

INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION
Aceh Local Elections:
Gubernatorial, Mayoral, & Head of Regency Elections 2012

-- Interim Report --
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The Asian Network for Free Elections wishes to congratulate the people of Aceh for their participation in the second local election held since the end of the conflict in the Province. The April 9th 2012 election is another milestone towards strengthening democracy and respect for the rule of law. This statement is an assessment of the pre-election period, Election Day, and the post-election period by ANFREL's eleven Citizen Observers from countries across Asia as well as the USA and Canada.

SUMMARY

The April 9th election was the second opportunity Aceh has had to elect its own governor after the 2005 peace agreement that allowed a legitimate government to be set up according to the Principles of the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding and the Law on the Governing of Aceh (LoGA). The event was widely viewed as a crucial step to strengthen the institution of democracy in the province and a step forward in consolidating democracy amongst different stakeholders through peaceful means.

Notwithstanding the violence, fraud and irregularities reported to the electoral supervisory body (Panwaslu), monitoring groups and political parties, it is worth noting that the electoral process can so far be categorized as successful. When viewed in the context of the past conflict, the election has been relatively calm and the electorate proved to be engaged, as evidenced by the over 75% voter turnout.

ANFREL deployed 11 mobile monitors from 18 March to 18 April 2012 to cover all of Aceh's regencies except the islands of Sabang and Simeuleu. The observation covered cities and rural areas during election preparation, polling (including polling at prisons) and during the post-election tabulation and consolidation process. Additionally, ANFREL received on the ground information from local correspondents directed by the mission to capture information from a wider area. All information received is verified and confirmed by ANFREL before it is used.

The roles played by the Independent Elections Commission (Komisi Independen Pemilihan, KIP), Electoral Supervisory Body (Panitia Pengawas Pemilu, Panwaslu), the Government of Indonesia (Gol) and security agencies were commendable in that a relatively peaceful atmosphere was observed during the election period. This was the case despite the complications and imperfections within the electoral administration; flaws reflected in the inconsistency of polling procedures and the slow security response which failed to create a completely open atmosphere free from violence and intimidation. Some candidates showed political maturity when they channeled their dissatisfaction with the election to the Constitutional Court (Mahkamah Konstitusi, MK). They are seeking a legal solution for their disputes and

allegations of fraud. In other locales however, a “street style” approach to displaying dissatisfaction has been taken by some candidates. In Kab. Gayo Lues, a candidate mobilized supporters for protests that resulted in vandalism of election materials and the burning of KIP and local government offices.

Security remains a major challenge to the carrying out of genuine elections in the province. Although the lack of security did not affect electoral management in a major way, its absence resulted in an environment that did not allow for free competition. Threats, violence and the misuse of money/power are widely acknowledged as effective strategies to win elections in Aceh. This was particularly true for this election because of everything at stake, with elections being held for Governor, 13 head of regency positions, and 4 Mayoral positions. Because local monitors arrived only immediately prior to the polling day, they were unable to preempt much violence with their presence. Time and again, ANFREL observers and correspondents found incidents of violence and intimidation, some even before the campaign began, that received an inadequate response from the security authorities. The second report from the EVER (Election Violence Education and Resolution) project combined with reports from the media have led to the conclusion that Partai Aceh (PA) was the most frequent offender, with its supporters launching attacks designed to cause fear in other candidates and to deter them from deploying their campaign teams.

The Acehnese were worried there would be a renewal of violence and that conflict would return because of the close race between two (2) main ex-combatants in the Gubernatorial elections, with both sides using propaganda, and their supporters, in massive, dueling shows of force designed to leave an impression on prospective voters. It was relayed to ANFREL that, “the election has been reduced to a zero sum game between the two main protagonists.” Despite having once been allies, by 2012 the two sides’ rivalry had intensified to unhealthy levels. The prevalence of political patronage throughout Aceh served to further raise the stakes of the election and increase the likelihood of conflict between the two sides. Each camp’s supporters were used as weapons in their rivalry while other locals were caught in the middle. The Acehnese have been deeply traumatized by decades of conflict. They know all too well that civilians are the true victims in conflict. People who live in rural areas are still vulnerable to influence through the use of money and intimidation, while those living in cities and more diverse communities have more resistance to these tactics because their political consciousness and education is relatively advanced.

Highlights of ANFREL’s Assessment of the Process:

Voter Registration & Disenfranchisement

Voter registration for the Aceh 2012 local elections produced a voter list (DPT) that is inaccurate. Voter list issues were encountered in many of the areas observed. The lists contained duplicate names, the names of non-existent people, people no longer living in the area as well as deceased people. This particular problem was also reported by candidates and other election

monitors. To gain a deeper understanding of the issue, ANFREL studied a copy the of voter list from Kab. Aceh Tengah. The list was confirmed to contain many of the above-mentioned flaws. It appears that inaccurate voter lists are the basis of some disputes and are being used by the candidates to call for a new election.

The chaos of the voter registration system remains unresolved from the previous 2009 elections. The raw database of registered voters is taken from population data managed by the civil registration office. It is well known that this population data is inaccurate thanks to its use in past elections where there were similar voter list issues. KIP mandated that the list be updated but, unfortunately, inaccuracies within the data remain.

Disenfranchisement happened at the Banda Aceh Prison, where only 18 out of 400 inmates were eligible to vote while the rest remain unregistered in the prison. Tensions rose as voting took place and ended with the cancellation of voting at the prison. Similar situations occurred at other prisons, ANFREL observed it in particular in Lokngaha and Bireuen where, according to prison officials at each, approximately 100 & 150 inmates were not registered to vote at the prison polling station and were thus unable to vote on Election Day. Prison officials mentioned that KIP had a hard time identifying the inmates originally registered in their home village and, as a result, transferring their voting location to the prisons was made difficult. Voter in hospitals across Aceh were also disenfranchised as KIP faced difficulties in accommodating them.

Campaign Periods

Although the campaign atmosphere appeared lively and colourful, many candidates reported that they were unable to campaign freely. As reported by the media and in police data, Irwandy's campaign team suffered several attacks during the pre-election period. Other candidates for Governor and Bupati also suffered various types of direct attacks on their supporters and vandalism of their campaign materials.

ANFREL observers received reports of threats received by SMS or telephone by unnamed and unknown person telling candidates to drop out of the race or face violent consequences. Candidates also claimed that their supporters were afraid to attend their rallies because they were being intimidated. Several candidates stopped holding open campaign rallies stating that their supporters were either afraid or being prevented from attending. A majority of the complaints on campaign related intimidation and violence came from independent candidates though all major candidates have complaints filed against them. While the police and Panwaslu are still investigating many reports of violence and intimidation, it should be noted that a vast majority of the complaints were directed at one party in particular.

Election Violence Education and Resolution EVER) filed 40 incidents in the period 12 – 30 March 2012. The highest numbers of incidents were recorded in Lhokseumawe, Pidie, Aceh Timur, Aceh Jaya and Aceh Utara. These five areas are also identified as the strongest areas for Partai

Aceh (see EVER report). PA enjoys massive support and was operating forcefully and uncompromisingly in these areas.

Voter Education & Public Outreach

Inadequate voter education remains a major issue for free elections in Aceh. While there are a number of efforts underway to increase voters' understanding of the election, there remains significant room for improvement. Many voters interviewed were unsure of the election procedure even as they were standing in line to cast their votes. This was especially true for first time voters and the elderly. Education campaigns carried out by KIP are insufficient and are often constrained by budget issues. An electorate that is informed of their rights, voting procedures and the process for reporting election related violations will reduce the ability of candidates and parties to intimidate people, increase the efficiency of election officials and generally support a free election environment.

The decision of KIP to base voter eligibility on both the temporary voter list (Daftar Pemilih Sementara, DPS) and final voter list (DPT) was not communicated well. Necessary information was not sufficiently distributed to villagers and polling officials resulting in otherwise eligible voters being turned down because their name was not on the DPT. There was also confusion about required voter identification. KIP allowed the voter to show any identity document (KTP, SIM, Passport etc) if they did not have an invitation letter (form C-6). Unfortunately, many voters not aware of this possibility were left believing they were unable to vote, a common occurrence in Banda Aceh.

Cooling Period

The pre-election cooling period in Aceh was an overall good exercise, with a vast majority of campaign materials cleaned up prior to polling day. The 3 days of the cooling period were used by candidates to remove banners, posters and other materials out of public view in order to respect polling day and keep the city clean. The cleaning effort by election and government officials was impressive and is commendable. Although much campaign paraphernalia was still displayed in many places across Aceh, in general the parties/candidates complied with the obligation. The 3 days of the cooling period were effectively used by KIP to make a final check of the electoral preparation and consolidation. Overall, the cooling period was and is a useful, positive feature of the election system in Aceh.

Electoral Administration: Pre-election and Polling Day

ANFREL observers initially identified four key areas of concern during the polling process. First, there was a large amount of inconsistency and sometimes confusion among polling officials concerning the opening of the polls. Common problems included: polling materials arriving late, polling station members arriving late, and, in one case, some ballots arriving already punched. In

two cases, broken ballot boxes were used. Generally, polling stations opened later than the time appointed by the KIP. The main reason for these problems appears to be insufficient training for polling station members. In some areas polling station members received no direct training. Instead, the head of the KPPS was trained and then relied upon to transfer the information to the rest of the members, a transfer that did not always reliably occur.

Second, observers noticed some problems with the election day and polling station environment. ANFREL has received reports and observed cases of polling station staff following voters to the polling booth without proper justification. In several cases, groups of individuals were standing behind the polling booths speaking with voters while they cast their ballots. Additionally, the polling stations in many places were porous and unauthorized people moved freely in and out of the area without being questioned by the Linmas. When there are partisan people present that wish to exert their influence over voters, as was found to be the case at many polling stations, the environment at a polling station is not conducive to a free election. A greater effort needs to be made to provide a voting environment where voters are not intimidated by polling station staff or people outside the station.

Third, during the polling process, multiple polling stations were observed not checking voter invitations against the voter list or checking for ID cards. In several instances, voters handed the polling station official their invitation and were given a ballot in return without ever consulting the voter list. Additionally, in several instances voters left the polling station without inking their fingers, this was mostly due to inadequate enforcement by the polling station members and security.

Finally, there were several inconsistencies observed during the closing and counting process including significant mishandling of the unused ballots. Many of the polling stations observed did not count or mark the unused ballots before beginning the counting process. Only after the counting was completed did some polling stations reconcile the numbers. In one case polling station members did not know that they needed to mark the unused ballots before sealing them in the ballot box and transporting them to the PPK. This resulted in a situation where polling station members were reopening the ballot boxes after delivering them and marking the unused ballots at the PPK.

Many of the problems that occurred during the polling process appear to be the direct result of inadequate education of the polling station members. Further investigation is required to determine the exact causes of the inconsistencies and their impact on the polling process.

Post-Elections:

The post-election period has been relatively peaceful, with the notable exception of Kab. Gayo Lues. The overall tally process (result recapitulation) at the District and Kabupaten/Kota level generally went well, with few isolated incidents of concern and obstacles. Observers in certain areas noticed that witnesses from all parties were not present at the counting and reconciliation

process at both the sub-district and district levels. KIP officials stated that they had informed all witness of the time and place of the counting and even attempted to contact the missing witness with no success.

The electoral stakeholders successfully managed the process despite tension and complications. KIP was proud to announce the final results on time on 17th April 2012. The appearance of a high voter turnout was confirmed as it was announced that 75,73 per cent¹ of 3.244.680 registered voters turned out. The turnout shows the enthusiasm of the Acehnese to exercise their political rights through the ballot. Although the figure is encouraging, it could have been higher if there had been no disenfranchisement. It should also be noted that other commenters noted possible inflation of the number due to multiple votes and ballot tampering.

The candidate pair nominated by Partai Aceh (PA), dr H. Zaini Abdullah and Muzakir Manaf, won the offices of Governor/Vice Governor by receiving 1.327.695 votes (~55,78%). They defeated other candidates by a wide margin, with the candidate pair of drh. Irwandi Yusuf and DR Ir Muhyan Yunan M.Sc coming in second with only 694.515 votes (~29,18%). The PA won in 14 Kabupaten/Kota (Simeuleu, Aceh Jaya, Aceh Besar, Aceh Barat, Nagan Raya, Aceh Barat Daya, Aceh Selatan, Pidie, Pidie Jaya, Bireun, Lhokseumawe, Aceh Utara, Aceh Timur, and Gayo Lues) while Irwandy won in 9 (nine) Kabupaten/Kota (Sabang, Banda Aceh, Bener Meriah, Aceh Tengah, Aceh Tamiang, Langsa, Aceh Tenggara, Aceh Singkil, Subussalam).

The PA also won most of the Bupati and Mayoral races. After PA, the coalition of non-PA political parties won in 6 (six) Regencies/Cities. A second round for run-off elections in Langsa, Sabang City, Aceh Barat, Aceh Barat Daya and Nagan Raya has been confirmed because no candidate reached the 30 percent threshold on April 9th. The outcomes in Aceh Tengah and Gayo Lues are still pending due to unrest and the uncertain situation in the area.

Final results for the Kabupaten/Kota level were announced locally with the final gubernatorial result announced by KIP Aceh. Irwandy witnesses refused to sign the result certification form at all Kabupaten/Kota where they lost, including the certification for governor that is done at the provincial level.

Gayo Lues Incidents:

The Aceh elections experienced several serious acts of violence. One of the most notable was in Gayo Lues where protesters burned KIP's office as well as 6 (six) district offices in Blangkejeren (including an official vehicle), Dabun Gelang, Blang Pegayon, Pantan Cuaca, and Rikit Gaib. The arson was the outcome of protests over alleged fraud in the Bupati/Vice Bupati race. Supporters of two candidates, Irmawan- Yudi Chandra (party coalition) and Abdul Karim-Nurhayati Sahali (independent) have accused the previous Bupati H. Ibnu Hasim-Adam SE MAP of fraud in the election. They also express frustration about the condition of the voter list, money politics and irregularities that occurred during the polling.

¹ Data from KIP Prov Aceh

ANFREL's observers collected data on allegations of money distribution intended to influence voters in Kec. Pining, Gayo Lues by a supporter of H. Ibnu Hasim and Adam (Candidate No. 3). The case has been handed to the Panwas for further investigation.

Protests started when candidate No. 2's team (Irmawan/Yudi) did not receive a quick count from their witnesses in Terangon and Tripe Jaya districts at around 8.00pm on the 9th April.² While checking into the cause of the delay, the candidate's witnesses informed them that the recapitulation was done at the house of the village headman located in Desa. Blang-Kola and Desa Terangon. The supporters of Irmawan/Yudi, along with KPA/PA cadres, took a photo and asked the attendees including the KPPS officers, the Keuchik, the camat, the Panwaslu, and witness to sign a letter admitting that the counting and recapitulation were done there (copy of signed letter available).

The news of the fraud allegation spread and supporters were mobilized. The crowd grew and became uncontrollable. It was at this point that the crowd moved to burn down the KIP office and government facilities, causing property to be lost and election materials to be destroyed. Surprisingly, the vandalism was not targeted at the Terangon or Tripe Jaya districts, the two districts which were directly related to the alleged fraud. This has raised suspicions that the action was actually a well orchestrated act of sabotage designed to destroy the counting/tabulation documents and records (including ballot papers). This might be done for a variety of reasons, one of which could be to force re-elections. After the violence, the situation cooled as 450 Brimob (Police Brigade) were deployed to maintain peace and order.

Aceh Tengah Incidents:

Also worth noting are rising tensions in the Bupati/Vice bupati race in Kab. Aceh Tengah caused by problems during the recapitulation of the electoral result. Ten out of eleven Bupati candidates eventually made a coalition against Nasaruddin – Khairul Asmara due to allegations of fraud. The coalition of candidates alleged that a systematic manipulation of the electoral process had taken place, through the manipulation of the DPS and DPT. There were also cases of people from West Java being allowed to vote despite having only been residents of that area for less than 2 (two) months.³

On the 10th of April, approximately 1.000 people, motivated by the allegations about the DPS/DPT abuse, marched and filled complaints to Panwas and KIP. The march continued to the Bupati's hall, where they were received by the caretaker Bupati to discuss the matter. Despite discussion, the matter was not resolved and on the 11 of April the coalition of 10 Bupati candidates regathered with a bigger crowd and continued protesting at KIP's office to demand re-elections and the disqualification of Nassaruddin - Khairul. Worried for the safety of the

² On that day, an internal quick count conducted by the Irmawan/Yudi team showed them behind by 2000 votes based on results collected from other Kecamatans. Because of this, the results from the two Kecamatans in question (consisting of not more than 9,200 voters on DPT) were obviously critical.

³ Only people who had resided in a locale not less than 6 months were allowed to vote for Bupati of the Kabupaten.

election materials, the police took quick action and transported the elections materials (incl. boxes, ballots, etc) to the police headquarters and tightened security to limit the access of the public to view the counting processes. One hundred Brimob (Police Brigade) were deployed to maintain order in Aceh Tengah. Recapitulation of the Governor has been done, while the recapitulation for Bupati still remains uncertain.

The conflict in the area is actually a renewal of an old competition between two political actors, Nasaruddin (incumbent) and Mahreje, both from the same Golkar party. Nasaruddin is accused of committing fraud during the elections. Nasaruddin was once the Head of the Golkar Party in Kabupaten Ateng but lost to Mahreje (Candidate No. 11) to be the Golkar candidate. The bitter contest is actually a repeat of the previous Bupati Election in 2006.

The most common concern in this area is the voter list that allegedly contains many unregistered voters. While there are cases of ineligible individuals being registered (informants shared info about 10 registered immigrants from West Java who arrived less than 3 months prior),⁴ there are also other opposite cases such as that found at the Village of Kp. Simpang Klaping where an estimated 80 eligible villagers were not registered on the DPT (according to the villagers). A formal complaint about the DPT was made by the coalition of 10 candidates as early as 6th April to KIP/Panwaslu. Panwaslu issued a letter, advising KIP to make a clarification on the DPT. In response, KIP issued a letter the same day on how the matter should be addressed. The letter provided guidance about how those with their name on the DPS but not in the DPT should be allowed to vote and also about how to handle repeat names. Responding to other complaints of irregularities on Election Day, Panwaslu issued another letter of advice on 10th April, this time advising KIP to freeze the electoral process at the next level. But KIP, citing Electoral regulations article 149 (1) and (4) – which states that the electoral stages/process shall only be halted on the advice of the Police, KIP refused the advice from Panwaslu.

The dominance of the incumbent Bupati/Candidate No. 10 has, from the start, led to accusations that KIP and Panwaslu lack neutrality. One Panwaslu officer had been sacked due to this and a complaint against the Head of Panwaslu had also been filed. The incumbent was also accused of stacking the local bureaucracy with his loyalists to secure his position, down from the Camats to the Keuchiks levels. Because electoral officials are still conducting an in-depth investigation, the situation in Aceh Tengah's Bupati elections remains uncertain.

Violations and an Atmosphere of Fear

ANFREL observers detected an environment of fear amongst the Acehnese before, during, and after the election. This so-called environment of fear is reflected in the hesitance of the villagers to speak about intimidation that the village/villager experiences though direct or indirect threats. The same hesitance can also be found in electoral officials and even civil society, when they express their findings, because they fear they could be compromising their safety by doing so.

⁴ Minimum eligibility to register shall be 6 months domiciled in a particular village.

Propaganda launched by PA cadres proved to be effective in affecting the voter's psychology in rural areas. They were the most vulnerable section of society during the conflict, a fact which likely influenced the way they voted. This fact, combined with the pro-active, pervasive effort by the PA political machinery at all levels to "escort" the electoral process, worked to "convince" the communities to vote for PA candidates. The ability of PA to mobilize an ideological base of determined cadres of supporters is a key to its success.

"It doesn't matter who wins as long we can live peacefully and make a living, our kid can go to school and we can eat," villagers said. A trader in the local market added that *"we just want security and stability so our business can be sustained."* Talking to people revealed the degree to which people were most interested in peace and security and, in further discussion, how they saw a particular party's victory as more likely to ensure that peace.

PA's strategy was successful in rural areas along the West and East coast of Aceh such as Aceh Timur, Pidie, Pidie Jaya, Bireun, Aceh Jaya, Aceh Barat, etc. However, it seems to have been less effective in areas that are more educated and diverse such as the cities of Sabang, Banda Aceh and Langsa, as well as in Aceh Singkil, Subussalam, Bener Meriah, Gayo Lues where many immigrants reside.

As mentioned above, there were widespread allegations of intimidation against voters, political candidates, campaign teams and election officials. While it is difficult to determine exactly what types of intimidation were used to influence voters, several observations should be noted. First, there is a general sense among voters, particularly in rural areas, that if Partai Aceh did not win a majority of the vote there may be a return of violence and instability to the area. Second, there were reports of voters being warned that if they voted against Partai Aceh's candidates they would face negative consequences, for example being forced from the village. Finally, there were reports that voters openly supporting independent candidates were told that if they did not remove campaign material from their residence they would be forced from the village. A majority of voter intimidation took place at the village level and appears to have been through implicit threats such as promising that there would be 'consequences' if the villagers chose the wrong party.

Unfortunately, violence and intimidation against candidates and campaign team members was also common. ANFREL observers received multiple reports of threats and violence directed at candidates and campaign teams. The most common form of threat was via SMS. ANFREL, as well as the media and Panwaslu, received reports of campaign team members and supporters being attacked and sent to the hospital while putting up posters or canvassing. Clashes between supporters resulted in numerous injuries and required intervention by the police or military. Campaign vehicles were a common target, with multiple instances of campaign cars being burned or smashed with rocks. ANFREL also received reports of threats directed towards election officials. Some election officials received SMS threats stating that they should be careful on Election Day. The Police, Panwaslu and election monitoring bodies are still investigating cases of intimidation.

Undoubtedly, PA cadre were shown to be the most likely to undertake forceful and intimidating actions. These often took the form of sweeping, blocking, and assault to obstruct the campaign of other candidates in the same area. The report of EVER also describes their dissatisfaction with ex-combatants who stand against Partai Aceh in the electoral contest and provides details about incidents and the motivation of the attacks.

IMMEDIATE RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the ongoing electoral process, where disputes are being processed through legal channels, the need for fact-based evidence is critical to assure electoral justice in the overall process. This is especially true when seeking solutions to the ongoing situations in Gayo Lues and Aceh Tengah. ANFREL thus proposes the following immediate recommendations:

Thorough Investigation into the Allegations of Fraud and Intimidation

An investigation should be immediately initiated to settle the allegations of fraud, intimidation, and assault complained of by the contestants and voters. The KIP/Panwas shall begin to consult with the appropriate institutions to reveal the fear during the elections that influenced voters' decision making. A major related issue that needs to be addressed is appropriate protection for those who file reports.

Violence among rabid partisans, intimidation of voters and candidates can be greatly minimized with a decisive election body and a determined police force. These were too often lacking in Aceh, where authorities were frequently spectators from the sidelines, playing it safe, and unwilling to displease either of the main protagonists. This kind of inaction can contribute to the relatively high number of cases of violence and intimidation.

In order for the law to be respected and to avoid a culture of impunity, individuals or groups who are guilty of breaking the law need to be punished.

MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

KPPS and Voter Intimidation

- Ensure adequate adherence to procedure by KPPS members.
- Inform and educate party witnesses and police of the rules of conduct for KPPS members so that violations can be reported.
- Design procedures that reduce the ability of KPPS members to influence voters.
- Mandate Linmas to clear an area around the polling station so that voters can cast their votes free from intimidation.

Review the Voter List and Act to Prevent Disenfranchisement

- A serious overhaul and audit of the voter list should be undertaken, as well as a review of the methods of registration.
- Voter lists need to be displayed and their location announced to the public so that they can be reviewed in a timely manner.
- The process of registration for prisoners needs to be reviewed to allow for the full franchise of this population.
- The use of mobile polling stations would allow voters in hospitals to vote, as is their right.

Electoral Official Review

- The performance of electoral officials at various levels should be reviewed with sanctions applied to those officers found to have violated the ethical code.
- Officials that are improperly related to candidates or political parties should also be considered for replacement.

Logistics and Polling Procedures

- Comprehensive training of all polling officers could bring immediate improvements in the process. This is necessary to fill knowledge and training gaps found during the 9th April elections. This lack of understanding caused mistakes and increased the likelihood of disputes. It is important to stress the fundamental steps involved in voter identification, counting the ballots during the opening, invalidating unused ballots, and the treatment of the C-1 form after the counting is done at the TPS. Improving training for KPPS members and ensuring that they have a sufficient understanding of the procedures and their responsibilities is essential for future elections in Aceh.
- Standardize the storage of ballot boxes, both before and after the Election Day, to prevent allegations of fraud.
- Standardize polling booth setup to ensure the secrecy of the vote, and strictly prohibit intervention during the voting processes. Such a prohibition could be announced openly to create appropriate awareness.
- Ensure only authorized persons are inside the polling station. The presence and roles of polling officials, party agents, and security should all be clearly defined and enforced. Other personnel not assigned as polling station staff, for example Satgas, should respect existing security arrangements and should avoid maintaining a presence at polling stations.
- Provide access for disabled and vulnerable groups by making reasonable arrangements to ensure their participation.

- The treatment of sensitive materials e.g. ballot papers at all times (printing, storage and distribution) shall be tightened to avoid illegal acts. The case of Aceh Barat Daya is a good example for more improvement.

More Deployment of Independent Monitors & Trained Party Agents (Saksi)

- ANFREL noticed that the local domestic monitoring could be improved. There were a considerable number of observers for polling day itself, but even then, there were not enough to cover every polling station. A non-partisan organization that is actively involved throughout the electoral process can contribute a lot to improving the quality of future elections. They can support the election body, work with police and even assist in the oversight function of the PANWAS.
- Regarding run-off elections, it is important to deploy more independent monitors and party agents as early as possible to cover the whole of the electoral process in order to assure a free environment and fair competition. It is also necessary to deploy observers or party agents to cover all existing polling stations to capture the entirety of proceedings in the TPS during polling day.
- The political party/candidate witnesses need to be better trained on polling procedures and reporting in order to be more effective.
- Better party agent training is but a part of a larger need in Aceh for institutionalized and meaningful political parties. Healthy democracies need competitive and lasting political parties.

Security Arrangements

- Where possible, Police should patrol more often during the period to make their presence known and to ensure the security of the election environment.
- Encourage all candidates and parties to release a public statement condemning violence and intimidation against voters and encourage their supporters to follow regulations.

More recommendation on the long term electoral issues related to the implementation of the 2012 Aceh Election shall be addressed in the final report of ANFREL's Elections Observation Mission which will hopefully launch 90 days from now.

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