

# Help bring peace and security to Aceh

## Aceh's struggle for peace

Aceh has suffered over 30 years of civil conflict. Tens of thousands of lives have been lost and human rights abuse widespread across the country.

It was only after the destruction caused by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, that a peace deal was made that marked an end to the insurgency.

The tsunami devastated the country: hundreds of thousands perished, and at least half a million became homeless. The economy suffered billions of dollars of losses, thus destroying the livelihood of people.

While the country has undergone enormous relief and recovery since then, the challenges to rebuilding Aceh persist, with the present focus going beyond the economic and infrastructural.

### What UNIFEM aims to do

- *Raise awareness* on women's roles in conflict and the peace process by developing educational materials.
- *Strengthen the capacity* of government and civil society organizations to include gender equality into plans and policies.
- *Empower women* to influence legislative reform for the protection of human rights and gender justice.
- *End Violence Against Women* – the National Committee for UNIFEM Singapore is supporting the campaign to end gender-based violence in Aceh through funding public education and research programs, as well as facilitating legislative reform.

### Why support the women of Aceh?



- "Gender blindness" threatens the success of the peace building process that has begun after 30 years of civil conflict
- 30% of Acehnese live below the poverty line, with women and children often the most affected.

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- Leadership for women is generally discouraged on a cultural and social basis.
- There is poor support for women to pursue higher education.
- There remains limited access to employment opportunities outside traditional earning capacity.
- Violence against women is prevalent and grossly underreported due to cultural sensitivities.

## Women are essential to the peace process

In August 2005, the Helsinki Peace Agreement (MoU) was signed between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Government of Indonesia (GoI) to mark the formal end of the country's civil conflict.

While this agreement signals a remarkable development to the peace process in Aceh, one glaring factor that undermines the potential strength of this process is the absence of women in Aceh's post conflict governance.

Women are an essential component to a robust peace process – for any peace process in Aceh to be democratic and fair, it must support women and men alike.

## Women, Peace and Security in Aceh: An urgent need

The Women, Peace and Security in Aceh program comes at a crucial time. The country's current post conflict transition is fertile ground for Aceh to create a democratic and equal society.

Our goal: To create a sustainable governance and peace in Aceh through women's full participation in recovery and peace building.

This program will reach thousands of women at sub-district and village levels. It will develop training activities around women's crisis centers to be built in all 23 districts, and also develop one-stop crisis centers at sub-district hospitals in 6 pilot sites.

### What you can do to help

- *Donate.* Funds raised by UNIFEM Singapore this year will be channeled to the Aceh project. Go to [www.unifem.org.sg/Make\\_a\\_Donation.shtml](http://www.unifem.org.sg/Make_a_Donation.shtml).
- *Raise funds.* If you would like to organize a fundraiser amongst your friends, family, social or work group, please email us at [contact@unifem.org.sg](mailto:contact@unifem.org.sg). We would be most happy to support you.
- *Spread the word.* Help raise awareness by writing articles on blogs, Facebook notes and Twitter about the project in Aceh.

