



Asian Network for Free Elections

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ANFREL second week report

Political situation before the election

November 25th – December 2nd, 2006

1. General election environment during the campaign:

With each passing day the election dynamics in Aceh appears to be getting more interesting and challenging. The election (Pilkada) to choose a Governor and Mayors has gathered enough steam. Given the relatively peaceful atmosphere, except for stray incidents of violence in some areas, there should not be any reason to doubt the integrity of the whole process. The Tsunami victims, especially those who still await relief are not pinning their hopes in the Pilkada but feel that the quality of life may improve after this election. The participation of the people at the campaigning process became bigger and bigger. "It's a fiesta of Democracy", said some voters to us.

On the one hand people appear to be happy that a democratic process is unfolding, while on the other they are unwilling to forget the traumatic past, especially "the conflict days." This has been a contributory factor to the frequent display of "reluctance and lack of interest," amongst the residents. People don't trust politicians and feel that the Pilkada would not make much of a difference to their lives.

However, even The Komisi Independen Pemilihan (KIP) or the Election Commission is doing everything possible to make for a free, fair and peaceful election, but given the fact that there is very little time and a lot remains to be done, an element and a feeling of uncertainty has crept in the peoples' mind. Most voters want to know about the election process and also about security preparedness to tackle violence during campaigns and the polling process. Incidents of violence in a few areas and violations of the code of conduct has been a cause of worry for the average voter.

The fact that KIP and agencies supporting it have not managed to penetrate into remote and far flung areas or create the much needed voter awareness has contributed to the low key interest in many areas. For example a number of villages in Aceh Jaya and the West coast of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD) have been left unattended or as findings from a series of visits and interviews suggests. Notwithstanding the fact that various methods of voter education has been carried out in several Kabupatens (districts) and Kachematans (sub-districts)¹, yet a certain number of Aceh population are uninformed, so much so that some don't know the date of the polling day. This problem is compounded by the delay in the voter registration process and inability of the KIP to send voter IDs and invitation letters to voters well in advance. Most people don't know if they would receive the voter card or the invitation letter to vote in the Pilkada and whether they could lodge their complaints if deprived of the opportunity to cast their franchise. In some areas (Aceh Melabou, Lam No) voters have not been registered as yet. This uniform

¹ Information from ALES/UNDP/USAIDS/KIP Media Centre

expression of concern by residents cutting across asymmetrical population distribution in Aceh contradicts the optimism of the KIP and also raises serious doubts about preparations for the election.

However, there is no denying that in many areas a positive vibe can be felt and this certainly augurs well for the election. Residents of Gayo Lues, were of the opinion that even though they have faced three elections, "This election is new." "We know this time our votes will decide our destiny, we have a good opportunity to be select our own leader; I don't know how the people will use their valuable vote. If we will do any mistake then we don't want to suffer for next few years," opined elderly voters.

2. Security situation:

A Former Governor has lodged a complained about "black campaign,"² by some canvassers. A prime suspect has been nabbed by the police following Panwaslih intervention. In Lhokseumawe, there is a case where the campaign materials of candidates have been torn and burnt by the unknown people. Panwaslih already reported this case to the police and hope that this incident will not happen again³.

Many residents think that rough and rude behaviour of supporters of candidates might be reasons for violence during the election as was the case in Matang Glumpang Dua on 23rd November 2006 where Governor candidate, Humam and his supporters been attacked by a group of unknown men⁴.

TNI in Lhokseumawe, Biruen, Aceh Utara and Pidie is ready to provide backup support to the police should the situation demand⁵. For the moment they believe that only police can control the situation with help of LIMNAS (a peoples' volunteer organization for security). The TNI is apprehensive that if candidates from GAM lose the election⁶ then it may lead to violence. The TNI also claimed that GAM members in Biruen broke the MOU in Helsinki as they were using the badges of GAM in their jackets. Besides that, TNI said that there is a case in Jeunib (Biruen) on 6th October 2006 where the GAM members robbed the villagers⁷.

"We are doing our best to keep normal situation, this election is different from past elections, society going to choose their leaders for 5 years, so their aspirations will reflect in forthcoming election" quoted head of the police, Gayo Lues. "Situation is sensitive, so I am trying to make peaceful" said Moulavi.

In Pidie, the police already well prepared for the elections. Police in Pidie have made various categories of areas such as less dangerous, dangerous and very dangerous.

- i) Less dangerous : 1 police for 2 polling station
- ii) Dangerous : 2 police for 3 polling station
- iii) Very dangerous : 1 police for 1 polling station

² Interview with Chairman of Panwaslih (Panita Pengawas Pemilihan Aceh)

³ Based on interview with Chief of PANWASLIH in Lhokseumawe.

⁴ Based on interview with Coordinator of JPPR in Biruen ,Coordinator of JPPR in Lhokseumawe, Coordinator of UNICEF for Aceh Utara, Lhokseumawe and Biruen, Chief of KIP in Lhokseumawe) and members of KIP in Aceh Utara.

⁵ Based on interview with District Commander of TNI for Biruen, Lhokseumawe and Aceh Utara.

⁶ Based on interview with District Commander of TNI for Biruen, Lhokseumawe and Aceh Utara.

⁷ Based on interview with District Commander of TNI for Biruen, Lhokseumawe and Aceh Utara.

Similar is the case in Singkil where security has been categorized as green, yellow, red – best to worst). In addition there are 300 additional police personnel on hand for Election Day to respond to local shortages or problems.

LIMNAS will provide 1890 personnel to help the police for the Election Day. This means that all polling stations will have the LIMNAS personnel⁸.

The police in Pidie received a report about the kidnapping of Ahmad Sabi the canvasser of candidates for BUPATI and Vice BUPATI, Drs. H. Bustami Usman Tiro – Tgk Anwar Yusuf (No. 7) from his wife Faridah Binti Adam. Ahmad Sabi been kidnapped at Gantung Village in sub-district Kembang Tanjong. Ahmad Sabi was released one day after the incidents near his house. Police are still investigating this case and have classified this case as a normal criminal case⁹.

As many as 10,014 policemen from the Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD) Regional Police attended the troops assembly last week to prepare for the Pilkada¹⁰. Assemblies were held at the regional police and all the county police at the same time. The 10,014 policemen will be directly involved in the election's security while another 3,000 personnel have been assigned customary law and order responsibilities that mainly includes safeguarding the BRR, AMM, Exxon projects and also monitoring foreign observers. All police officers who are on election duty will receive 32,650 Rp. for 34 days. This was announced by NAD Chief of Regional Police Irjen Bahrumsyah.

In Sabang the police are providing a sound back up to the KIP in managing the security operations. Police personnel have been stationed at all strategic places such as the Campaign ground near Sabang Plaza, KIP office and also near training centres. Though so far the army (TNI) has not been used in other areas like Aceh Jaya, but there are enough indications to suggest that the army is maintaining a strict vigil and is on high alert.

In Gayo Lues on the Election Day 2 police officers will be on duty in remote areas in 1 TPs. In other areas 1 police officer will be responsible for 3 TPs. This is being done considering the geographical distribution of the polling stations and the distance between polling stations. The police have given security awareness training to the public and also trained members of the LIMNAS for election duty. In all 185 police officers and 394 LIMNAS are doing their election duty right now, apart from that 150 police officers stand by for manage the emergency situation.

3. The Komisi Independen Pemilihan (KIP):

During the 2nd week of our observations, all the KIP offices were busy, occupied with logistics. KIP staff stayed up late in the office, preparing the materials, folding ballot papers. 600 ballot papers were packed in each box and the materials sent to sub-district KIP office (PPK) for onward transmission to KPPS. Aceh Timur office even hired some civilians to finish logistics.

The KIP has put an impressive networking system and has got the Gampong (Kelurahan)/City administration/ to assist them in the distribution of the invitation letters to voters and also the Voter cards¹¹. The documents were distributed district wise^{12, 13}:

⁸ Based on interview with Vice Chief of Police in Pidie.

⁹ Based on interview with Vice Chief of Police in Pidie and Erwan, Chief of Investigation of Police in Pidie.

¹⁰ Interview to media by NAD Chief of Regional Police

¹¹ Interview with Election Commissioner of KIP Sabang

¹² Interview with Election Commissioner of KIP Sabang

¹³ Interview with Kelurahan (Gampong) members

KIP in Lhokseumawe organized the debates for the 6 Mayor and Vice-Mayor couple candidates at PT.Plaza Samudera International Hotel on 27th November 2006 with the cooperation of KNPI. This debate was organized for middle class residents. KIP organized another candidate debate for the working class and the poor on 2nd December 2006¹⁴.

The ALES-UNDP is assisting the KIP to impart voter education. In Aceh Utara the KIP is coordinating well with the media to distribute the information about the election. But KIP in Aceh Utara is of the opinion that people in rural areas still lack of information about election¹⁵.

One or two days before the polls the invitation letter and the voter cards will be all sent to the voters by the chairperson of KPPS with assistance from the PPG/Kelurahan. The invitation letter which mentions the date of election-day, time and names of the voter will be distributed together with the voter cards. Though there are contradictory reports about which document has more integrity, KIP commissioners in Sabang were of the opinion that the invitation letter is more important for various reasons. The other foreseeable reason is that many people lost their identity and voter cards in the Tsunami and this prompted the Ministry of Interior of the Government of Indonesia to pass a decree making it compulsory for every voter access to an invitation letter. "The invitation letter is a legal document and it will provide the voter to cast his/her franchise," the ANFREL team was told by the KIP commissioners in Sabang. However, the fact that Sabang was not badly affected by the Tsunami has helped in smoothing the process of election preparation.

The KIP headquarters in Banda Aceh too seemed to agree that the invitation letter is a more important document which would eventually decide the genuineness of a voter. However, there were many questions like the two days time before polling chosen to distribute the voter cards. The voter is left with virtually no room for lodging complaints in case of aberrations and error in entry of name, place etc.

The KIP Sabang conducted a two-day training for all the 300 plus personnel who will work in 60 polling stations. The training started on 29th November at the District Government Hall.¹⁶ In the training polling agents and officials were provided following inputs:

- In the event of the voter not being present then invitation letters could be given to the family members.
- Voters living outside the constituency have to report 14 days before the election day
- Some KPPS will have five where some will have a seven (maximum) One day before polling day all witness have to register
- In case of shortage of ballot papers, a report must be sent to the PPG
- In case of mistake during Coblos (punching ballot paper by using nail), one additional chance has to be given to the voter.
- Simulation and CD presentation on the polling day process
- Practical exercises on recording voters and polling materials
- Valid and invalid ballot papers
- How to check ID document for voters from other TPS proper completion of the relevant form (Form C8-KWK) etc.

However, in Aceh Jaya, the process is slow and so far there is no information on the election preparedness. The ANFREL team encountered several problems in Aceh Jaya, where the KIP has

¹⁴ Based on interview with Chief of KIP in Lhokseumawe.

¹⁵ Based on interview with Members of KIP in Aceh Utara.

¹⁶ Information from KIP training at Government District Hall

not managed to reach out to the voters. The registration process too appears to be incomplete. Voters complained of lack of awareness about the registration process and voting. Many people said that they have not been registered.

In Aceh Barat there are some disturbing variations from the other districts and the KIP seems to be in the dark about the basic rules and procedures governing the elections. For instance the KIP here said that there are no fixed timings for campaigns, though the KIP in the province (Banda Aceh) has brought out printed election regulation brochures which clearly states that electioneering/campaigns (public rallies) would be allowed from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm. A candidate is allowed to hold campaign even during night and that does not require permission of the KIP. The KIP also does not have any laid down procedure for voting in hospitals and jail. The KIP is unsure on whether ballot boxes would be sent to the hospitals or patients would be brought to the polling stations. Patients would be allowed to vote if they or their relatives fill up a request form and submit to the KIP. There are no provisions for voting for temporary prisoners (after the tsunami the permanent prison was shifted to Aceh Saletan). KIP officials were not able to answer queries relating to use of mobile phones by voters to take pictures of ballot papers.

In Aceh Timur, about 3000 ballot papers for mayor election were misprinted so KIP office ordered to reprint it in Medan on November 27, which could delay logistics.

Role of KPPS and security

Security 1: help voter to enter the TPS

KPPS 1: Chief of KPPS takes charge of all processes in the polling station.

KPPS 2: Check the voter ID card and invitation card before KPPS 1 hands two ballot papers to voters.

KPPS 3: assist KPPS 1 to give ballot papers and check rejected (rusak) ballot paper.

KPPS 4: check ID or invitation card at the entrance of the polling station and check voters' fingers.

KPPS 5: lead voters to the ballot booth in order and help the disabled voters to cast their vote in ballot booth.

KPPS 6: distinguish the governor and mayor ballot papers and make sure that voters put the ballot paper into the right ballot box.

KPPS 7: After voter put the ballot papers into the boxes, he/she help the voter to apply indelible ink on the little finger of the left hand.

Security 2: help voters to exit

3.1 Voters Registration:

Registration of voters continues to be a cause of concern all over Aceh. In Aceh Jaya for example there are complaints galore about the KIP not registering all voters. The most affected seems to be the fisher folks who said that they were not interested in the Pilkada as they did not receive voter registration cards.¹⁷ Many said they did not know about the registration while others claimed that KIP/PPG did not send its officials to their houses to register them. However the Chief of the village called Ujang Mulie near Lam No said that the voters registration process was completed two months back with the involvement of the PPG and KIP.¹⁸ He was confident that most fishermen would turn up for voting as on election they do not go to the sea.

¹⁷ Fisherfolks in Lam NO

¹⁸ Interview with village Chief

Intriguingly the same concerns were raised in Banda Aceh, notwithstanding its better access to the KIP headquarters. Residents of Peulanggahan¹⁹ who have been badly affected by the Tsunami seemed to care little even if their names did not figure in the voters list.

Aceh Jaya is a case in point of either lack of voter education or sheer ignorance by the residents as some data/audit²⁰ claim that the voter registration has been high up to 87 percent. Whatever be the case there is a definite problem as voters seem unaware of the fact that they would have been registered or they do not know where to cast their vote.

The KIP in Gayo Lues has not visited the prison, but they registered the prisoners as voters from their family members in their homes²¹. ANFREL observer visited the prison and met prison officers and prisoners. When the ANFREL observer discovered that prisoners were not registered, that matter was brought to the notice of the KIP chief following which the registration process started. Prisoner's knowledge about the election is mainly through visitors and they are interested in voting. However, a person serving a prison term for over 5 years cannot vote. Prison officers have right to vote. Not like police or TNI.

In Aceh Utara, a problem encountered by the KIP is that the chief of the village has been repeatedly adding names of new people to the Voter's list²². The voter's registration card is yet to reach the KIP in Aceh Utara from the KIP in Banda Aceh. KIP in Pidie have a problem with the database of voters. The software that they used always hanged, the name, spelling of the voters always wrong and they think that the software that they used only capable for 10,000 names while they have more than 300,000 voters in Pidie. This is perhaps why the names of voters in each polling station are yet to be registered²³.

Many people do not know which document they should use for their election, the invitation letter from KIP or voter cards or both. There seems to be no answer as to why the voter cards have not reached the people so as to assure their franchise before the 11th December and to give them time to complain in case they do not receive the card from the Jakarta administration. The apprehension of the voter is perhaps not unfounded as registration documents at one Kelurahan in Sabang²⁴ revealed that the identification process of the voter is questionable. In the registration there is no mention of the population number, NIK which is the code number of the new ID cards, except date of birth, address and serial number. Originally the NIK and the family card were meant to be used for identification of the voter on the Election Day. So as of now it appears that the invitation letter would be the most dependable form of identification.

In Aceh Singkil most people do not have much information about the Governor election. They see the Bupati as having a greater impact on their lives – economy, education, money, development, etc.

In Singkil, ballot boxes were being stored without security in a warehouse outside the city. Upon arriving at the warehouse, a truck/lorry loaded with empty ballot boxes was leaving. ANFREL investigated the situation and learnt that KIP is delivering the metallic secure boxes empty to the Kecamatan.

Many residents in Keude Bakongan of southern Aceh Selatan said they were not registered to vote and knew nothing about the election. Also, PPK Bakonhgan reported that a software snag

¹⁹ Interviews with residents and media reports/Jakarta Post/Serambi and other newspapers

²⁰ Jurdil Aceh Independent audit and USAID supported IFES Survey

²¹ KIP Officer

²² Based on interview with Members of KIP for Aceh Utara.

²³ Based on interview with Members of KIP in Pidie.

²⁴ Interview and physical verification with officials of Kelurahan Sabang

managed by the GTZ had registered all voter ages as 20. PPK said this caused them to delay their second posting of the registration lists. However, there is no mechanism to compile standardized post-election data. Trumon PPK also said they did not have plans for delivering ballot boxes to the TPS which gives rise to questions on the method of delivery of ballot boxes in some TPS.

3.2 The Polling Process:

Even as the voter registration process, which is the first step and the most important aspect of the election has run into hurdles, in most areas the KIP has managed to provide sufficient information, through posters, demonstrations, trainings, simulations about the polling process.²⁵

However, there continues to remain a number of loose ends, like for instance, the appointment of the Village Chief as the chairperson of the KPPS/TPS. The Village Chief could influence voters and this could jeopardize a free and fair polling process. Surprisingly, the KIP Commissioner in Banda Aceh told the Pilkada Working Group Members that the village chief would not be allowed to be the Chairperson of the KPPs/TPS which in more ways than one is contrary to decisions that have already been taken at Kecamatan in Aceh Besar and Aceh Jaya, levels to appoint the Village Chief as Chairperson.²⁶

The KIP in Banda Aceh has distributed posters in urban and rural areas to educate the voter and KPPS personal about the polling process.

In Sabang for instance the KIP initiative is being complimented by the Kelurahan/city administration and most residents seem to be fully aware of the election and how to go about the polling process.

In Sabang schools and tents will be used as polling stations. Mosques will not be used.²⁷

3.3 KIP Voters Education and Civic Education

Two weeks before polling day, the coordination between the various stakeholders that are involved in the elections seems to be good. The relationship is especially good with the media and this has allowed the KIP to make up for lost time. So far the media, both English and local language newspapers as well televisions have supported the election process by publishing advertisements released by the KIP and also with news reports which reflects the actual ground situation. While organizations like the UNDP, JPPR and a few others have supported the KIP with voter education exercises, the KIPP (self funding NGO, Jakarta based) also plans for outreach to remind the voters about the election process 3 days before Election Day. JPPR will organize candidate debate live at the local radio station soon²⁸.

The population that has apparently not received any attention could make a difference to the overall outcome of the electoral process. This lack of knowledge would be used by candidates and political parties. Again, it still needs more effort to inject information about the candidates or political parties contesting for the post of Governor/Vice-Governors and Mayors/Vice-Mayors. Many people are more aware of the KPU (National Commission) but not many seem to know about the KIP. In Aceh Utara, even though KIP has a fairly good coordination with the media to

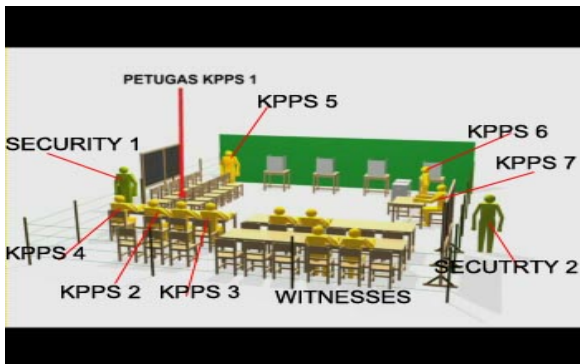
²⁵ KIP Media centre and observation surveys conducted by ANFREL Team No. 1

²⁶ Minutes of meeting between Pilkada Working Group with KIP Province Commissioner

²⁷ Interview with officials of Kelurahan under Sabang Kabupaten

²⁸ Based on interview with Coordinator for JPPR in Lhokseumawe.

disseminate information about the Pilkada, but that is not enough as it is difficult to access the people especially in rural area²⁹.



These shortcomings are perhaps bound to create doubts and likelihood of another round, in case the voter turnout is low or there is a breakdown of the system, but that does not in any way undermine the efforts that have gone in, keeping in mind the time constraint, to organize the elections. What has to be borne in mind, unlike other elections, maybe even the 2004 general elections in Indonesia is the post conflict and post Tsunami situations which have thrown up a number of challenges for everyone, from the

government controlled administrations, to independent bodies like the KIP, NGOs and the general public.

Based on the simulation training and the CD produced by KIP, the following was summarized.

4. Voters voices

Most of the people are happy with the Pilkada for the simple reason that it is being held under a non-militarized environment and aims to put in place a more "acceptable democratic structure." Moreover this is the first time people would be electing a local government directly.³⁰ Many voters also still confused with the candidates. They hope that KIP or NGO's can go to the grassroots level to explain to them regarding this³¹. In Blang Luah village in Aceh Barat there are reports that a certain candidate has spent Rp. 20,000 to Rp. 50,000 to buy a single vote. Investigations revealed that money has been given out to voters during the campaigns. Vote buying is said to be an old tradition in this area and most people interviewed said that maximum vote buying will take place three days before the election. (News published in the Serambi Indonesia). In some places candidates are distributing gifts to the society and trying to take their votes. Most people were unanimous that vote buying "is not a good practice," and that "vote should come sincerely from the heart otherwise it will effect the future of Aceh."³²

In Padang Seurahet in the Johan Pahlawan region of Aceh Barat, people mostly fishermen were completely unaware of the election. A settlement of 4000 fishermen who have been badly affected by the Tsunami consider election wastage of time," as they believe that politicians have not done anything for the Tsunami victims. Most people were of the opinion that NGOs are more effective than Governments. So far voter registration has not been done in villages in Aceh Barat.

The Chief Doctor of Gayo Lues Hospital is of the opinion that "voters are very enthusiast in this election unlike the previous elections which were not democratic in nature and in last election only we knew political parties only but in this election we know the candidates and their parties."

²⁹ Based on interview with Members of KIP in Aceh Utara.

³⁰ Based on interview with the local people in Lhokseumawe, Aceh Utara and Pidie.

³¹ Based on interview with the women in Lhokseumawe.

³² Based on interview with the villagers, women group and fisherman in Lhokseumawe, Aceh Utara and Pidie.

School teachers had reasons to be hopeful as they believe that electing an “appropriate governor,” for Aceh and Mayor for district, could improve their pay packets or better their salaries. Students said that they would participate in the election. A 17 year girl student knew that “one day people will gather in the village,” which is the Election Day.

Minority Voters (Christian) Aceh Tamiang:

“There’s only one church in Kota Langsa, Aceh Timur and Aceh Tamiang and about 200 people regularly come to holy Sunday to pray here”, said 25-year-old English teacher. When asked whether she had any discrimination from the society, she answered, “It’s hard to get promotion at school only because I am not Muslim, and I am supposed to wear a scarf at work. For my father, he must close his store during Friday prayer between 12:30 to 1:30pm. My father is not Muslim, though.” And she seemed to give in to the reality that she can not have a mayor or governor whose religion is Christianity.

There is a sizeable population of Chinese community in Aceh Barat but they have not been registered as voters as yet.

Religious leaders

The religious leaders are trying their maximum to keep the situation calm. They are giving speeches in mosque about election and peaceful process of voters and candidates. “I am trying my best to keep peaceful condition in Gayo Lues, but some biased and unfair people are disturbing that. Everything is happening because of money, I think poverty has crated this situation” an Ulama observed.

5. The role of the media in Information dissemination:

The media has been a good source of information, both print and electronic as more and more people interviewed said that they knew about the dates of the elections and polling station locations from the media.³³ The radio has been a reliable source of information dissemination.

However, may media houses in Aceh have reported variations on the level of awareness and voter awareness. Local and vernacular in particular have been critical of the way voter education has been handled by the KIP and have underscored the need for a more researched and systematic approach to educate the voter about their right and the importance of casting their franchise.³⁴ The non-media sources have basically been posters, campaigns and coffee shop discussions about the Pilkada. Word of mouth information delivery has been the main feature in villages and rural areas.

A local FM radio in Aceh Barat invited ANFREL team to participate in a series of live radio programs on election. ANFREL is planning to invite KIP to join them in the radio broadcast so as to create voter’s education.

6. Panwaslih³⁵:

There has been a complaint from a former Governor and now candidate for the same post Azwar Abu Bakar about “black campaigns,” by some canvassers of another candidate³⁶. The Panwaslih

³³ Information collected from interviews with people, media (Jakarta Post, Serambi, Radio and TV journalists and correspondents

³⁴ Aceh World, Jakarta Post, Harian, debates and talks in Televisions, especially TVRI

³⁵ The Panwaslih has been created to observe and monitor the election process. The mandate of the Panwaslih is to monitor the election at different levels, from the filing of nominations, to registering complaints from candidates and voters and also tackling matters related to violation and cheating as well as crime and settling disputes. The Panwaslih composition is unique. One representative each from police, Attorney, Press, educational institution (university), Civil Society organization, makes up the Panwaslih. The Panwaslih is head quartered at Banda Aceh and it monitors irregularities in campaigns by candidates and political parties, indulgence in crime, register complaints etc.

has sent out strict warnings to all political parties and candidates to abide the regulations and the provisions of the LOGA. Under the law (Qanun) no one is supposed to hang posters or banners in front of the Governor's house and the main street. However, Panwaslih in Banda Aceh believes that there is every possibility of use of money to lure voters on the morning of the Election Day. Amounts ranging from 50,000 to 100,000 Rp. are likely to be given to each voter to garner voters. However, Panwaslih is not too sure if such cases could be registered as mostly candidates use third parties making it difficult to find enough evidence. There is no mention of vote buying in kind in the election regulation which often allows candidate/candidates to get away with promises and distribution of gifts in kind to voters. Cases built on complaints will be heard and decided in three months³⁷.

Contrary to its role as a supervisory and monitoring body, the Panwaslih in Aceh Barat, Nagan Raya and Aceh Barat Daya has come in for sharp criticism from the civil society for taking sides, supporting political parties and ignoring complaints regarding campaign violations and irregularities. The credibility of the Panwaslih as a neutral body has taken a beating in these areas. In Aceh Barat, Panwaslih chief Mr. Muzakkir Abdullah is also the Secretary General of the PPP, a political party. (Refer to newspaper articles). The Panwaslih chief is said to be openly supporting a certain candidate. Complaints by NGOs to the Panwaslih provincial office about this gross abuse of office has fallen on deaf ears. There is a fear and dejection amongst the people on the politicization of the Panwaslih. The Panwaslih has refused to register complaints regarding vote buying by candidates. The non existence of Panwaslih in the sub-district level has left people frustrated as they are not able to lodge complaints.

Panwaslih in Lhokseumawe received reports about the campaign materials of some candidates that been burnt and destroyed. Observers went with Panwaslih members to the location where the billboard for candidates of Mayor and Vice Mayor Drs Marzuki Muhd Amin, MM - H Fathani (No. 2) and IR. H.T.A Khalid, MM – Drs. H. Mursyid Yahya (No.5) were burnt and torn³⁸. Panwaslih received reports from canvassers and the people near the site of the incident³⁹. They reported the case to the police.

Panwaslih in Lhokseumawe and Aceh Utara have financial problems. Till now, they have not received financial support from the local government even though they have already recruited 1035 volunteers. The local government had promised to transfer the money but that is yet to be translated into action⁴⁰. The KIP in Aceh Utara had similar financial problems which has given room for possibilities for cancellation of the Pilkada⁴¹. Panwaslih Lhokseumawe requested ANFREL to highlight this issue.

In Aceh Utara, Panwaslih members felt there the process of holding the election is too hasty. They firmly believe that more time is needed to conduct a "good pilkada." The formation of the Panwaslih has been delayed as it has come after two important processes such as voter's registration and nomination of the candidate⁴². They received some complaints about the campaigning before the official campaigning date.

Panwaslih in Pidie received a report about the kidnapping of a canvasser for candidate No. 7(Bupati and Vice Bupati), Ahmad Sabi and the black campaign against a Governor candidate. For the kidnapping case, they already reported to the police and the case is still under

³⁶ Interview with Chairman of Panwaslih (Panita Pengawas Pemilihan Aceh)

³⁷ Interview with Chairman of Panwaslih (Panita Pengawas Pemilihan Aceh)

³⁸ 26th November 2006, 11.30 am. Went to the location in Lhokseumawe with PANWASLIH members.

³⁹ Based on the interview with the Vice Chief of PANWASLIH Lhokseumawe.

⁴⁰ Based on interview with the Chief of PANWASLIH in Lhokseumawe.

⁴¹ Based on the interview with Chief of PANWASLIH in Aceh Utara.

⁴² Based on the interview with Chief of PANWASLIH in Aceh Utara.

investigation while for the black campaign case, two suspects have been detained by the police. The case will be forwarded to the court⁴³.

Panwaslih in Aceh Tamiang are not visible on the filed which has allowed candidates to violate campaign schedules provided by the KIP.

The Gayo Lues officer in charge of the Panwaslih said that there is "need for more resources." The Panwaslih officer here does not have sufficient computers, transport facilities, communication facilities etc. Panwaslih has requested more resources from the central government. One complaint about voter registration double entry has been received by Panwaslih in Gayo Lues from Golkar party No-1. Usually Camat (sub district chief) gives the voter registration to the PPK, and then PPK gives those details to the KIP, but in this case Camat gave the details to the PPK as well as to KIP. An investigation has been initiated to establish whether this had been done by mistake or if it was planned.

An incident, maybe not election violation per se which the Panwaslih has recorded is the distribution of school bags and books to the students, by ICRC. Political party No-2 claimed this action tantamount to giving gifts as because distribution of things in kind has been stopped till December 11 by the police following a complaint by the Panwaslih to the police. However, in spite of the Panwaslih intervention political parties are telling voters thus: "If you choose our candidate only we will be give those things (bags) to you, other wise we never give you." The Panwaslih has taken up the issue with ICRC which has agreed to abide by the Panwaslih decision to not distribute gifts to people.

In Singkil Panwas has identified two areas for special consideration for Election Day: These are

1. Gunung Mariah – a large population and hometown of three candidates and potential conflict areas.
2. Simpang Kiri – Subullusalam, the main city and the focus of much unofficial campaigning.

7. Campaigns:

The campaign for the election has taken off with candidates, both independent and those backed by political parties campaigning during the period from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm to reach out as many people as possible. Though in Banda Aceh campaigning, especially public rallies has been somewhat low key, in Sabang most of the seven couple who are contesting for the Mayor and Vice-Mayor have held public meetings in the open ground near the Sabang Plaza. They used artists and brief skits, performed by professional artists to drive home their message to the people. Supporters from all age group attended the public rally. Soon after this campaign several other candidates held their public rallies at the same venue, the next day. Candidates also took out rallies in becaks, decorated with banners and posters throughout the city. In Aceh Besar for instance most candidates used singers and poets to bring people out of their homes to attend the campaigns.⁴⁴

However many candidates have limited their public rallies to two or three owing to "financial constraints," and inadequate manpower to handle the campaigns. In Lapangan Padang Hirat campaign for BUPATI and Vice BUPATI, Kasim – Dahlan No. 4. They provided the transportation for the people to come and distribute free drink⁴⁵.

The common aspect of the missions of the candidates is the implementation of Syariah law, establishment of peace, economic development, good education system, and fulfillment of

⁴³ Based on interview with Chief of PANWASLIH in Pidie.

⁴⁴ Public rallies in Aceh Besar and Sabang by candidates contesting for Mayor and Vice Mayor

⁴⁵ Lapangan Padang Hirat, 28th November (4.00 pm).

people's basic needs such as clean water system, sustainable electricity, and kerosene (for stove) supply.

In Gayo Lues, the GAM is indirectly supporting a particular political party.

During an informal chat with ANFREL many candidates said that they would strive to work for peace and economic uplift of Aceh and its people.⁴⁶ GAM members who are part of the KPA (Komite Peralihan Aceh) too said that they had given up guns as they wanted to ensure that peace returns to Aceh. GAM members admitted that they would personally support their members who are contesting the elections as independent candidates but clarified that GAM as a group is not supporting them. GAM leaders said that the election would be a key to cementing the peace deal which was signed with the Government of Indonesia in Helsinki on August 2005.

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8. Women Participation

The participation of women in the election both as a voter and as candidates is significant compared to previous elections. Though there are no candidates for the gubernatorial polls, but few are contesting the Mayor's election which is being held for 19 of the 21 districts. Most women in urban areas were better informed about the election than in the rural areas.

Recommendations

1. Children should not be used for campaigns.
2. KIP should make announcement which documents should be used for voting: voter registration card, invitation letter or ID card. What is to be done if one document goes missing?
3. Budget for KIP and Panwaslih should be allocated as soon as possible.
4. Village Chiefs should not be recruited at the polling stations even though they are not government officers.
5. KPPS (Polling staff) must be trained with adequate knowledge especially about valid and invalid ballot papers.
6. Members of the Public should not convince voters to receive money from any candidate since it could build up a culture of corruption.
7. Some KIP and Panwaslih members should maintain neutrality and impartiality.
8. All stakeholders should put more efforts on voter education.
9. All candidates and political parties should respect and abide the election code of conduct for the cooling days.
10. All the logistics and election materials should be properly safeguarded.

⁴⁶ Interview with former Governor and GAM leader.

⁴⁷ Interview with GAM leader.