

**INDONESIA:  
OVERCOMING MURDER  
AND CHAOS IN MALUKU**

19 December 2000

## Table of Contents

Map Of Indonesia .....	i
Map of Maluku .....	ii
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>I. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II. MALUKU BEFORE THE VIOLENCE .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>III. ACCOUNTING FOR the VIOLENCE .....</b>	<b>4</b>
A. Ambon and Nearby Islands: January-July 1999 .....	4
B. Conflict Spreads to North Maluku, August 1999 .....	6
C. Ambon Again and Massacre at Tobelo, December 1999 .....	7
D. Laskar Jihad and the Moslem Offensive, May 2000 .....	8
E. Civil Emergency, 27 June 2000 .....	10
F. Government Impotence: Mass Violence Resumes in September .....	11
<b>IV. KILLING IN THE NAME OF ISLAM: LASKAR JIHAD .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>V. KILLING IN THE NAME OF CHRISTIANITY .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>VI. WHY ISN'T MORE BEING DONE? .....</b>	<b>16</b>
A. The National Government .....	17
B. The Regional Governments .....	18
C. The Military .....	19
<b>VII. INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF CONTINUING VIOLENCE IN MALUKU .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>VIII. CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
A. About the International Crisis Group	
B. ICG Reports and Briefing Papers	
C. ICG Board Members	







## INDONESIA: OVERCOMING MURDER AND CHAOS IN MALUKU

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Intercommunal violence in Indonesia's Maluku region during the past two years has left over 5,000 people dead and displaced roughly 500,000 more. The smouldering tensions erupted again in November and December, leaving approximately 100 dead and the city of Ambon in a state approaching civil war. Christian and Moslem religious holidays in the last week of December will almost certainly lead to more clashes unless steps are taken to protect communities and constrain the fighters. The outlook is for much higher death-tolls in the months to come. The conflict has divided Malukan society along religious lines – Moslem versus Christian – even though the origins of the fighting are multi-layered and involve ethnic, economic and political rivalries. A cyclical pattern of fighting has been established, but it has increased in intensity over time. Until this pattern changes, bloodshed in the region will continue and the Christian-Moslem divide will widen, with consequences that will extend beyond the Maluku region.

During the first fifteen months of fighting, the Moslem and Christian fighters were more or less equally engaged in localised fighting. But between April and June 2000, well-organised Moslem militias established a dominance in the violence that has not been challenged since. The turning point was the arrival in Maluku of members of the Java-based Laskar Jihad, a radical Moslem organisation that had received military training and access to arms from sympathisers in the military. A Christian massacre of about 500 Moslem villagers at the end of December 1999 created the domestic political conditions that allowed the emergence of Laskar Jihad. Important Moslem political leaders saw it as a force dedicated to the protection of endangered Moslems. Laskar Jihad is now the main source of continuing bloodshed, something acknowledged by President Abdurrahman Wahid's government. Laskar Jihad increased its numbers in Maluku in the lead-up to the most recent violence. The group has turned intermittent fighting between two communities into a campaign of 'religious cleansing'. The group's leaders have defiantly declared they will not leave Maluku until their work is done.

Government authorities, at both the national and regional levels, have been largely ineffective in containing the violence, let alone in dealing with the underlying causes. The government has not tried to remove Laskar Jihad, or even just its leaders, from the region, partly because they have been linked with sympathetic elements within the military and partly because the government appears to want to avoid the political cost of opposing a pro-Moslem force. Moreover, it is widely believed that certain national politicians and military officers who have been displaced by the Wahid government are encouraging violence in Maluku and elsewhere as a means to discredit and destabilise the current administration. The military and police in Maluku, pursuing a variety of motives, have joined the fighting on both sides, although the intervention of predominantly Moslem military personnel has more often, although certainly not always, favoured the Moslem militias.

Although the two provinces of Maluku are only a tiny piece of the sprawling Indonesian state – and hold just 1 per cent of Indonesia's 200-million people – the Maluku violence cannot be fenced off or ignored. The impunity for killing, destruction and forced displacement sends a signal that such serious criminal actions will be tolerated. While the circumstances in Maluku are not replicated closely in other parts of the country, many parts of Indonesia have serious social or economic divisions, and are therefore at some risk of contagion from large-scale, organised political violence if provocateurs decide to go down that path.

Lacking an effective security force, the Abdurrahman Wahid government has allowed the killing in the Maluku region to simmer for almost two years without formulating a clear strategy to overcome the violence. One element of such a strategy must be the removal of the Laskar Jihad from the two provinces but this will not be enough. It is essential that the security forces are capable of protecting both communities and particularly that the removal of the Laskar Jihad is not followed by renewed attacks by Christian militias on Moslems. Peace cannot be restored until both Moslems and Christians feel that their own personal security is guaranteed. It is crucial that the government regain control of its police and military forces in Maluku and that these forces act in a neutral way between the rival communities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **To the Indonesian Government:**

1. The early arrest and trial of Laskar Jihad and Christian militia leaders who are responsible for murder, violence and destruction is necessary to deter further violence. This will need to be backed up with appropriate measures in the investigative and judicial systems.
2. The government should implement its stated policy of removing non-Malukan members of the Laskar Jihad from the two provinces - gradually if necessary, but determinedly.
3. While removing the Laskar Jihad, it is essential that the security forces ensure that this is not followed by attacks on Moslems by Christian militias: the security forces must be able to guarantee the security of Moslems and Christians alike.
4. It is necessary that all militias ultimately be disarmed, but that must occur in the context of a broader program introducing and credibly enforcing the rule of law.
5. It is absolutely essential that military and police personnel should play a peacekeeping role and refrain from joining in the fighting. They must not assist combatants in other ways such as through the supply of weapons and ammunition. Tighter security measures should be imposed on military stocks.
6. Security personnel must be properly supplied with food, accommodation and equipment.
7. Officers entrusted with raising funds on behalf of the military should not acquire personal benefits that give them an interest in prolonging the conflict.

8. Security personnel responsible for serious crimes in the fighting should be arrested and prosecuted.
9. The TNI must take care its repressive measures do not get out of hand and that non-lethal methods of crowd control are only abandoned as a last resort.
10. Unless the military can demonstrate that it can carry out its duties in a professional and neutral way, the civil emergency should not be raised to a military emergency.
11. The national government should give a strong lead to religious leaders, both Moslem and Christian, not only to refrain from exacerbating the conflict but also to criticise in the strongest possible terms premeditated killing.
12. Members of the government should refrain from making unsubstantiated allegations about foreign and Indonesian provocateurs since these allegations only feed the suspicions and insecurities of the warring communities.
13. The national government should continue to encourage discussions between members of both the Moslem and Christian communities on ways to overcome the conflict and future political structures in the two provinces.
14. The government could consider setting up a special tribunal to try perpetrators of gross violations of human rights. An investigation into the causes of the violence and a published report could be conducted by a team of Indonesians credible to both sides although care should be taken to avoid exacerbating existing tensions.
15. The creation of safe zones where both sides can conduct daily business – particularly in economically vital ports and markets – would be a useful measure.
16. The Indonesian government needs to ensure security for international humanitarian workers supporting refugees.

#### **To Foreign Governments:**

17. Foreign military intervention in Maluku would be counter-productive, could easily lead to further destabilisation in Indonesia, and should not be sought.
18. Consideration should nonetheless be given to offering foreign observers, preferably from ASEAN countries, as potentially helpful in creating confidence in Indonesian military and police neutrality.
19. Foreign suppliers are justified in maintaining or imposing embargoes on the export of weapons to Indonesia so long as the Indonesian military and police cannot prevent their weapons falling into the hands of militias determined to use them against members of other religious or ethnic communities.
20. Foreign governments should be willing to assist the TNI and the police to upgrade the quality of its personnel by providing suitable training programs for peacekeeping.
21. Foreign governments should remind the Indonesian government that gross violations of human rights have occurred in Maluku and that the failure of the Indonesian government to deal with these violations will continue to prompt calls for international action.

22. Foreign governments should be sensitive to local conditions when making statements, and be careful to note that both Moslems and Christian civilians have experienced extreme suffering.
23. Donors should monitor needs identified by relevant international humanitarian organisations and UN agencies and aim to respond more quickly to these needs.
24. The international community should be ready to assist Indonesia with money and investigative resources to re-establish the rule of law.
25. Foreign donors should consider the provision of special funding for the two Maluku provinces conditional on progress toward reducing the level of violence.

**JAKARTA/BRUSSELS, 19 December 2000**



## INDONESIA: OVERCOMING MURDER AND CHAOS IN MALUKU

### I. INTRODUCTION

Since January 1999, the people of Indonesia's Maluku region<sup>1</sup> have been the victims or perpetrators of savage inter-communal fighting<sup>2</sup> which has left over 5,000 people dead and displaced nearly 500,000 others from their homes<sup>3</sup>. Each lull in the fighting has proven temporary. Between October and early December 2000 a string of horrific attacks were carried out. The main dividing line between the two sides is religious identification (Christian or Moslem) though religious issues were not at the core of the fighting when it first erupted. As Christian and Moslem religious holidays in the last week of December approach, religious leaders on both sides fear renewed atrocities. Indonesian authorities at the national and local levels have proven unable to stop the pattern of violence or to detain the principal perpetrators of the killing. No effective disciplinary action has been taken against members of the security services who have joined in the attacks.

The future course of this violence remains difficult to predict. On the one hand, it will remain subject to the purely local dynamics of two hostile communities acting out of extreme fear of, or hate for, their neighbours. On the other hand, national-level political dynamics are also in play. A Java-based radical Islamic organisation, Laskar Jihad - which is of only marginal political significance in Java - has sent thousands of its members to Maluku initially to defend besieged Moslem communities but later to undertake what it sees as a holy mission to cleanse the Maluku region (or parts of it) of Christians. Members of the national political elite have facilitated the passage of Laskar members to the Maluku region and sympathetic elements in the military have provided training and access to arms. A number of prominent political figures in Jakarta are suspected of encouraging the disruption in Maluku, as in other parts of Indonesia, as part of a strategy to discredit and destabilise the Abdurrahman Wahid government. Other national political leaders seem more preoccupied with political manoeuvring in Jakarta than with the Maluku crisis, a disaster in a distant region with less than one percent of the national population.

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<sup>1</sup> Maluku was divided into two provinces - Maluku in the south and North Maluku in the north - in 1999. The original province was geographically dispersed over more than 850,000 square km and was at least ten times more water than land. The total population of the two provinces is a little over 2 million - just 1 percent of Indonesia's population. In this report, the term Maluku standing alone is used to refer to the entire region comprising the two provinces. The phrase 'Maluku province', where it occurs in this report, is used to refer to the new administrative division created in the south of the region in 1999.

<sup>2</sup> See ICG Briefing, *Indonesia's Maluku Crisis: the Issues*, 19 July 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Estimates of the number killed vary, with 5,000 now accepted by most observers as the low end of the range. As for refugees, UN officials say the number is certainly higher than 500,000 while the Indonesian government says 570,000 are displaced. Accurate numbers are difficult to calculate, as many people have returned to home villages outside Maluku or have been absorbed into remote communities.

This report argues that the Indonesian government has failed to appreciate the gravity of the violence in Maluku, and that its responses as a consequence have been inadequate. The report also argues that the government, the leaders of the main political parties, the country's religious leaders, and the leaders of the armed forces, will of necessity be the principal actors in restoring order to Maluku. It is largely through them and with their cooperation that external concerns should be expressed. External actors must look for the influence, and pressure, they can bring to bear on each of these groups.

## II. MALUKU BEFORE THE VIOLENCE

Maluku was often portrayed as a model of religious and ethnic harmony before the violence but this characterisation was not accurate. Though Ambon, the capital of Maluku province in the south of the region, and Ternate, the North Maluku capital, were religiously mixed cities, each neighbourhood was commonly identified as either predominantly Christian or Moslem. Communal fights – stone throwing, vandalism, occasional murders – would break out between the warren-like *kampongs* from time to time, though there is disagreement now among Maluku residents about the seriousness of those confrontations. Most of the islands in the Maluku region have mixed populations of Moslems and Christians, though the two groups have traditionally been segregated by choice or custom in their own villages.

The south of the Maluku region has undergone more change in the past 50 years than the north, and in this process of change, traditional social regimes that helped defuse communal conflicts have largely evaporated. There had been a strong tradition of loyalty to the village leadership and to an inter-village alliance system called *pela gandong* ('village alliances'). This system stressed ethnic similarities over religious differences. It was anchored in mystical beliefs shared by both communities. But since independence, the central government actively undermined traditional leaders and Christian and Moslem preachers enjoined their congregations to abandon remnant traditional beliefs. An influx of non-Malukan Moslems diluted the influence of the more long-standing communities of Moslems who embraced the old ways. By the time Soeharto fell in 1998, the system of *pela gandong* had been catastrophically weakened.<sup>4</sup>

In the south, political power had long been the domain of Christians. They were favoured by the Dutch during the colonial era and carried that legacy forward when independence was achieved. After the migrations of the Soeharto years, immigrants from South Sulawesi (particularly Bugis and Butonese) made up roughly a quarter of the population of Ambon City. Their arrival tipped the confessional balance in favour of Islam and was accompanied by a rise in the political and economic fortunes of individual Moslems. In the 1990s, as part of President Soeharto's effort to win the political support of Moslem groups, he began appointing Ambonese Moslems to the governorship in preference to the military officers whom he had preferred until then. As a consequence Moslems came to dominate the bureaucracy. Moslems account for about 55 per cent of the people in the new Maluku province, while on Ambon island the split is roughly even. The precise religious balance in Ambon City is less clear.

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<sup>4</sup> See *Your God is No Longer Mine*, Dr. Dieter Bartels.

As in most parts of Indonesia, local politics have been intimately connected with patronage, access to resources and abuse of power. As power and bureaucratic weight have shifted from Christians to Moslems, so have money and opportunity. Christians in Ambon felt that they were being overwhelmed, and were particularly anxious about national-level Moslem politicians who had been trying to forge a more Islamic identity for the state. It didn't help that Moslem migrants were more economically successful than locals.

In North Maluku, the situation was quite different. Although the traditional sultanates of Ternate and Tidore had been absorbed into the modern province of Maluku, the current sultans have continued to wield considerable informal political influence. Ternate, the capital, has always been predominantly Moslem, and the North Maluku province as a whole is about 80 per cent Moslem. But there have been large concentrations of Christians in the northern half of Halmahera, and on the islands of Obi and Bacan. The Ternate Sultan had traditionally protected the interests of the region's minority Christians. The Christians, in turn, had remained some of his most fanatic supporters. The Sultan and his followers also served to mediate communal conflicts when they flared. The Tidore sultanate has struggled with Ternate for regional supremacy for 500 years and has tended to be more overtly Islamic than Ternate. The latest manifestation of this rivalry was Tidore's failed effort to be declared provisional capital of the new province of North Maluku in 1999. Tidore's power grab, and Ternate's opposition to it, reopened old wounds. The rivalry has played a pivotal role in the spread of violence in North Maluku.

Just as in the south, North Maluku's conflicts have been aggravated by migration. In Ternate, there has been some migration of Moslems from other parts of Indonesia – many Moslem militia leaders have family ties to Sulawesi. But more important has been the movement of people within the province. For instance, numerous battles have broken out between the Makian and Kao ethnic groups in the last 25 years, entirely due to the migration policies of the Soeharto years. The Makian, natives of a volcanic island of the same name off the west coast of Halmahera, were resettled in the Kao District of northern Halmahera in 1975, when it was feared their volcanic island home was about to erupt. Cultural differences, competition for limited resources and a forced transfer of traditional Kao land to the Makian guaranteed a legacy of conflict between the two communities. The Makian are exclusively Moslem, and have purged most of North Maluku's traditional beliefs from their daily lives, whereas the Kao are Christian (about 80 per cent) and Moslem (about 20 per cent) and view their ethnic identity as more important than their religion.

As in Ambon, migration hastened the traditional leadership's descent towards irrelevance and this trend, already visible before the fall of Soeharto, only increased the anxiety level of local Christians after his fall. They felt then that democratically elected local governments and the planned decentralization of power to the provinces would deprive them of protection.

The Maluku region's Christians are overwhelmingly Protestant, with less than 7 per cent of the population of the two Maluku provinces Catholic. Most of the Catholic community live in the southeast of Maluku, where there has been relatively little violence. During the Indonesian struggle for independence,

segments of Ambon's Christian elite and some Ambonese Moslem traditional leaders feared that their position would be threatened if Maluku (ie South Maluku) became part of an independent Indonesia. In April 1950, with the support of the mainly Christian Ambonese soldiers of the Dutch colonial army, they proclaimed the *Republik Maluku Selatan* (RMS, Republic of the South Moluccas). The Indonesian armed forces occupied most of the Ambonese islands by December 1950, leaving a small band of RMS guerrillas to fight on in the interior of Ceram until 1963. Several RMS leaders managed to escape to The Netherlands, via then Dutch-controlled Irian Jaya, where they joined a community of some 12,000 Ambonese soldiers and their families, who had been repatriated from Indonesia in early 1951. An RMS government in exile was established in The Netherlands, where the ideal of an independent state has been kept alive to some extent.<sup>6</sup> While pockets of nostalgic and passive support can still be found in Christian villages of Maluku, particularly on the island of Saparua, the vast majority of Maluku's Christians are not interested in independence. But the separatist history has helped divide the two communities, and spurred Jakarta's determination to bring the local government under central control. Though the centralization of authority has been a national theme since independence, special efforts were made in Maluku because of its 'disloyal' history.

### III. ACCOUNTING FOR THE VIOLENCE

In both provinces, the changing communal mix has proved to be quite volatile though the political stasis of the Soeharto years helped keep it under control. With his fall in May 1998, demands in Maluku that injustices – real and imagined – be redressed came to dominate political rhetoric. As demands turned into violence, an incompetent or uninterested security apparatus stood by and ignored low-level incidents. An inevitable process of snowballing ensued and vigilante justice came to the fore. The violence has gone through several phases, bounded by major outbreaks. Understanding the way the conflict has evolved is essential to understanding the complex series of steps that will need to be taken to help it stop. That's not least because of the mythologies of conflict Christians and Moslems have created about the fighting,<sup>7</sup> with stories of past atrocities by the other side providing a seemingly endless supply of fuel for an equally unending cycle of revenge.

#### A. Ambon and Nearby Islands: January-July 1999

On 19 January 1999, on the Moslem holy day, Idul Fitri,<sup>8</sup> an argument in Ambon City between a Christian public transport driver and at least one Moslem passenger deteriorated into a wide-ranging brawl which escalated into days of

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<sup>6</sup> See Richard Chauvel, *Nationalists, Soldiers and Separatists: The Ambonese Islands from Colonialism to Revolt*, KITLV Press, Leiden, 1990.

<sup>7</sup> The communities in both provinces are now completely divided. Telling is the tale of Acang and Obet. Acang is short for Hasan, a typically Moslem name, and Obet is short for Robert, a popular Christian name. After the Christmas 1999 killings, the government sponsored a local television spot featuring the friends Obet and Acang driven apart by fighting. They search for each other in the smoke, eventually finding each other and embracing. A childlike vision of reconciliation and friendship arching across the religious chasm. But the spot did not have the desired effect. Instead, 'Obet' and 'Acang' have become Maluku's favorite slang for 'Christian' and 'Moslem,' a hostile shorthand to delineate us and them. Other popular terms are whites (Moslem) and reds (Christian), after the headdresses their fighters wear, and 'Israeli' (Christian) and 'Palestinian' (Moslem).

<sup>8</sup> This marks the end of the fasting period of Ramadhan.

mob violence.<sup>9</sup> Within hours of the incident, Christian and Moslem fighters were attacking neighbourhoods all over the city, with both sides taking heavy losses in lives and property.<sup>10</sup> The fighting spread almost immediately to the nearby islands of Haruku, Seram, Saparua and Manipa, partly because natives of those islands fled the Ambon fighting, carrying with them rumours about the plans of one 'side' (Christians or Moslems) to evict all of the other group from the province.

Ethnic origin was a significant factor in the first few days of fighting, with anger directed at the Bugis, Butonese and Makassar Moslems from Sulawesi -- collectively known as 'BBM'. Early in the conflict, it appeared to some that the dispute was between Moslem immigrants and local Christians. But this theory neglected the very deep anger and distrust that had grown up between the Christians and local Moslems. Some in the local Moslem and Christian communities had been arming themselves against a looming conflict for months, with rumours swirling that the religious holiday would be used to launch an attack. The January incident was exacerbated by the presence in Ambon of 200 Ambonese Christian gangsters deported from Jakarta in mid-December 1998 after a deadly brawl over territory in a red-light district with rival gangs of Ambonese Moslems.

Attacks continued sporadically through February on Ambon Island and the neighbouring islands. In this first month, the fighting was almost entirely driven by local people and their leaders. Although casualties were high, the weapons used were usually knives, machetes and home-made guns. Police and military units sometimes opened fire on mobs but they failed to contain the violence which continued sporadically. Though lives were at stake, soldiers often seemed reluctant to intervene, telling community leaders somewhat disingenuously that they had no formal authority to use force against civilians.

The two communities believed radically different stories about how the fighting had started. For Christians these stories centered on national plots to introduce Islamic law and wipe them from the province. For Moslems, the focus was on an international conspiracy to create a Christian state in the heart of Indonesia. Local politicians did little to defuse the situation and did not grasp the dangerous polarization. With no 'official' version of events, and no trusted independent source of information, inflammatory rumor and innuendo ruled.

During a four-month lull in the fighting, Indonesia's first free national and regional elections in 44 years were held in June 1999 and these passed in Maluku without major violence, although voting did not take place in a few districts. In late July 1999, in and around Ambon City, where refugee camps had proved fruitful recruiting grounds for both sides, fighting resumed with a new intensity. On 27 July, a stone-throwing incident between Christian and Moslem youths led to rioting throughout Ambon City, with hundreds of shops and homes destroyed. The Maluku military commander issued shoot-on-sight orders and in a few instances troops did fire on mobs.<sup>11</sup> The military seemed to be caught by surprise and their response was ad hoc, as it has been since.

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<sup>9</sup> See Human Rights Watch, *Indonesia: The Violence in Ambon*, March 1999, for a detailed discussion of the 19 January incident, and the divergent Moslem and Christian accounts of what happened.

<sup>10</sup> Today, large sections of Ambon City lie in rubble, and much of this damage was done in the first few weeks.

<sup>11</sup> Jakarta Post, 'Military Issues Shoot-on-sight Order in Ambon,' 30 July 1999.

The local and national governments were unable to exploit breaks in the fighting to rebuild bridges between communities, and many officials were happy to convince themselves that if there was no fighting in the streets, the conditions for conflict had gone.

## **B. Conflict Spreads to North Maluku, August 1999**

In August 1999, fighting broke out in North Maluku between two small ethnic groups, the Moslem Makian and the predominantly Christian Kao.<sup>14</sup> This was directly linked to the government's 1999 decision to split Maluku into two provinces, which the Makianese saw as an opportunity to create their own administrative district. The Makianese dominate the bureaucracy in the North Maluku capital of Ternate, and began lobbying almost immediately for the creation of a new administrative district (*kecamatan*) centred around Malifut, the town in which they settled in 1975. The plan was (and ostensibly still is) for the new district to subsume five ethnic-Kao villages. With the government promising to decentralize revenue, this had potentially huge financial consequences for both groups since the new district, to be called Malifut, would become the administrative centre receiving tax revenue and other benefits from the operations of a gold mine. The new administrative arrangements would see the tax benefits of the mine – the only industry in the area -- stripped away from the Kao, who have vocally opposed the plan since it was announced. As early as February 1999, Kao leaders were warning that blood would be spilled. But lacking the Ternate contacts and lobbying skills of the Makianese, they were ignored.<sup>15</sup>

On 18 August, the day the new district was to be inaugurated, fighting with traditional weapons broke out between residents of Malifut and the Kao village of Sosol, one of the villages to be incorporated in the new district. More than a dozen were killed before the Ternate Sultan, Mudaffar Syah, arrived in Kao on 21 August and appealed for the Kao to put down their arms. The Kao grudgingly bowed to a traditional leader whom many still believe has magical powers, but insisted the matter was far from settled. Underscoring the fact that this was not a religious problem was the alliance between the Moslem Sultan and the mostly-Christian Kao, and the fact that Moslem Kao fought alongside Christians against the Makianese.

The spark for fighting in North Maluku was not religion. On the micro-level there had been decades-old disputes between people of different ethnicities over land, while on the provincial level, seeds of conflict can be found in the centuries-old political rivalry between the Sultans of Ternate and Tidore. The two islands have traditionally competed for dominance of the main island of Halmahera, with Ternate usually coming out on top. But as in Maluku province, the origins of North Maluku's problems were quickly subsumed by religious rhetoric and confessional hatred.

Fighting erupted again on October 24. By the end of the month, the Kao had reduced Malifut to rubble, killed 100 or so of its Moslem inhabitants, and forced the 4,000 survivors to flee to Ternate and the neighbouring island of Tidore. The

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<sup>14</sup> The Kao are more numerous than the Makianese and proud of their traditional role as warriors in the service of the Sultan of Ternate.

<sup>15</sup> ICG confidential interview September 2000.

military, which had stepped up its local presence after August, did not act to protect Malifut, though it did assist in the evacuation of the Makianese.

The flight of the Makian to Ternate and Tidore was the crucial factor in the spread of violence and religious hatred in North Maluku. While the religiously mixed Kao continue to insist their dispute has nothing to do with confessional differences, the Makian's arrival in Ternate touched off rioting there that led to the 'cleansing' of that city of Christians and the creation of organized Moslem militias. Once in Ternate, the Makianese began agitating for a Jihad to take their land back and for reprisals against Christians generally. Propaganda was circulated alleging Christian plots to wipe all Moslems from North Maluku.

By early November, all Christians had been purged from Ternate and local Jihad groups started to form. Though the Sultan of Ternate is a Moslem, the Sultanate has had Christian subjects for hundreds of years, and a significant portion of the Sultan's traditional guard is drawn from the Christian population of Halmahera. He refused to support the Makianese, who turned for support instead to Sultan Djafar Danoyunus of the nearby island of Tidore. The Tidore sultanate and the Makianese have a history of alliances in local politics. Ternate's Makianese population, both native inhabitants and refugees, worked with supporters of the Tidore Sultan to break Sultan Mudaffar Syah's power.

When the Ternate Sultan stood up against the rioters in early November 1999 and sent 4,000 of his guards into the streets to protect Christians, he was quickly labelled anti-Islam. By 27 December, his guards were beaten and he had to back down under the pressure of elements loyal to the Sultan of Tidore.<sup>16</sup> Though some of Ternate's Moslem inhabitants still see themselves as loyal subjects of the Sultan, they are afraid to speak out and have been politically sidelined. The district legislature and bureaucracy have also been purged of all Christian members and Moslem voices sympathetic to Christians. As elsewhere, the local military and police failed to take action against rioters.

### C. Ambon Again and Massacre at Tobelo, December 1999

During the second half of 1999 clashes took place regularly, with ferocious fighting and high casualty counts. Ten were killed when troops fired on rioters near Ambon's Al-Fatah Mosque on 10 September.<sup>17</sup> On 26 November, 37 were killed in Ambon.<sup>18</sup> And in nearby Seram, 42 were killed on 3-4 December. The rising level of conflict finally reached its peak in the last week of December.<sup>19</sup> Christians were attacked on the island of Buru, resulting in dozens of deaths and the flight of refugees. Ambon itself witnessed some of the worst rioting of the year after a 26 December traffic accident involving a Christian and a Moslem. The damage included the burning of the Silo church, the largest protestant church in the region. As the conflict spread the partisan involvement of military and police personnel became more obvious. Army troops launched mortar attacks on

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<sup>16</sup> Smith Aldhar, 'The forgotten war in North Maluku', *Inside Indonesia*, No. 63, Jul - Sep 2000. The article can be found at <http://www.insideindonesia.org/index.htm>.

<sup>17</sup> *Republika*, 15 September, 1999.

<sup>18</sup> *Kompas*, 28 November, 1999.

<sup>19</sup> Just as the Moslem fasting month preceded the first stage of violence, the approach of Christmas saw both communities ratchet up street-level propaganda about attacks planned to mark the holiday. Such rumours have tended to be self-fulfilling because they convinced communities to take preemptive strikes. Christians and Moslems have radically different versions of how this new round of violence started, focusing on the provocation of the other side and the blamelessness of their own.

Christian parts of town and police paramilitaries fired weapons into Moslem neighbourhoods from hillsides and tall buildings.<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, in Halmahera island's Tobelo District, which is just north of Kao, local Christians went on the offensive against the local Moslem minority. At least 500 Moslems were killed and the district was 'cleansed' of more than 10,000 survivors between 26 December and 1 January.<sup>21</sup> The violence was fuelled by rumours of planned 'cleansing operations' on both sides. Many local Christians say news of the Silo Church destruction helped feed the fighting. Most of the Moslem refugees fled to Ternate after briefly taking refuge at the Indonesian Army's Company 'C' post in Tobelo.<sup>22</sup>

This incident was pivotal in galvanizing national Moslem calls for Jihad. Moslem politicians on Java began to agitate for a Jihad in Maluku, as did Moslem radicals like the founders of the Laskar Jihad. There was an explosion of interest on international Jihad web-sites<sup>23</sup> and inflammatory reporting in Islam-oriented daily newspapers in Jakarta.<sup>24</sup> But the Tobelo incident received little attention from the international press, a fact that many Indonesian Moslems treat as evidence of an international conspiracy to cleanse Moslems from the region. As the secretary of the Ambon office of the Indonesian Ulemas Council, Malik Selang, complained: 'They make big news when there are Christian victims, but the newspapers are silent when Moslems get killed'.<sup>25</sup> Once more, the military did the bare minimum to protect citizens and restore order, despite having been handed responsibility for security by North Maluku's acting Governor, Abdul Muhjie on 28 December.<sup>26</sup>

#### D. Laskar Jihad and the Moslem Offensive, May 2000

The massacre of Moslems by Christians in Tobelo provoked a Moslem outcry in other parts of Indonesia, including Jakarta. More than 100,000 Moslems took to the streets of Jakarta on 7 January 2000 calling for a holy war (*jihad*) in order to save the Moslems of Maluku. Very senior politicians backed their call, including Amien Rais, chairman of the supreme legislative body, the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) and leader of the National Mandate Party (PAN), the largely Moslem political party that came in fifth in the 1999 general election. Rais spoke at the 7 January rally, which became a recruitment springboard for the fighters sent to Maluku from Java and elsewhere later in the year.<sup>27</sup> Rais warned that 'our patience has limits'.<sup>28</sup> By late January, the first non-Maluku militias were arriving in North Maluku in direct response to the Tobelo massacre. These early militias were not particularly well organised or effective.

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<sup>20</sup> ICG interviews with aid workers who were in Ambon at Christmas.

<sup>21</sup> ICG visit to Tobelo and interviews with: Church workers, Christian politicians, aide workers, and Christian residents of Tobelo; members of Christian militia groups from both Tobelo and Kao, which sent fighters to assist in the violence; people who helped dig mass graves and interviews with Moslem refugee survivors of the Tobelo killings.

<sup>22</sup> ICG interviews with Tobelo refugees, Christian residents of Tobelo, church and mosque sources, August-September 2000.

<sup>23</sup> See [www.Moslemsonline.com](http://www.Moslemsonline.com), [www.jihadtimes.com](http://www.jihadtimes.com), for examples. There is a comprehensive list of world Jihad sites at <http://qital.tripod.com/>.

<sup>24</sup> For instance *Republika*, a national newspaper, referred to the killings as a 'genocide' in a 31 December story. See <http://www.islamicsearch.com/IslamMail/Articles/20000104a.txt> for an English translation of the article.

<sup>25</sup> ICG interview, August 2000.

<sup>26</sup> In circumstances where the police are unable to maintain order, the assistance of the military can be requested. This is different to the introduction of a civil emergency, which occurred later.

<sup>27</sup> *Jakarta Post*, 8 January 2000.

<sup>28</sup> *Associated Press*, 7 January 2000.

However, a new Jihad group appeared in April that dramatically altered the complexion of Maluku's crisis. Called the Laskar Jihad<sup>29</sup>, its leader is Jaffar Umar Thalib, an ascetic Indonesian preacher who fought alongside the Afghanistan Mujahaddin in the late 1980s. On 6 April, Thalib led a sword-carrying procession in white robes through the streets of Jakarta to meet President Abdurrahman Wahid. Among other things he threatened to launch a Jihad in Maluku if the government didn't take firmer action. The president threatened to arrest Thalib and his followers if they went to Maluku.

Thalib, who says his ultimate goal is for Islamic law to be enshrined in Indonesia, was already running a paramilitary training camp for 2,000 recruits in Bogor, near Jakarta. Though the camp was closed on Wahid's orders in late April, Thalib's men were allowed to return to their base near Yogyakarta. In May an estimated 3,000 left Java for Maluku, despite the President's threat to arrest them. Thalib has repeatedly made provocative statements in the press and threatened to create violence on Java if his men are forced out of Maluku. Neither the police nor military, then or since, have taken effective action to curtail the movements of the Laskar Jihad.

Laskar Jihad operatives took control of existing militia in Maluku, and in North Maluku their advisers also introduced a centralized command for the local jihad. On 19 June 2000, jihad militias operating out of Ternate killed at least 200 Christians in the village of Duma, in the Galela district just north of Tobelo in Northern Halmahera. The militias used automatic weapons, radio communications and coordinated a joint land and sea assault on the town. Their leaders described that attack, which received global press attention, as revenge for the Christmas-time attacks on Moslems in Tobelo.<sup>30</sup>

On Ambon, the Moslem militias embarked on a strategy of 'cleaning' Christian villages out of key transportation corridors. In clearing Christians from enclaves, the Laskar Jihad has tended to attack with terror rather than wholesale mass murder, although there have been some horrific massacres.<sup>31</sup> By and large, the radical Moslem agenda has been served by lower numbers of killings in a given community, with the survivors being driven away by fear. Typical was the destruction of the town of Waai, a Christian village between two Moslem towns -- Tulehu and Liang -- on the east coast of Ambon Island in July 2000. Roughly 25 of the men of Waai were killed during fighting with Moslem attackers, some supported by soldiers, during the month. There was no larger massacre of Waai's population of 6,000, as could have happened if the Jihad had chosen, given its superior arms. This is small comfort to the now homeless survivors, but this pattern of action may mean that the situation will be more readily capable of control if effective policing action is ever taken.

Throughout June, military cooperation with the Laskar Jihad became more pronounced. Credible witnesses saw military units providing covering fire for Moslem attacks on Christian neighbourhoods in and around Ambon. Though the

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<sup>29</sup> On the role and organisation of the Laskar Jihad, see further Section IV below.

<sup>30</sup> ICG interviews with Ternate Jihad Commander Mohammad Albar, Galela Jihad Commander Mohammad Sawai and Duma refugees.

<sup>31</sup> The best-documented large massacre of Christians is the Duma massacre on Halmahera in North Maluku which did not, in fact, involve the Laskar Jihad, but the Ternate-based Jihad known as the Mujahadin. Though the two groups have links and similar goals, they are not the same organisation.

Police Mobile Brigade (Brimob), a paramilitary unit, had tended to side with Christians, they began to back down in the face of superior numbers and organisation. On 21 June, Laskar Jihad fighters with support from soldiers overran Brimob headquarters in Ambon, effectively ending the police's role as a counterbalance.

The violence, now led to a large degree by Laskar Jihad, continued to deepen despite the despatch of more soldiers from other provinces. By July 2000, the uniformed strength in Maluku reached seventeen army battalions and two police paramilitary battalions, totalling approximately 14,000 troops -- up from a reported 5,300 one year earlier.

#### **E. Civil Emergency, 27 June 2000**

On 27 June, President Abdurrahman declared a state of civil emergency - one step below an imposition of a military emergency or martial law.<sup>32</sup> It gives the military and the police wide powers to act - but still under civilian command. The President is ultimately responsible, with the civilian governors acting as his representatives. The Governor Saleh Latuconsina is in charge of Maluku province and the acting governor and retired Brigadier General Abdul Muhjie Effendie is in charge in North Maluku.

The civil emergency began with a frank admission from TNI spokesman, Vice Air Marshall Graitto Usodo, that a significant proportion of the soldiers in Maluku were 'emotionally involved' in the conflict. Roughly 1,400 potentially 'contaminated' soldiers were rotated out of the province and steps were taken to reduce the likelihood of future involvement.<sup>33</sup> The regional Pattimura Military Command was taken from Brigadier General Max Tamaela, an Ambonese Christian, and given to Col. I Made Yasa, a Balinese Hindu, whom the government hoped would appear neutral to both sides. Yasa has since been promoted to Brigadier General.

In the first two weeks of the civil emergency at least 100 more were killed. During July, rioting and sniper attacks continued in Ambon City, including in the neighbourhoods directly around Pattimura Military Headquarters. The Laskar Jihad engaged in a series of devastating attacks on Ambon Island. The villages of Waai, Poka and Rumah Tiga as well as the Pattimura University, all within an hour's drive of military headquarters, were destroyed. On 17 July, a cameraman from Associated Press Television filmed regular army troops providing covering fire for a Moslem attack on a Christian neighbourhood. Sporadic attacks continued until 30 July, when refugees from the already destroyed village of Waai were attacked in the hills near their former home. The local military says the July incidents were unavoidable because it took time to move biased troops out of the province. They say the transition to civil emergency was chaotic, making it easier for attacks to slip through.

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<sup>32</sup> According to the powers given under the 1959 Law on State Emergency, the police and the security apparatus may conduct a naval blockade; prevent the entry of suspicious elements into the territory; conduct sweeping operations to confiscate weapons; impose a curfew; replace the military and police command in the area; impose a media black out; conduct house-to-house searches for weapons and wiretap telephone and radio communications. However, under a state of civil emergency, this authority is exercised under the leadership of the two provincial governors. Under a state of military emergency, authority is transferred to the military commander.

<sup>33</sup> 'Indonesia is to Replace Troops in Ravaged Ambon,' Reuters, 27 June 2000.

Some improvements have been implemented. The military stopped billeting soldiers with local families, a practice which led many soldiers to identify with one side or the other. It also began to pull soldiers back into barracks and exert more control on their whereabouts and actions. Before the state of civil emergency, the impression among local people was that soldiers and police roamed the city at will. The Navy also stepped up its presence, with eleven warships brought in to patrol the waters of the two provinces and stop gunrunning. A string of early successes was reported and aid corridors to refugee camps reopened.<sup>35</sup>

But for every positive step there was a serious failing. Problems ranged from an absence of political will to the weakness of the armed forces. There were sweeps for weapons, but not thorough ones. Militia leaders were arrested, but later released. Some biased troops were removed from the province, but not all. Local commanders and civilian leaders promised action, but did not follow through. There was continuing evidence of military involvement in violence with no apparent disciplinary action taken against offenders. In many cases, government and military leaders said they did not take firmer action because they feared a backlash by local communities.

Most telling has been the failure to come to grips with the Laskar Jihad. In July, both Maluku Governor Saleh Latuconsina and Pattimura Commander I Made Yasa promised to forcibly expel the group from the province. Indonesian Foreign Minister Alwi Shihab promised that 'the military is moving ahead to remove them.' Laskar Jihad spokesman Ayip Syafruddin countered that the group would create violence on Java and elsewhere if it was ousted from Maluku.<sup>36</sup> Laskar Jihad continued its terrorism but on a reduced scale. In early August, two Moslems in Ambon's Waihong neighbourhood, which is home to the main Al-Fatah Mosque, were publicly executed for being 'traitors to Islam.' The chairman of an Ambon group with ties to the Laskar Jihad took credit for the killings.<sup>37</sup> There have been no arrests, and it appears policing has been left in the hands of militias and informal community groups on both sides.

## **F. Government Impotence: Mass Violence Resumes in September**

The failure to effectively enforce the state of civil emergency only served to widen the government's credibility gap. Citizen distrust has been nourished on both sides and many Moslems and Christians no longer acknowledge the bureaucracy's authority. The unintended message to citizens has been that militia leaders, not the government or the military, are the source of protection. This has not only strengthened the militias, especially Laskar Jihad, but emboldened them. A new round of violence began in September 2000 with a bomb attack on a market in front of the Maluku Governor's office in Ambon City, speed-boat attacks on ferries in Ambon bay, and inter-communal fighting on the islands of Haruku and Saparua. On 25 and 26 September, part of the Christian village of Hative Besar,

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<sup>35</sup> 'Indonesian navy seizes 67 weapons-carrying ships in the Malukus', AFP, 18 July 2000.

<sup>36</sup> 'Indonesian military told to remove Moslem militants from Moluccas,' DPA 12 July 2000. 'Indonesia's Jihad Force Says to Reinforce Moluccas,' Reuters, 24 July 2000 and 'Maluku seeks Jakarta's help in expelling Jihad Force,' Jakarta Post 27 July 2000.

<sup>37</sup> 'Ketua FPIM: Musuh Berbahaya, Orang Berkhianat.' *Sivillima*, 21 August 2000.

just across the bay from Ambon City, was destroyed, with reports of more than 30 dead and 2,000 refugees evacuated to a Christian village in Ambon City.<sup>38</sup>

Throughout early October there was a series of attacks by Laskar Jihad and Moslem villagers on Suli, one of the few remaining Christian villages on the east coast of Ambon island. These attacks occurred despite the presence nearby in the town of Suli Atas of a large military base. In November, Laskar Jihad attacks on Seram, a short boat ride from Ambon, left at least a dozen dead and hundreds of homes destroyed. At the end of November, there was a massacre of as many as ten Christians on the island of Kewsui. Ambon City has reverted to a near state of war, with snipers on rooftops, nightly gunfire and bombings in the streets. The resumption of conflict is evidence of the military's failure to restore order or disarm combatants.

North Maluku, on the other hand, remained mostly peaceful, though storm clouds are gathering there as well. The provincial government and military have said the reintroduction of the Makianese into Malifut is a priority and have built barracks to house soldiers in Malifut to protect that community when it is reinserted. The Kao have vowed to fight this. For the moment, the status quo is being maintained. North Maluku officials have been pressing for an end to the state of emergency, an option that Coordinating Minister for Political, Social and Security Affairs, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, said that the government is considering.<sup>41</sup> The peace in North Maluku, however, is not based on progress towards reconciliation. It results from the cantonment of the region's Christians and Moslems. There are still nearly 200,000 angry and frightened refugees in the north. Governor Effendie admits tension is very high: 'The rule of the moment is to keep the Moslems and Christians divided to avoid violence.'<sup>42</sup>

As of early December, the Laskar Jihad was still operating freely. With Christmas and Idul Fitri approaching, Moslem and Christian sources in Ambon say tension is rising to levels not seen since early in the year. Most project outbreaks of violence motivated by the religious holidays. There are no signs that the military is prepared. It has done nothing to disarm the Laskar Jihad.

#### IV. KILLING IN THE NAME OF ISLAM: LASKAR JIHAD

The Laskar Jihad are not the cause of Maluku's problems, but they are now the greatest instigator and beneficiary of the violence. Their continued presence in Ambon will lead to more killings, more destroyed villages and more refugees. The group has friends and sympathizers throughout Indonesia, as well as the Middle East.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> In response to this attack, the Pattimura Military Commander Brig. Gen. I Made Yasa, suggested in a television interview in Ambon on 27 September that the people of Hative Besar were responsible because of their distrust of the military.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>39</sup> 'Moluccas Report No. 71,' Ambon Diocese Crisis Centre, 10 October 2000.

<sup>40</sup> TVRI Broadcast 2 October 2000 Summarized by the BBC in 'Navy Brokers Peace Agreement in North Maluku,' 5 October 2000.

<sup>41</sup> 'Indonesia may end civil emergency in the Moluccas,' Reuters, 12 October 2000.

<sup>42</sup> ICG Interview with Effendie, 30 August 2000.

<sup>43</sup> For instance, the organisation cites authorising Fatwas for a Jihad in Maluku from a variety of Sunni Ulema in the Arab world.

The executive board of the Laskar Jihad is grouped in the Yayasan Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah, a Yogyakarta-based Islamic foundation chaired by Jaffar Umar Thalib. Laskar Jihad members frequently refer to their mission in the cosmic terms of a final struggle with Christianity. There is little doubt that the organization's objective is to 'cleanse' as much of the region as possible of Christians, as made clear both by the statements of its leaders and the group's military strategy.<sup>44</sup>

On 3 September 2000, Thalib gave a speech at Ambon's Al-Fatah Mosque that was broadcast on local radio. He described the then prevailing lull in the fighting as a 'half-time' and urged good Moslems to wipe out Christians. After the speech, Governor Latuconsina and Maluku Police Chief Brig. Gen Firman Gani met Thalib on 14 September in Ambon police headquarters and asked him to promote peace rather than war. Then they let him leave.<sup>45</sup> Fighting resumed two weeks later.

On 19 September, Thalib visited the former Christian village of Waai, which was destroyed in a July Laskar Jihad attack. He and a group of local Moslem leaders decided to build a new town there, to be called Waai Islam. Thalib expressed delight at Waai's imminent 'return' to Islam. The village had converted from Islam to Christianity in 1670, a historical crime he claimed to be correcting.<sup>46</sup>

The Jihad fighters in Ternate, the North Maluku capital, have a different organisation. In Ternate the local Moslem militias prefer to call themselves Mujahadin, or describe themselves as members of the Front for the Defenders of Islam, an organisation that also has a presence in Jakarta. The North Maluku Jihad Commander is Abubakar Wahid, who says he was born in the province, and the number two is Mohammad Albar, who is also from North Maluku. However, they have many formal and informal links to the Laskar Jihad. The North Maluku Jihad says it closely coordinates its efforts with Thalib's organisation.<sup>47</sup>

The Laskar Jihad has become the greatest symbol of the government's impotence in the face of the Maluku crisis. Thalib and his followers had publicly promised a Jihad in April 2000, and President Abdurrahman had ordered they be prevented from leaving Java and Thalib arrested. These orders were relayed both directly to Armed Forces Chief Widodo and through the then civilian Defense Minister Juwono Sudarsono.<sup>48</sup> The orders were ignored. When they arrived in Ambon after taking a commercial ferry from Surabaya on Java, containers of arms were waiting for them.<sup>49</sup> The group and its leaders have committed a series of violent crimes without arrest or sanction. Thalib and his lieutenants frequently fly between Ambon, Sulawesi and Java on commercial flights. Though Thalib calls himself a 'humanitarian' he has repeatedly promised to use violence to achieve his ends.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> For a full review of the group's political beliefs, go to [laskarjihad.cjb.net](http://laskarjihad.cjb.net), [www.laskarjihad.or.id](http://www.laskarjihad.or.id) [www.ummah.net/sos/indonesia1.htm](http://www.ummah.net/sos/indonesia1.htm) and <http://listen.to//Rustam-Kastor>. [www.laskarjihad.or.id](http://www.laskarjihad.or.id) is the official site of the Yayasan Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah, which is the umbrella organisation for the Laskar Jihad.

<sup>45</sup> Siwilima, Ambon 3 September 2000 and Antara, 'Maluku Governor Asks Jihad to Promote Peace,' 14 September 2000.

<sup>46</sup> Laskar Jihad 'Berita Harian', 19 September 2000, [www.laskarjihad.or.id](http://www.laskarjihad.or.id).

<sup>47</sup> ICG interview with Albar, Ternate 1 September 2000.

<sup>48</sup> Gatra, March 25 2000 'Headquarters of Jihad Troops'; Sydney Morning Herald, 12 January 2000 'Wahid warns Moslems against Moluccas Jihad'; and ICG confidential interview, September 2000.

<sup>49</sup> Jakarta Post, 15 July 2000.

<sup>50</sup> ICG interview with Thalib, Yogyakarta 10-11 August 2000. Also, collected speeches and writings, [www.laskarjihad.or.id](http://www.laskarjihad.or.id).

Hard questions will have to be asked about the government's commitment to peace in Maluku so long as they are not expelled. Why were they not stopped? Why has Thalib not been arrested? Who is funding them? It is widely believed that elements in the military and police have provided some support but it is likely that most of those officers do not actually share the Laskar Jihad's Islamic aspirations. Rather, they see it as a tool to undermine the current civilian government.

Another reason why the military and police have been reluctant to act against the movement is a concern to avoid antagonising that part of the Indonesian Moslem community outside Maluku that sees the Laskar Jihad as protecting Moslems under threat in Maluku. It is widely believed that an international Christian plot aims to separate Ambon from Indonesia and persecute Muslims there.<sup>51</sup> It is feared that strong action against the Laskar Jihad could provoke Muslim protest and even violence in other parts of Indonesia.

The group is tolerated by significant members of Jakarta's political elite: whether due to real sympathy or political calculation is hard to say. For example, Minister of Justice and Human Rights Yusril Mahendra, who is also chairman of the Crescent and Star Party, has declined to condemn their actions.<sup>52</sup> Another Crescent and Star Party leader and deputy chairman of the national parliament, Ahmad Sumargono, speaks approvingly of the group,<sup>53</sup> as does the militant Jakarta-based Front for the Defenders of Islam. Recently ousted National Police Chief Gen. Rusdihardjo, in a letter sent to Thalib in April 2000, apologized for having evicted the Jihad paramilitaries from their Bogor training camp. He even wished Thalib 'good luck with your struggle' (*'selamat berjuang'*).<sup>54</sup>

Some believe the Laskar Jihad is receiving extensive support from the Middle East and there are many tales told by Christians of 'Arab-looking' men fighting in Ambon. ICG, however, found little evidence of foreign involvement. While it would not be surprising for friendly organisations overseas to be sending money (or the odd mercenary), focusing on foreign support tends to downplay the strength of the group's domestic network.

Though the removal of the Laskar Jihad from the equation in Maluku would not solve the region's problems, it would be a vital first step.

## V. KILLING IN THE NAME OF CHRISTIANITY

The weight given to the involvement of the Laskar Jihad by this report should not create the impression that there are no 'Christian' fighters. The chief difference is the absence of a driving ideology or goal to bind Maluku's disparate Christian fighters together. They tend to be fragmented and focused on local goals of

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<sup>51</sup> For an example of this belief, see Rustam Kastor, *Konspirasi Politik RMS Dan Kristen Menghancurkan Ummat Islam Di Ambon-Maluku* (The Political Conspiracy of the RMS and Christians to Destroy the Moslem People of Ambon-Maluku), Yogyakarta, Wihdah Press, 2000. The full text of Kastor's book can be found at <http://listen.to//Rustam-Kastor>.

<sup>52</sup> ICG Interview 29 June 2000.

<sup>53</sup> 'Ambon Manangise', *Gatra*, January 1999.

<sup>54</sup> Letter seen by ICG of the group's representative office in Bogor, June 2000.

community protection and land, with only a nebulous sense of the larger provincial picture.

Despite their central role during the first year of the conflict, they have been on the defensive during the last eight months. With the arrival of the Laskar Jihad and the support of sections of the army for Maluku's Moslem fighters, superior numbers and organisation were brought to bear on the Christian militias, which have their roots in traditional defence organisations in rural towns, and gangsters in the cities. Rather than fight and lose, they have chosen to fade into the background. This does not mean that they are gone. Much like the Laskar Jihad, they have been left to their own devices in their communities, allowed to stock-pile weapons and prepare for conflict as they see fit. They are mainly armed with traditional weapons.

Typical is Agus Wattimena, leader of Coker (*Cowok Kristen*, 'Christian Boys'), a gang based in the Kuda Mati neighbourhood of Ambon. The conflict has elevated Wattimena's status in his community, and his home is now buzzing with visitors coming to pay their respects and ask for his support. Wattimena has clearly benefited from the conflict, and Coker and Christian groups like them will have to be disarmed before peace can be considered. To quote Wattimena: 'This is a real religious war and we have to protect ourselves. Sometimes protection means attacking first. We have a plan, and when the time comes, we will wipe them out.'<sup>55</sup> There is evidence that soldiers have helped arm Coker: whether out of sympathy or for money is not clear. In Halmahera, Christians that have participated in massacres have sometimes described themselves as 'Laskar Jesus.'<sup>56</sup>

Church leaders have not spoken out against violence as much as they could, and Coker members are regularly visible around the Marinatha Protestant Church in Ambon, which is the headquarters for the protestant churches in Maluku. Christian leaders have allowed the lines between civilians and militia to become blurred. For instance, members of Nunusaku for Human Rights, a Christian group based in Ambon that has lobbied for international intervention, regularly meet with Wattimena. The anger within congregations is so high that preachers are reluctant to speak out against violence, even when they oppose it themselves. 'I'm very afraid of what my own people would be capable of,' said one.<sup>57</sup>

Not surprisingly, the Laskar Jihad and many other Moslem leaders consider Wattimena to be a key provocateur and a common demand is that he and a number of other prominent Christians be arrested before they can talk peace. Wattimena, and many regular Christians, believe that organisations like his are vital to protect Christian interests. They are deeply convinced of a national conspiracy to drive Christians out of Maluku. Their rhetoric has grown increasingly militant over time. Wattimena says he has always been an Indonesian patriot 'but if the government won't protect us, why would we want to remain Indonesian? We'd be better off independent.'<sup>58</sup> Christian leaders say they would only agree to disarm if international peacekeepers are sent.

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<sup>55</sup> ICG interview, 30 August 2000.

<sup>56</sup> ICG interviews in Halmahera, also 'Christians fight back with militias,' *South China Morning Post*, 20 July 2000.

<sup>57</sup> Confidential ICG interview, 29 August 2000.

<sup>58</sup> ICG interview, 30 August 2000.

## VI. WHY ISN'T MORE BEING DONE?

There is a long list of puzzling failures that led to the current situation: Indonesian religious leaders, constrained by their own bias and the bias of their constituencies, did not condemn the violence. The military did not defend communities, and has not yet formulated a comprehensive strategy for ending the conflict; Indonesia's politicians preferred to avoid tackling the problem, often voicing the hope that it would 'work itself out.' The Laskar Jihad should have been restrained on Java, and police heads should have rolled for failing to restrain them. The Attorney General should have quickly investigated and assigned teams of prosecutors.

Justice and protection are the keys. As long as the government is unable to assure each community that its own security is guaranteed, it will be virtually impossible to end the violence. Moral appeals by political and religious leaders to end the violence will not work if large numbers of people feel that their own survival continues to be threatened by members of the rival community. If the government's security forces cannot provide such assurances, the two communities will continue to rely on their respective militias. As a first step, an armed force is going to have to start protecting communities. As a second, key instigators of conflict will need to be arrested and jailed.

However, given the circumstances in the country as a whole, there are tremendous hurdles to putting together a neutral force to restore basic law enforcement. There are powerful resource and political constraints limiting the government's room for manoeuvre. The crisis in Maluku arises in part from local circumstances but, in some respects, the mass violence can be seen as yet another manifestation of the chronic crisis facing Indonesia as a whole.<sup>59</sup> And the resources, capacity to govern and national cohesion needed to address the national crisis are as lacking in Maluku as they are in the rest of the country.

There are also considerable difficulties in disarming the opposing forces in Maluku. While guns must be removed from civilian hands, Christian and Moslem, before peace can be assured, the government would need to be able to convince communities that they can rely on the military and police to protect them. The vast majority of the Maluku provinces' people want the violence to stop, and would be willing to go without their own militias if they believed the military could and would protect them. But in the current environment, they fear the consequences of not having a militia to protect them most of all. If aggressive weapons sweeps are begun as a first step, community leaders will tend to jump to the conclusion (fairly or otherwise) that they are being disarmed to make them more vulnerable to attack, not to restore order. Therefore, disarming would need to come within a broader program to introduce the rule of law and convince citizens that it will be applied.

While it may be inadvisable, even if it were possible, to seek to prosecute every person who has participated in the Ambon violence, going after a few high profile instigators of violence would begin to send the message that the period of impunity is coming to an end. Until militia leaders – both the Laskar Jihad and the community-based Christian fighters – see a real threat of arrest, they are not

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<sup>59</sup> See ICG Asia Report No. 6, *Indonesia's Crisis: Chronic but not Acute*, 31 May 2000.

likely to put down their arms. There have been periodic discussions of getting the courts up and running again, including the idea of trying cases on Navy ships in Ambon Bay, but they have not yet borne fruit.

## A. The National Government

The national government has seemed reluctant to engage Maluku head on. President Abdurrahman Wahid and other Jakarta politicians do not place Maluku at the top of their list of priorities. Central government neglect is prolonging the crisis, especially because of the weak civilian leadership on the provincial level.

Abdurrahman Wahid did not appear to grasp the crisis in Maluku when he took office in October 1999. Apparently pre-occupied by developments in Aceh and misinformed by his own bureaucracy, he downplayed the national implications of the Maluku conflict and called on the people to settle their problems amongst themselves. Vice President Megawati Sukarnoputri was appointed by the President to spearhead reconciliation efforts shortly after his election, but she was ineffectual and appeared disinterested, electing to take a New Year's vacation to Hong Kong while the violence in Maluku raged.<sup>60</sup> For her part, Megawati complained to aides that the President had made her responsible for Maluku without giving her the power she needed to make a difference.<sup>61</sup> Although both the President and Vice-President made brief visits to Maluku, these visits were not followed by policy initiatives.

The president finally took responsibility when he declared the civil emergency at the end of June, but he still continued to describe the problem 'as an issue to be solved by the people of Maluku themselves'.<sup>62</sup> Even in simple matters, he has failed to assert himself. On July 3, he alleged that Maluku Governor Saleh Latuconsina was contributing to the violence, but said he decided not to replace the governor because 'many did not agree to my proposal'.<sup>63</sup>

At the same time, he and aides have complained about the role of Moslem extremists and disloyal officers in fomenting Maluku violence. Both current Defense Minister Mahfud M.D. and his predecessor Juwono Sudarsono have said generals linked to former President Soeharto are stirring up violence.<sup>64</sup> The accusations, however, have been frustratingly vague and have not been pursued. Likewise, while the president has asked that action be taken against the Laskar Jihad, an organisation he finds personally distasteful, he has not demanded it.

Why? Abdurrahman's puzzling reluctance to take firm action arises from his own tenuous political position. A significant proportion of Indonesia's largely Moslem population sympathizes with the Moslem side of the conflict and believes that the Moslems are indeed the victims of a Christian campaign to drive them out. Wahid is hemmed in by political considerations. If he speaks out too much his opponents could brand him anti-Islam and mobilize popular opposition to him on that basis. Many within the central government are also afraid to act because of fears the Laskar will seed violence on Java and elsewhere if removed from Maluku. One

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<sup>60</sup> 'Students Lash Out at Megawati Over Maluku', *Jakarta Post*, 6 January 2000.

<sup>61</sup> ICG confidential interview, September 2000.

<sup>62</sup> 'President: I Am Responsible For Moluccas Conflict' *Kompas*, 30 June 2000.

<sup>63</sup> 'Wahid says Governor, ex-Maluku military chief behind violence,' *Indonesian Observer*, 3 July 2000.

<sup>64</sup> 'Army elements behind violence,' *The Straits Times*, 5 October 2000 and 'Juwono Speaks on Maluku Tragedy,' *Jakarta Post*, 15 July 2000.

Wahid aide says the president has a tacit agreement with the group whereby he leaves them alone in Maluku and in return they don't burn churches on Java.<sup>65</sup>

## B. The Regional Governments

Both provincial leaders are Jakarta appointees. Without strong local political bases, neither has shown much appetite to seize control of the situation or take advantage of the special powers provided by the civil emergency. Saleh Latuconsina was appointed as governor of Maluku in 1997 when President Soeharto was still in power while Brig. Gen. A. M. Effendie was appointed as acting governor of the new province of North Maluku after it was decided it was impossible to call the provincial assembly into session in order to elect the governor. North Maluku's legislators are still in a legal limbo. Though elections were held in most parts of Northern Maluku in 1999, it was before the area had provincial status, and the winners of that election were scheduled to serve in Ambon. Some local political parties are pushing for new elections in North Maluku – a process that would be badly skewed by the massive dislocation of people and probably create more violence – while others want the winners of the original election to take their seats.

Neither of the governors have been especially effective. Both have consistently downplayed the depth of the problems. For instance, Latuconsina's reports to the central government in late 1999 and early 2000 incorrectly reported that the situation was improving.<sup>66</sup> Both have been asked as civil emergency authorities to govern with a military establishment that is not used to taking orders from civilians. Not surprisingly, the results have been less than ideal. Even as Latuconsina was demanding the people of Maluku disarm at the start of the civil emergency, soldiers were selling arms to both sides.<sup>67</sup>

Though insisting that he is in charge, Maluku Governor Latuconsina seemed, in an ICG interview, almost resigned to accepting his lack of authority. When asked what he was doing about 'rogue elements' in the military, he distanced himself from the problem. 'Don't ask me about that, that's the job of the Military Commander' (Brig. Gen. I Made Yasa).<sup>68</sup> In North Maluku, in answer to the same question, Governor Effendie simply denied that there is a problem of military involvement in the conflict.

Government-sponsored reconciliation efforts have all failed. The government's approach has been to assemble leaders from the two communities and have them pledge to stop the violence without laying any of the groundwork for real reconciliation. When empty pledges break down, the feeling of hopelessness is reinforced, as is distrust (along the lines that 'they' didn't keep their word).

While it might appear time for Jakarta to appoint more vigorous leaders in Maluku, human resources are a huge constraint. Virtually all vigorous leaders with local support are identified closely with one side or other in the conflict. 'Neutral' Moslems or Christians are not likely to enjoy sufficient support within their own communities or be able to act with vigour. This leads to the suggestion that

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<sup>65</sup> ICG confidential interview, September 2000.

<sup>66</sup> ICG confidential interview, September 2000.

<sup>67</sup> ICG confidential interviews in Ambon, August 2000.

<sup>68</sup> ICG Interview, 22 August 2000.

'neutral' leaders should be recruited from outside the two provinces, as is now the case with the army and the police leadership.<sup>69</sup> During the Soeharto era until the early 1990s, the governors were always appointed, and almost always military officers. Given the performance of the military so far in the two provinces, it is unlikely that a military governor would win public acceptance. In short, though the present governors aren't perfect, there are no clear alternatives.

### C. The Military

The military in Maluku has failed to play the role of an impartial peace-keeper. Instead, military personnel themselves have joined in the conflict. Not only have soldiers and police sold or rented weapons and ammunition to the combatants but on many occasions troops have actually joined in the battle on one side or the other. Adding to this problem is the poor communications equipment and training of officers in the field.

Christian leaders are particularly forceful in condemning the military, whom they see as siding with Moslems. 'The military is the whole problem in the Moluccas – if the military can do its job properly, as a referee, then we could end this conflict,' says the Rev. Sammy Titaley, a leader of the Protestant Church in Maluku. The military 'is trying to win back their traditional political and financial roles with violence,' he says.<sup>70</sup>

Many Indonesians believe that the military is doing a less-than-vigorous job because it would like to see martial law replace the civil emergency. Indeed, officers have quietly argued that the present civil emergency, which puts authority in the hands of the governor, does not give them enough power. A declaration of martial law would also show up civilians as less than competent and slow the erosion of the military's political role. Officers themselves complain that in the post-New Order era, military personnel are worried that they may be vulnerable to charges of human-rights violations if they take firm action to prevent social disorder without the legal cover provided by martial law.

Since the end of September, there have been signs of improving performance from the military. Col. Sutrisno, an army officer who headed the Security Restoration Sector Command for North Maluku until 10 September, was replaced by Marine Corps Col M. Alfian. During Sutrisno's nine months in North Maluku, a number of Jihad attacks were launched from Ternate, and witnesses saw boats of attackers leaving Ternate port in full view of soldiers.<sup>71</sup>

In Maluku province, Brig. Gen. Yasa declared on September 30 that rioters would be shot on sight, replacing 'persuasive' measures by the military with 'repressive' measures.<sup>72</sup> Although such threats have been made in the past with little follow through, it appears that at least some army units have shed their reluctance to respond with maximum force. In attacks on Galela, Halong and Suli in October, soldiers shot armed attackers. On November 25, army soldiers repelled what

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<sup>69</sup> The former police chief in Maluku and the current army commander for the region are Hindus from Bali. Ironically, their lack of local religious identification denies them credibility on both sides. Hard-line Moslems and Christians in Maluku insisted that Hindu officials were secretly members of their opponents' religion.

<sup>70</sup> ICG Interview, 21 August 2000.

<sup>71</sup> ICG confidential Interview, August 2000.

<sup>72</sup> 'Military issues shoot on site orders in Maluku,' Jakarta Post, 2 October 2000.

appeared to be a Laskar Jihad attack on the Seram town of Kairatu, killing seven – although only after roughly 100 houses were burned.

But old problems remain unresolved. Both Christians and Moslems continue to allege that soldiers are helping to arm the other side and in some cases participating in attacks. Many of the fighters in Maluku are very well-armed, with October and November attacks using military-style rifles, mortars and grenades. Military weapons depots are the likeliest sources of these weapons. Informants in Ambon City say it is relatively easy to buy guns and ammunition from soldiers.<sup>73</sup>

This points to a broader problem that undermines military discipline and the best intentions of commanders: the current situation is lucrative to soldiers. A variety of protection rackets, tolls and other 'business' ventures run by soldiers have sprung up in the two provinces. For instance, stevedores at Ambon port say four million rupiah (\$US500) is paid to the military for every container they unload. Meanwhile, most of the large industries in the Maluku provinces (predominantly fisheries and timber) continue to run despite the chaos. Many of these businesses have officers as silent partners and also pay protection fees. There have also been claims of soldiers demanding money from citizens before moving in to protect them during attacks. While the ICG was not able to conclusively confirm these reports, a number of instances were found where soldiers and police officers were being paid to guard refugees.

Military businesses breed indiscipline in many ways. As in many parts of Indonesia, the army and the police paramilitary Mobile Brigade (Brimob) are business rivals, and on occasion have engaged in shootouts that resemble gang turf wars. Cooperation between the Army and Brimob has improved but even today leaders in Maluku sometimes speak of the need to keep Brimob and Army personnel apart, at a time when they desperately need to cooperate.<sup>74</sup>

All this business activity is natural given the way the military has to generate its own finances. About 75 per cent of the military's budget is met by informal means, and the TNI could not operate if it did not take such payments. But in crises such as Maluku's, it ironically gives soldiers a stake in the violence.<sup>75</sup>

## VII. INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF CONTINUING VIOLENCE IN MALUKU

The failure of the Indonesian government to rein in the violence in Maluku makes it vulnerable to demands calling for international intervention. Continuing murder and other massive human rights abuses, particularly with Christians now bearing the brunt of the violence, will keep Indonesia under pressure internationally. Some sections of the Christian community in Maluku and their international allies, including the World Council of Churches, have called for a foreign peace-keeping force. In Indonesia both the Catholic and Protestant Churches have asked for peacekeepers, most notably the Indonesian Communion of Churches (PGI), Indonesia's largest Protestant group. Domestic Moslem reaction has been predictably angry, with the Chairman of Muhammadiyah, the country's second

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<sup>73</sup> ICG confidential interviews September 2000.

<sup>74</sup> *Siwilima*, 10 October 2000.

<sup>75</sup> See *Indonesia: Keeping the Military Under Control*, International Crisis Group, 5 September 2000.

largest Moslem group, saying Christians were in effect calling for a 'new colonialism'.<sup>76</sup>

After the humiliating 'loss' of East Timor in 1999, however, it would be politically impossible for an Indonesian government to accept foreign military intervention under the auspices of the United Nations and it is virtually inconceivable that foreign troops would come to Maluku without the Indonesian government's agreement.

In the wake of East Timor's independence many Indonesians view the United Nations and the international community with extreme distrust. The entry of foreign soldiers would provoke a nationalist and Moslem backlash that would cast unpredictable and destabilizing ripples throughout Indonesia. A large proportion of Moslems with a political stake in the conflict say they believe there is a foreign conspiracy to declare a Christian Republic of South Maluku in the region. A Western-backed foreign force would give these voices a standard to rally around. In North Maluku, foreign aid workers are already being treated with distrust by the local government and military command, with senior officials occasionally complaining of fears that 'foreign spies' might be mixed in among them.<sup>77</sup>

President Abdurrahman clearly fears the domestic political consequences if foreign troops were introduced. Foreign Minister Alwi Shihab was sent to plead for patience from UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in July. 'If the international community insists on intervening, our society would not accept such a thing. And there would be protests against the government. These bad possibilities must be avoided,' he told reporters.<sup>78</sup> The introduction of international troops would also drive a further wedge between President Abdurrahman and his military.

However, consideration could be given to offering foreign observers with the task of monitoring the performance of the military and police in order to create confidence in their neutrality. Such observers should not come from Western countries but from the Asian region, particularly members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

There are other measures that can be taken that are well short of armed intervention, some of which are already being pursued, with others that might be possible if properly approached.

The foreign role to date has been limited to expressions of concern and humanitarian assistance. The U.S. has called on the Indonesian government to 'prevent organised groups from initiating attacks and stop extremists from outside areas from inflaming the situation and engaging in violence'.<sup>79</sup> The U.S. has also repeatedly complained about Indonesia's policy of limiting diplomatic access to Maluku -- an apparent effort to limit the flow of information about the violence. The United Nations' response has been more muted. In July, Kofi Annan said he urged President Abdurrahman to take 'all necessary measures' to stop the killing.<sup>80</sup> Wahid himself said Annan had told him that there was 'some pressure'

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<sup>76</sup> BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 29 July 2000.

<sup>77</sup> ICG confidential interviews, September 2000.

<sup>78</sup> 'Shihab to meet Kofi Annan, Albright over Maluku unrest,' *Indonesian Observer*, 19 July 2000.

<sup>79</sup> U.S. State Department Daily Briefing, 26 July 2000.

<sup>80</sup> AFP, 17 July 2000.

from Security Council members for an international force.<sup>81</sup> The Australian government, perhaps due to popular Indonesian anger over its role in securing the newly independent East Timor, has limited its public comments on the Maluku violence to expressions of concern and promises of aid, as has the Japanese government. The British Council conducted a series of workshops for Moslems and Christians in conflict resolution early this year that were ineffective, essentially since the participants in the workshops were not combatants.

The European Union passed a resolution in July that called for the European Commission to investigate how it could contribute to ending the fighting, including the advisability of sending international observers. A delegation consisting of five EU ambassadors from Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Portugal went to Maluku and North Maluku in mid-October. The ambassadors said their primary duty was to assess the humanitarian situation.

The United Nations has begun a series of international humanitarian assistance programs in Maluku, led by the World Health Organisation, World Food Program, the United Nations Development Program, the UN Children's Fund, and the Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Other aid agencies at work in the region include the International Committee of the Red Cross, Medecins Sans Frontières, and World Vision. Though aid workers were having trouble reaching refugees earlier this year, in part because of military non-cooperation, the situation has improved since July. The international community should be prepared to assist with humanitarian aid for years, as it seems unlikely all 500,000 refugees will be able to go home soon. In November, the Netherlands provided a \$2 million grant to pay for the return of 22,500 people from the Kai islands in Southeast Maluku. However, some aid workers in Maluku are worried that repatriations may come too soon and could ignite more fighting.

## VIII. CONCLUSIONS

Maluku's conflict is wide-ranging and for the most part still uncontained. There is no single issue or objective driving its combatants. Instead a series of overlapping and shifting demands for justice, revenge, land and power have created an unstable political landscape that does not lend itself to simple answers. Justice and security will be at the core of any peaceful future, but will not be obtained quickly, or easily. The failures of civil institutions and the military to address adequately the crisis have been as much the result of ingrained political culture as anything else, and this means that improving these institutions will be a long-term project. Peace agreements and other symbolic efforts do not address popular anger, fear or demands for justice. While one might argue that they are better than nothing, many in Maluku are tired of meaningless reconciliation talks. For peace talks to be truly productive, they must come in the right context: one in which Christians and Moslems can sit down across from one another without terror.

The short-term outlook is poor. At the local level, while war-fatigue is setting in among both communities and increasing their willingness to negotiate and compromise, fear and distrust are overwhelming. The outlook for repatriation of the displaced – which is a constant goad to new fights – is grim. A crucial

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<sup>81</sup> Reuters, 23 July 2000.

component remains the behaviour of the military and the police, which have repeatedly failed in their duties and shown bias in the conflict. The military has almost no credibility as a neutral keeper of the peace in Maluku now.

Meanwhile the weak elected government of President Abdurrahman Wahid remains incapable of asserting its authority in the Maluku region. The president depends on the support of a coalition in which Moslem elements are a crucial component. Many of these Moslems believe that their co-religionists in Maluku have been the victims of Christian aggression and therefore support such radical bodies as the Laskar Jihad which they see as protecting Moslem communities. Although the president and some of his ministers have spoken out against the Laskar Jihad, the government has not been able to enforce its own policies.

The main conclusion of this report is that peace cannot be restored in the Maluku region until both Moslems and Christians feel that their own personal security is guaranteed. As long as they have no confidence in the capacity of the state security apparatus to protect them, they will continue to rely on their own militias and the violence is likely to continue. It is crucial therefore that the national leadership should regain control of its police and military forces in Maluku and that these forces must act in a neutral way between the rival communities.

But there are no simple and straightforward strategies that provide the key to restoring peace in the Maluku provinces. Every significant policy proposal has its drawbacks. The way forward will inevitably require the balancing of the pros and cons of different courses of action. Policies will need to be implemented flexibly and adjusted in accordance with the changing responses of the contending communities themselves.

A fundamental dilemma for the government arises from the universally recognised fact that its major policy instruments - the military and the police, the provincial governments and the legal system - are not only not working effectively but in some cases are contributing to the conflict.

One of the most important policy goals is the disarmament of the armed militias - both Moslem and Christian - and the expulsion of the non-Malukan members of the Laskar Jihad. But how can this be achieved when military and police personnel lack proper training, are not supplied with adequate daily necessities, and often become 'contaminated' in the sense of siding with one side or the other in the conflict? Of course, new troops can be brought in from elsewhere but the same problems will continue as long as the underlying deficiencies are not addressed. In any case it will not be easy to capture and expel several thousand members of the laskar jihad.

Another important goal is the arrest and trial of those accused of gross human rights violations, including murder, in the course of the conflict. But this would require a thorough reform of the legal system - both military and civilian - and cannot be achieved soon. So far, there have not been any successful prosecutions of individuals responsible for murders and other serious crimes. A further problem in judicial investigation is the fact that almost every judge and prosecutor of Malukan origin either is, or knows, a victim of the violence.

In presenting recommendations for the consideration of the Indonesian government it is, therefore, necessary to keep in mind the constraints under which it is operating. This does not mean that nothing can be done but that progress can only be gradual.

### **The Laskar Jihad and the Christian Militias**

While it may be impossible to prosecute all those responsible for murder, violence and destruction in the Maluku provinces, the arrest and trial of those most responsible will be an important step towards the restoration of order. The arrest and prosecution of Laskar Jihad leaders must be accompanied by similar measures against Christian militia leaders. Unless the law punishes those responsible for the violence, revenge killings might easily continue.

The government should aim to implement its stated policy of removing the non-Malukan members of the Laskar Jihad from the two provinces. It is likely that the implementation of such a policy will meet with resistance and could lead to conflict within the security forces themselves. This policy, therefore, can only be implemented gradually. However, if the government can succeed in deporting a significant part of the Laskar Jihad, it is not unlikely that many others would leave voluntarily.

It will be counter-productive to remove the Laskar Jihad unless the security of Moslem communities can be guaranteed by the security forces. If the removal of the Laskar Jihad from Maluku were followed by renewed attacks by Christian militias on Moslems, it is likely that the conflict in Maluku would spiral out of control. Thus, the removal of the Laskar Jihad needs to be accompanied by credible measures to guarantee security for Moslems and Christians alike in Maluku.

Ultimately it will be necessary to disarm all militias - both Moslem and Christian - but, once again, this will be impossible to achieve without firm guarantees for the security of the two communities, in the context of a general restoration of the rule of law, and can only be achieved gradually.

### **Security Forces**

The performance of the security forces in Maluku has been appalling, although some steps seem to have been taken after the introduction of the civil emergency to improve it. It is absolutely essential that military and police personnel should play a peacekeeping role and refrain from joining in the fighting. It is also essential that security personnel should not assist combatants in other ways such as through the supply of weapons and ammunition. Ultimately it is impossible for the security forces to perform their functions in a professional way if they are not properly supplied with food, accommodation, and equipment. Much of the counter-productive behaviour of the security forces is derived from their need to raise their own funds in the field.

While the involvement of military officers in raising funds for their troops is inevitable in present circumstances, it is important that officers should not acquire personal financial benefits that give them an interest in prolonging the conflict.

Action should be taken against soldiers and police who violate the law. Soldiers should be disciplined for human rights abuses and other crimes. This would go a long way to winning back public trust, but it would require a massive commitment to reform of the military law system.

The military has begun to use force to protect communities from attack, as is required under the terms of the civil emergency. This is at times necessary but the TNI must take care that its repressive measures do not get out of hand and that non-lethal methods of crowd control are only abandoned as a last resort.

### **Emergency Rule**

Military officers have called on the government to raise the level of emergency from civil emergency under civilian leadership to military emergency under military leadership. Unless the military can demonstrate that it can carry out its duties in a professional and neutral way, it is reasonable to assume that the transfer of more powers to the military might do more harm than good.

### **The National Leadership**

The national government should show more public concern about developments in Maluku. In particular it should call on religious leaders, both Moslem and Christian, to refrain from exacerbating the conflict and instead use their influence to create an atmosphere favourable for the restoration of peace. It would be helpful if national Moslem leaders, including the Speakers of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) and the national parliament (DPR), would take the lead in condemning new outbreaks of violence while at the same time recognising the security concerns of the Moslem community in the Maluku region. Members of the government should also stop making unsubstantiated allegations about foreign provocateurs and disgruntled Indonesian officers, unless they are prepared to take action. Such statements only serve to heighten feelings of fear and hopelessness.

The national government should continue to encourage discussions between members of both the Moslem and Christian communities on ways to overcome the conflict and future political structures in the two provinces.

### **Law and the Courts**

A functioning judiciary is needed to stop the cycle of violence. There have not been any successful prosecutions or investigations of individuals that have participated in the violence. While perfect justice is not possible, there are leaders on both sides of the conflict who could be investigated and tried -- a powerful signal to the region's people that the season of impunity is coming to an end. The government may consider setting up a special tribunal, given that almost every judge and prosecutor of Malukan origin either is, or knows, a victim of the violence.

In the search for justice, however, it is necessary to keep in mind that many combatants perceive themselves, and are perceived, as heroes defending their own communities from the aggression of the other side. In deciding to prosecute particular cases, care must be taken to avoid steps that can reignite old antagonisms.

An investigation into the causes of the violence and a published report should be conducted by a team of Indonesians credible to both sides. However, care should be taken that the publication of such a report does not exacerbate existing tensions.

### **Cantonment**

The military is presently in effect advocating permanent cantonment of the two communities. While communities should not be forced to live together, a long-term goal must remain eventual reintegration – otherwise communal fighting will remain likely. One short-term measure could be the creation of safe zones for both sides to meet and interact – particularly economically vital ports and markets. The two communities' economies are growing more separated, a process which is feeding resentment.

### **Refugees**

In general it is desirable for refugees to be able eventually to return to their homes. In the case of non-Maluku refugees, most have already returned to their ethnic homelands and are unlikely to want to return to Maluku. Whether other refugees should be encouraged to return home will depend on local conditions. Conditions in most areas are not likely to be conducive in the short run. The Indonesian government needs to ensure the security of international humanitarian workers supporting refugees.

### **International Involvement**

Foreign governments should be sensitive to local conditions when making statements, and be careful to note that both Moslems and Christian civilians have experienced extreme suffering.

Whatever its attractions might be thought to be, foreign military intervention in Maluku would be counter-productive, could easily lead to further destabilisation in Indonesia, and should not be sought.

That said, the presence of foreign observers could be helpful in creating confidence in Indonesian military and police neutrality, and serious consideration should be given by foreign governments to offering, and by the Indonesian government to accepting, them. Given local conditions, such observers would almost certainly need to come from within the Association of Southeast Nations. They could go a long way towards easing the fears of local communities and help hold soldiers to a higher standard than they have adhered to until now.

As long as the Indonesian military and police cannot prevent their weapons falling into the hands of militias determined to use such weapons against members of other religious or ethnic communities, it is reasonable for foreign suppliers to maintain or impose embargoes on the export of such weapons to Indonesia. However, the international community should be willing to assist the TNI and the police to upgrade the quality of its personnel by providing suitable training programs.

Foreign governments should remind the Indonesian government that gross violations of human rights have occurred in Maluku and that the failure of the Indonesian government to deal with these violations could prompt calls for international action.

Donors should monitor needs identified by relevant international humanitarian organisations and UN agencies and aim to respond more quickly to these needs. Foreign donors should consider the provision of special funding for the two Maluku provinces conditional on progress toward reducing the level of violence, and the international community should be ready to assist Indonesia with money and investigative resources to re-establish the rule of law.

**JAKARTA/BRUSSELS, 19 December 2000**

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## About the International Crisis Group

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The International Crisis Group (ICG) is a private, multinational organisation committed to strengthening the capacity of the international community to anticipate, understand and act to prevent and contain conflict.

ICG's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts, based on the ground in countries at risk of conflict, gather information from a wide range of sources, assess local conditions and produce regular analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers.

ICG's reports are distributed widely to officials in foreign ministries and international organisations and made generally available at the same time via the organisation's internet site, [www.crisisweb.org](http://www.crisisweb.org). ICG works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analysis and to generate support for its policy prescriptions. The ICG Board - which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media - is directly involved in helping to bring ICG reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policy-makers around the world. ICG is chaired by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari; former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans has been President and Chief Executive since January 2000.

ICG's international headquarters are at Brussels, with advocacy offices in Washington DC, New York and Paris. The organisation currently operates field projects in eighteen crisis-affected countries and regions across three continents: Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia in Europe; Algeria, Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe in Africa; and Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan in Asia.

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