displacement on IDPs and their host communities, but also the politics driving government action and IDP response. With the IDP situation not fully resolved today, Duncan leaves us with some important considerations for achieving communal reconciliation.

Using Banda as a case study, Agnes Westwater examines the increased potential for HIV/AIDS infection as a result of the recent violence in Maluku. During the conflict, this comparatively isolated community was affected by the influx of refugees and outbreaks of local violence, together with a marked loss of income through the monetary crisis and the cessation of tourism. As a result, potential risk behaviors for HIV increased and were exposed to the embarrassment of the relatively conservative community. As elsewhere, women are the most vulnerable, being restricted by religion in necessary knowledge or the power to negotiate their social/sexual relations, while often responsible for family main-

tenance in the absence of male providers. Westwater identifies a potentially long-term effect of the violence as she documents the disruption it visits upon everyday life in an isolated community.

There is evidence that the social niches of various actors and institutions advantage them for roles in building peace in post-conflict Maluku according to Kirk Lange's paper. While the high level brokering of the Malino II peace accords officially conferred peace in Maluku, action at the grassroots and an often overlooked "meso" level were important preconditions to the easing of hostilities. Any lasting peace will necessarily rely on efforts by actors and institutions at all of these levels. Lange applies and overlays best practice theories and tools of conflict transformation praxis to craft an original "peacebuilding map". This map isolates the peacebuilding resources that can be brought to bear in Maluku and suggests the timing of their application. Isolating underutilized resources and suggesting how efforts of various actors and institutions can be parlayed for greater synergy offers reason for hope and concrete ideas for building peace in Maluku.

It is our hope that this collection of papers contributes towards an understanding of the diverse effects of communal violence in Maluku, that will assist the people of the province as they work together and with local and national government and with Non-Governmental and Community-Based organizations to rebuild the level of trust and cooperation necessary to restore conditions of lasting peace. Among other things, the case studies collected here illustrate the importance, but also the increased vulnerability, of traditional institutions and leadership in the contemporary political and economic context. It is not so much a question of returning to some previous ideal, however, as much as negotiating new roles for surviving traditions capable of embracing both indigenous and non-indigenous populations, and Christians and Muslims. It is a challenge that Maluku does not face alone, of course, though the extent and intensity of the recent violence makes it more difficult and more urgent.

REFERENCES

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