MIGRATION AND CONFLICT IN INDONESIA[*]

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Since 1998 the political uncertainties and acute economic crisis have result of the long ruling authoritarian regime of President Suharto and design the installation of a new democratic system. Unfortunately in the same time, ethnic and violence ignited at many places in Indonesia, which was started with East Timor to be independent. Then, there are the revival of ethno-nationalism in the provinces of Aceh (in the northern Sumatra), Irian Jaya and "religious" violence between the majority Muslims and minority Christians on the eastern Maluku Islands and Poso (Central Sulawesi).

In the recent years Indonesia still continues to suffer, when a sustainable economy recovery is so slowly and looks un-focusing, the government is also still weak and ineffectual in dealing with the situation. Even many the violence remains linked to elements of the military. One of big real effect is in the grassroots population which directly faces the violence and the hard time in the shelters and tents as internally displacement persons (IDPs).

Discussing IDPs in Indonesia, as Susan F Martin remains that their flow is caused more of push factors in their home communities which is fuelled by conflicts, human right abuses and political repression that displace people from their home communities.[1] This flow of them becomes recent phenomenon around regions in Indonesia. Since 1998 the flow of IDPs is already more than 1.3 million persons, not only from Kalimantan and Ambon, but also from Sumatra, Sulawesi, Irian Jaya dan Nusa Tenggara.[2] Although there are some actions from many kinds of local, national and international organizations since

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[1] IDP actually is a part of forced migration. See Susan F. Martin, Working Paper 41: Global Migration Trends and Asylum, *New Issues In Refugee Research*, April 2001: <http:www.unhcr.ch/refworld/pubs/pubon.htm>

[2] See the data of WFP, VAM Unit Jakarta, Http://www.idpproject.org/database/.

1998, it seems no real government effort to solve the IDPs problems. Remaining the IDPs problem that will be discussed, it will focus on what actually the reason was behind the movement and how to create the solution.

Resistance of Ethnics

Ethnic tension actually is not a recent phenomenon. It is potential in Indonesia and the seed of conflict were planted more than 30 years ago, when the complex process of state making was not creating political space for pluralism, but more uniforms. Moreover social commitment was so fragile, such as among social relationships or political cooperation. It was more in the *SARA* concepts (ethnic, religion, race and among groups) which actually it created negative impact for harmonize of civil society. [3] It could be detected from stigma of Indonesian and Chinese minority, which the stronger indication has shown on 13-14 May 1998 tragedy at Medan Jakarta, Solo, Surabaya and Palembang.

However, today in the social-political transition there is changing pattern and more complicate. Since the crisis started the structure Indonesian society faces many social, economy and political problem of ethnic. Ethnic violence ignited with East Timor's drive to independence, the revival of ethno-nationalism in the provinces of Aceh (in northern Sumatra) and Irian Jaya. These three regions had long histories of resistance to central authority in Java. The suffer continues and secular nationalism which based on region and largely on the sidelines, such as violence between the majority Muslims and minority Christians on eastern Maluku islands and Poso–Central Sulawesi, between local ethnic and Maduras in East Kalimantan. These social conflicts phenomenon is interested in term of friction and transformation pattern from Indonesian and Chinese minority pattern to the local people and the new settlers and the other things. From this phenomenon of conflicts, there are three general patterns of conflicts: (1) Economic and political conflict multi

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[3] Since 1996 there were the big and wide riots with religious, social, economic and political dimension, such as at Situbondo (East Java), Tasikmalaya, Rangkas Dengklok (West Java), and Pekalongan (Central Java). Look Riza Sihbudi et.al. *Bara Dalam Sekam: Identifikasi*

dimensional and latent; (2) Political conflict movement and nationalism; and (3) Natural resources struggle, communal and seed of ethnic consciousness.

First, the economic and political conflict multi dimensional and latent pattern grows particularly in the regions which actually had religion harmony, as occurred at Ambon and Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara. That was such as what happened in Maluku 1999, in January of that year Ambonese Christians mobilized anti-new settlers feeling against the Bugis (ethnic from Sulawesi) and Butonese minorities, which are Moslem.[4] The main reason of conflict actually related with the history of new settlers came and the reason why they live there. All are the economical reasons. Unfortunately at the same time government recruited employees, which mostly the Moslem and usually they should be the ICMI member.[5] This condition really disappointed and discriminated the Ambon Christian indirectly.

Beside that, the violence dispread to West Lombok district, Central Lombok and Senggagi Tour region.[6] In Mataram the composition of ethnic are so heterogenic, as usually in other region in Indonesia, but there are some those dominated, there are Sasak, Sumbawa and Bima ethnics. This pattern is also showed in Waikabubak, Sumba, East Nusa Tenggara. When social violence was trigger by government recruitment employees (*Pegawai Negeri Sipil*= *PNS*) at East Nusa Tenggara, have consequences the ethnics conflicts, whereas in fact from the people composition, the new settlers are much less than local people, which the majority is Christian. Those situation causes the widespread of conflict have succeeded in attracting religious matter, as their identity, to their cause. Religion becomes tool of pressure the mass movement.

Akar Masalah dan Solusi atas Konflik-konflik Lokal di Aceh, Maluku, Papua dan Riau, Kerjasama LIPI, Menristek RI dan Pustaka Mizan, January 2001: 9-11.

[4] *Kompas, Suara Pembaruan, and Media Indonesia*, February 1999.

[5] Around the end of 1995, under Suharto power, the former Vice President BJ Habibie developed the new Moslem organization, which is called ICMI (*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia,* Indonesian Academic Moslem Community). This organization spread to all of Indonesian Provinces through PNS. The political power which is base on PNS is use to be on the new order regime.

[6] In the first case shows a lot of places burnt, such as churches, 77 houses, 29 shops, 7 restaurants, and 14 cars were burnt. See P2P-LIPI research, *Anatomi Kerusuhan Sosial Di Indonesia* (The Anatomy of Social Conflict in Indonesia), Kerjasama Kantor Menteri Negara Riset dan Tehnologi RI dengan Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia, Mizan, Bandung, 2002.

Second, this political conflict ethnic movement and nationalism kind of conflict actually grows on the region which has good and rich natural resources, but the local people do not have enough power and resource sharing, that involves as the parts of managing these resources. Even though the base of conflict is economic interest, the local people feel on the discrimination position, such as in Aceh, Riau and Irian Jaya. The national government has controlled them to much and exploited their natural resources all. Therefore, separatist movements are the best way for them. [7]

Third, this natural resources struggle, communal and seed of ethnic consciousness pattern is showed such as in Sambas, West Kalimantan. The Sambas conflict was so unique; it was among Malay, Dayak and Chinese with Madurese. Started from the armed robbery have been done by Maduras to Melayu on 17 January 1999 on Paritsetia village. Then they took revenge by burning houses. The violence fights and murder, even genocide could not be avoidable.

Although the base of conflict much more of economic interest, the straightforward relationships between economic competition and ethnic conflict are difficult to establish. Such relationships are not wholly absent, but the economic problem explains much more at the top than at the bottom of developing societies. Every ethnic or a part of ethnic usually has difference in culture, history, preferences and imputed aptitudes and environment, such as even the Madurese in Kalimantan does not adapt easily with other Madurese in Madura Island – East Java.[8] Much more obviously, economic theories can explain it as a part of conflict interest, but not the extent of the emotion invested in ethnic conflict.

As Horowitz points out that ethnic conflict are often labelled cultural conflicts, because cultural differences that usually divide ethnic groups. He remains that there are conception of the role of cultural differences in the politics

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[7] See Riza Sihbudi et al, 2001 and Syamsuddin Haris, Potensi Disintegrasi Nasional: Kasus Empat Dearah, in Syamsuddin Haris et.al, *Indonesia di Ambang Perpecahan.*Kerjasama PPW-LIPI, Yayasan Insan Politika, The Asian Foundation and Erlangga Publisher, 1999: 3-14.

[8] *Kompas*, 8 March 2001; *the Jakarta Post*, 2 May 2001; *Republika,* 8 June 2001.

of ethnic relations, which make the society has many cultural sections and one of them dominates the others.[9] In spite of this, the dominate culture does not come from the local community, but the culture of new settler or the government. Thus the core of problem is marginalization of local communal that is related with the self of ethnic identity. It really becomes the fuse factor of conflict.

The Flow of Internally Displacement Persons (IDPs)

Nothing expression in discussing the situation and condition can say just "becoming stranger at their own house". The worse ethnic conflict affects the flow of displacement population in many places in Indonesia, which includes internal as well as across borders.[10] AS seen in the map one, the main camps of IDPs are widespread in almost all Indonesian islands. Such as scores of IDPs now live in camps or shelters along with conflict of many areas in Aceh, Sampit, Sambas, Ambon, Poso and Irian Jaya. As seen in map two, the intention of population flow recently around 1,321,136 people (30 November 2001)[11], which are in widespread from many conflict places in Indonesia, such as:

- The eruption of a separate Christian and Muslim conflict in Poso, Central Sulawesi had first emerged in a 1998 fight over a local political appointment. Left at lease 200 dead and an estimated 60,000 people temporarily displaced;

- In Aceh, the number of persons displaced by the conflict ebbed and flowed, but tens of thousands fled their homes over the course of the year, many in the face of violent police and military "sweeps" for suspected rebels. Thousands of non-Acehnese migrated to other provinces in Sumatra and Java, many after having been threatened by rebels.

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[9] Donald L. Horowittz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict,* University of California Press, California, 1985: 135-136.

[10] Http://www.hrw.org/wr2k1/asia/indonesia.html/

[11] Source: WFP, VAM Unit Jakarta, Http://www.idpproject.org/database/.

- In July 2001 the approximately 60,000 IDPs from Central and West Kalimantan of the recent outbreaks of violence living in appalling in tents and shelters in Pontianak, West Kalimantan. Respiratory diseases were not the only problem. There was also a scarcity of clean water, which resulted in sharp increases in the number of people suffering from diarrhea and skin disease.[12]

People who have been forced to leave their homes because of conflict are put in an extremely vulnerable situation. It is so hard to establish the exact figure, but the available information shows that large IDPs do not find enough shelters in organized camps or protected areas. This has evoked frustration among the displaced, which lives day-to-day in temporary camps, or military barracks with very limited infrastructure. They have lost everything, especially in the economic sense, such job which does not easily create new opportunities in the camps where they live.

The worse situation is the psychical condition among IDPs, for example they are from Sampit, Central Kalimantan, which live at Sampang district, Madura. More than 55.000 IDPs from Sampit are spread on 40 villages are in psycho-social trauma. Children, for examples, do not want to go to school and develop social live, because trauma to threaten far away with their parents.[13]

Beside that, actually IDPs' flow or displacement population in Indonesia is still far from reducing the conflict, because they promote the new conflict with local population in the new place. In Sampang Madura, one of the examples, are struggling to suppress the growing strain of accommodating thousands of IDPs Madurese from conflict in Central Kalimantan. Most of them came with little more than the clothes they were wearing.[14] Most of them are the responsibility of feeding and houses on the local villagers in Sampang, because neither the provincial nor national government has provided meaningful

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[12] *Koran Tempo* 16 July 2001
[13] *Republika,* 7 June 2001, *Suara Pembaruan*, 22 October 2001,
[14] *The Jakarta Post, Kompas,* 25-30 April 2001

assistance so far.[15] Although it looks can run in the daily time, in some places there are potential conflict with the local people, particularly when they work as a vendor or labourer. IDPs seem have taken some chance of land for working.

Life in the various camps is actually fraught with suffering. Some of them have to shuffle from one place to another as manual labourer to make ends meet, but many of them face another conflict with local people. IDPs from Maluku in Buton, for example, actually the Button ethnic, but the local community of Buton is reluctant to accept them.[16] The local residents always corner and portray the Maluku IDPs as trouble-makers and frequently have been violence to them. Until on 8 October 2001 IDPs in their camp have been involved in deadly bawls with local community.[17] After that, they have been virtual prisoners in their camp and have not been allowed to go outside the camp.

It is interested. In actual fact both the local people and IDPs of Maluku originate from Button Island. Although the IDPs only left the island around two generations ago, they have found themselves treated as aliens by the local. It seems that both the local Buton ethnic and the Butan IDPs have had difficulties to find to integrate themselves after the long separation. It is possibly, maybe because the IDPs have been exposed to different cultures in Ambon, Maluku Island.There are the small example, which can find in many places IDPs camps or shelters such as in West Kalimantan, Medan, Nusa Tenggara and Central Sulawesi.

These all go to show that they really need the humanitarian assistance, which come from not only local and national NGOs but also international NGOs and other countries governments. Since 1998 there is some Crisis Centre that special for social conflicts in Indonesia, which usually they work together with international organisation and many other NGOs and sometimes with

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[15] Many local family of five are now having to accommodate and feed as many as 20 - 50 IDPs. They share all, from food, space and help send children of IDPs to local schools also. See many new about IDPs in Sampang, such as *Suara Karya* 27 August 2001*, Kompas* 8 March 2001, *Koran Tempo* 12 May 2001*, Media Indonesia* 19 July 2001,

[16] *The Jakarta Post*, 22 December 2001.

[17] *Ibid.*

government. They are active to providing humanitarian assistance, but still no really effort of government to maintain a sense of unity and domestic security.

The Unclear Government Policies

Since the government of President Abdurrahman Wahid, there is not sense of urgency of the Government, which it has to have for encouraging sense of belonging among societies. Although at that time the National Board Coordination (*Badan Koordinasi Nasional = Bakornas*) created for tacking the natural disaster and refugee (or IDPs) and now under the State Minister of Social Welfare participate dealing with natural disaster and IDPs, there is no real government effort to prosecute anyone to stop the conflict and offer the humanitarian aid for IDPs.

Actually there are policies of the IDPs, which try to give solution of displacement. These policies are in the three kinds of project: transmigration, normalization and resettlement back.

First, transmigration project already did to some of IDPs in Sulawesi. Through the Social Welfare Minister Bachtiar Chamsyah tried to adopt a part of the policy of transmigration. There are around 800 IDPs families resettled to transmigration settler unit (*Unit Pemukiman Transmigrasi:* UPT) Donggala district – South-east Sulawesi.[18] And, IDPs from Aceh resettled from Medan to Bengkulu.

This physical rehabilitation project actually has some serious weakness that should be understood. Resettlement policy is as the one of solving problem in many places for IDPs looks a good point for them, but there are some fragile problems come out. The concept of resettlement is in contradiction with the concept of Indonesian nation building and state building. This concept means that every citizen can stay and live in all other places in Indonesia, without concerning with what ethnic they are. It means also one ethnic group can not claim their land is their ethnic land. Therefore, in the case of Madurese in

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[18] *Kompas, Media Indonesia and Koran Tempo*, 12-13 and 19-20 October 2001.

Sampit, the government and police should not blame ethnic Madurese, when they did not want to do resettlement, but again, the national government and police exploited their power to push Madurese to move other places.

At the side of that, a closer examination of the conflicts and the causes of conflict, it was not causes directly by inter-group differences, particularly in many places in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Ambon and Irian jaya. However the ethnicity merely becomes an excuse for using of state force to quell violence and historically the Indonesian government has been quick to seek IDPs behind the veil of only ethnic conflict without addressing the real issues. Lake and Rothchild remain that there are some push and pull factors, such as problems of commitment, security dilemma, the state is weakened, cultural domination and polarize society.[19] Although statistic can mislead, there is a number of conflict pattern cannot be ignored. Most of ethnics or religious violence has happened in areas or regions where there is a diverse mix of ethnicity, with a single pre-dominant ethnic group.[20]

The case in a point is one episode of ethnic violence in Kalimantan, there has been a long history of conflict between the Dayaks (the indigenous people of Kalimantan) and the Madurese (the new settlers). Historically the first Madurese arrived in Kalimantan in 1930s in the transmigration program which was initially started by the Dutch colonial. The numbers increased dramatically in the 1970s as a direct consequence of Indonesian government's transmigration plan. Under transmigration program the government hoped to ease the pressure of the growing population in Java and populate those areas of Indonesia that were less densely populated and the abundance of natural resource. The transmigration program in Kalimantan resulted in rainforests, which are an inextricable part of the Dayak way of life, being replaced by palm oil and coconut plantations. No chance for them to share in the exploitation of their traditional resources. This situation made the Dayaks soon found them at the bottom of the economic without pursuing their traditional means of exercise.

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[19] David A Lake and Donald Rothchild, Spread Fear: The Genesis of Transnational Ethnic Conflict, *the International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear Diffusion, and Escalation*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1998: 4.

Now this kind of people movement has gone down, but the process of mix diverse cultures without supporting of adequate policies or delivery mechanisms, institutions and infrastructure that guaranteed equitable distribution and protected and respect the indigenous peoples' sensitive in promoting real growth, was a recipe for disaster.

This pattern of misery has been replicated in other parts of Indonesia. Even though this pattern could not use generally, but the exercise can prove that in the recent picture many local people is anger and violence to the arrival people dealing with ethnic or religion reasons actually is more the existence of identity. The combatants in the several ethnic conflicts are around Indonesia, whether they are majority or not within their respective communities, using and highlighting their ethnic diversity as a justification for mobilization support.

Second, normalization of the riot places. Word "normalization" actually is the ideal idea for solving the problems, but the hardest to be implemented. Case by case of ethnic conflict indicates that the government and police reacted to the situation slowly. On one hand, they seem take no responsibility for the situation and give this problem to the communities. On the other hand, when they so reactive their approaches, but nothing other than for security on region. Some places in conflict areas indicated that the excesses of the security approach highlighted by events in Aceh, Ambon and Irian Jaya. They should be responsibility for protecting the people got violence, not more try to catch the rioters.

Moreover, "normalization" in the Indonesian government or police's way of action mostly has contradiction meaning. Historically, Indonesian government did not have an experience dealing with making situation in the regency is deemed to have returned to normal from the societies perspective. Normalization means returning the situation normally but because of the lack of professionalism among military and police raises concern over out of control abuses of human rights. Sometimes, government need to impose a state of

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[20] Sidhesh Kaul, Ethnic Conflict or Policy Failure? *The Jakarta Post*, 9 March 2001.

civilian emergency, but as long as it is implemented properly and the operation is under good control of them.

Talking normalization, many factors should be taken into account to normalize the situation. Although they could not be generalized, there are some main things need to be consider. Firstly, the role of local government, informal leader of both ethnic should in the same understanding to the root of conflict and the facilitated factors. Secondly, the mechanism of reconciliation between them is needed. So, with in same understanding each other will be expected they have sense of belonging to their IDPs and it can easier to find the way out of solving the IDPs problems.

Actually, normalization should not to the point after the riot, but the most important is normalization when the violence happened. It needs good and fast effort of police or government to anticipate them, thus the normalization starts with the preventive situation, which local and new settlers communities feel safety and not necessary displaced.

Third, resettlement back the IDPs is not always a fair solution. Actually the condition will not much better than resettlement through transmigration. There are a lot of constrain that should be accounted. Government sometimes do not take into account the financial things which have lost, such as in Central Sulawesi, houses, mosques and churches have been burn down in a wave of violence.[21] The infrastructure and other financial capital for IDPs should be developed first. It is so important, because the main risk to develop again the societies without infrastructure create the new problem and conflict with local people.

Additionally, the most important is the process of normalization should not for the stability of region, but for building understanding and sense of mix diversity ethnics.[22] It is not easy for both ethnics to be cooled down and understand each other soon. They need more time to understand that they are

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[21] *The Jakarta Post*, 5 December 2001
[22] Bob Sugeng Hawinata, Hakekat dan Dinamika Konflik Domestik di Negara Berkembang, *Global* 8/2001: 28.

living in the diversity ethnics and should be respect each other. Such as in Sambas, the Malay community has remained unwilling to accept the Madurese IDPs.

The Local Authority as the Alternative

Many people have begun to suspect that there is an unexplained grand design to destroy the Indonesian nation building.[23] Megawati is not really sensitive with the conflict and IDP camps, because effort to solve the conflict and the IDP problems has been so slow, while officials are making excuses about some obstructions to peace. Beside suffering and ethnicity conflicts, also IDP problems could also destabilize society. Still the statement of local and national government are more uniform and distortion dealing with human tragedy.

A responsible government would be marshalling resources for providing humanitarian aid for IDPs. Thousands of them are in need of medical care, food and shelter. Whatever steps the government decides to take now will be far too little, and way too late. Too much blood has already been split for there to be any chance of reconciliation in the near future and the government has insufficient legitimacy to exercise any sort of moral authority over local population.

Therefore these problems should be minimized with supposing considerable challenges to Indonesian cohesion and corporation among provinces. The autonomy province and district should see as a challenge as their authority to develop their-own societies. When government already try delegated the task of solving the conflict and to look after the IDPs to the provincial government, delegating to solve the conflict problem and IDPs actually really close to the new policy that dealing with decentralization region in Indonesia. In 1999 Indonesian parliament approved legislation number 22/1999 and 25/1999 which shifted political and economic power from centre to the

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[23] See many newsletters in Indonesia, such as: *Media Indonesia*, 24 March 2001, *Kompas*, 1-5 March 2001, *Suara Karya*, 6 March 2001, *Suara Pembaruan,* 28 March 2001, *Kontan*, 12 March 2001, *Republika*, 13 March 2001.

region. Under new legislation, considerable authority has been passed directly to districts and municipalities, by passing provincial governments.[24] Mac Donald and Lemco discuss that although an effort has been made to implement meaningful decentralization, it has not been smooth.[25] Uncertain has grown that the new legislation risks failure, particularly to make decision about solving IDP problems.

Even though the implementation of legislation number 22/1999 does not yet clear, there are some positive thing that can be done by local government and community. As Indonesian sociologic Tomagola recommended for Sampit conflict,[26] there are the main stream that could be consider. First, with doing strengthened the local police, they can take their all responsibility in their region. If the military still involve the local riot, it should be in emergency period and temporary. Second, building the integrated pattern of settlement is dealing with the level of ability to buy it, education and cultural facility. The settlement should not be compartmentalized as before the riot. Among ethnic can learn and develop their respect each other. The last one is how local government and communities get their power and resources sharing with national government.

Conclusion

Conflicts between people of different ethnic background have spread of and mushroomed in many places in Indonesia in the last few years, especially since the end of Soeharto's era. Differences root of conflict and level of conflict have shown the intensity of the conflict itself and the effect to their societies. This condition has emerged which not only causes the destroyed regions, but also

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[24] The distribution is districts will receive 80 percent of income from most mining and logging operations, 30 percent of earnings from natural gas, and 15 percent from oil, also 20 percent of local income-tax and at least 25 percent of special fund of centrally collected revenue, *Undang-Undang* (Legislation) Number 22 and 25 /1999.

[25] Scoot B. MacDonald and Jonathan Lemco, Indonesia: Living Dangerously, *Current History*, April 2001:181.

[26] Thamrin Amal Tomagola wrote that after knowing the root of conflict, he gives some suggestion that give the solution for resolution of conflict and also for to manage the IDPs get their settlement. See Thamrin Amal Tomagola, Anatomi Konflict Sampit, *Suara Pembaruan*, 23 March 2001.

the uncontrolled IDPs to many places and regions in Indonesia, particularly to Java Island.

Many conflicts and that kind of displaced people have the possibility of undermining stability of state and Indonesian security treat. Weak economies and turbulent politics have effect such as raising regional or province tensions and reducing national integrity. Even increasing friction is not only among ethnic itself but also between national and local government.

Actually government and NGOs have been learning about how to deal with conflicts and IDPs today. In this case national and local Governments, include the Province and Districts can play their own role. In the frame of decentralization it does not mean they should solve by themselves, but how they together manage the conflict and the IDPs. They need social and political dialogues among them. This proposal appears to be somewhat premature, but steps need to be taken to begin to seriously consider the most meaningful forum or mechanism for a regional dialogue in Indonesia. Then they can build the new pattern of settlement, which is dealing with pluralism society. The Indonesian government – in the central or in the province and district – should take this chance, if not they will lose their legitimacy worse.

Therefore, local government and local communities should work together and open their main that decentralization actually is not only on the context of region building, but also their community in term of the nation building and the pluralism society in Indonesia.
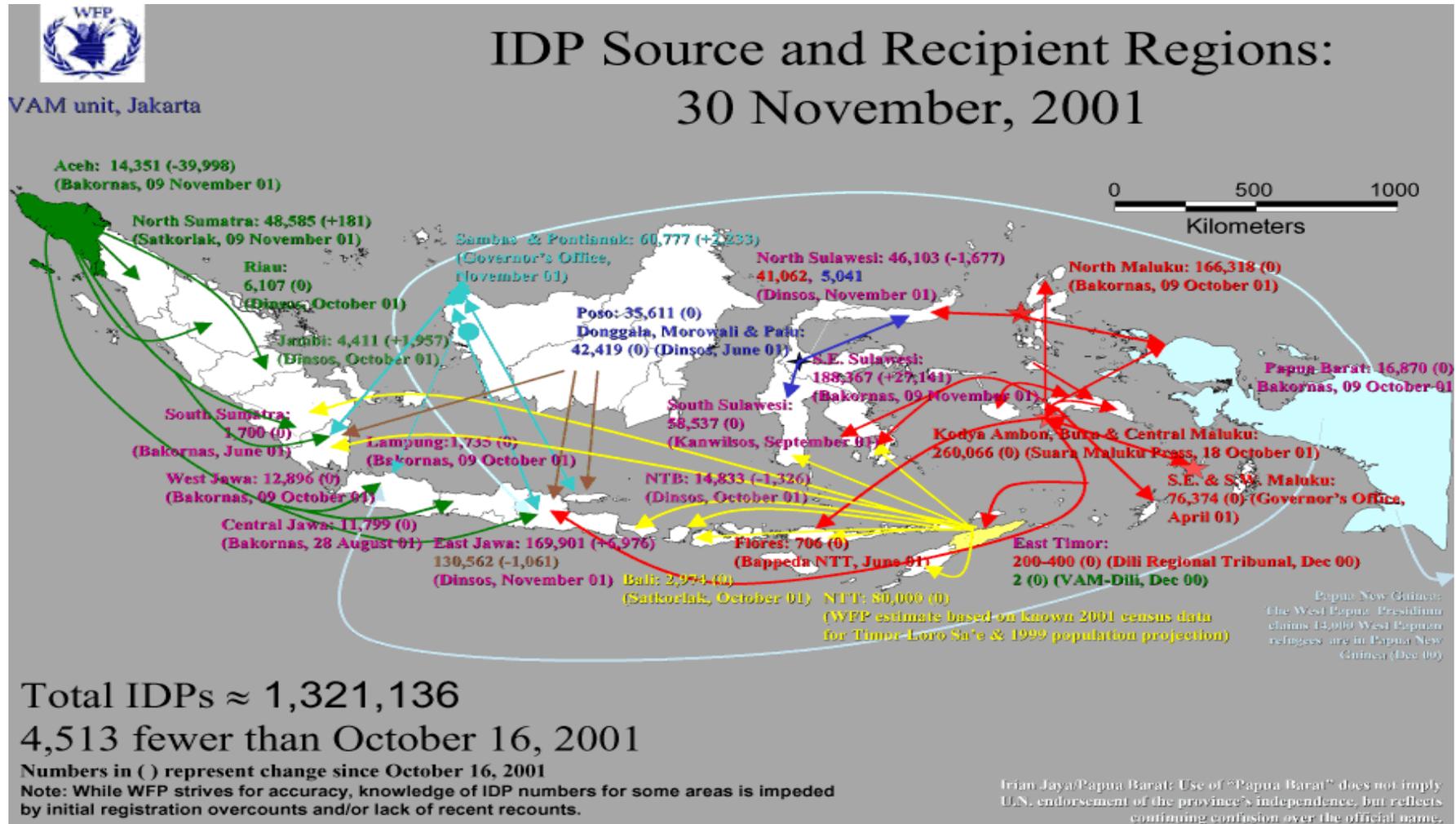
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Map 1. Internally Displacement Persons Champs
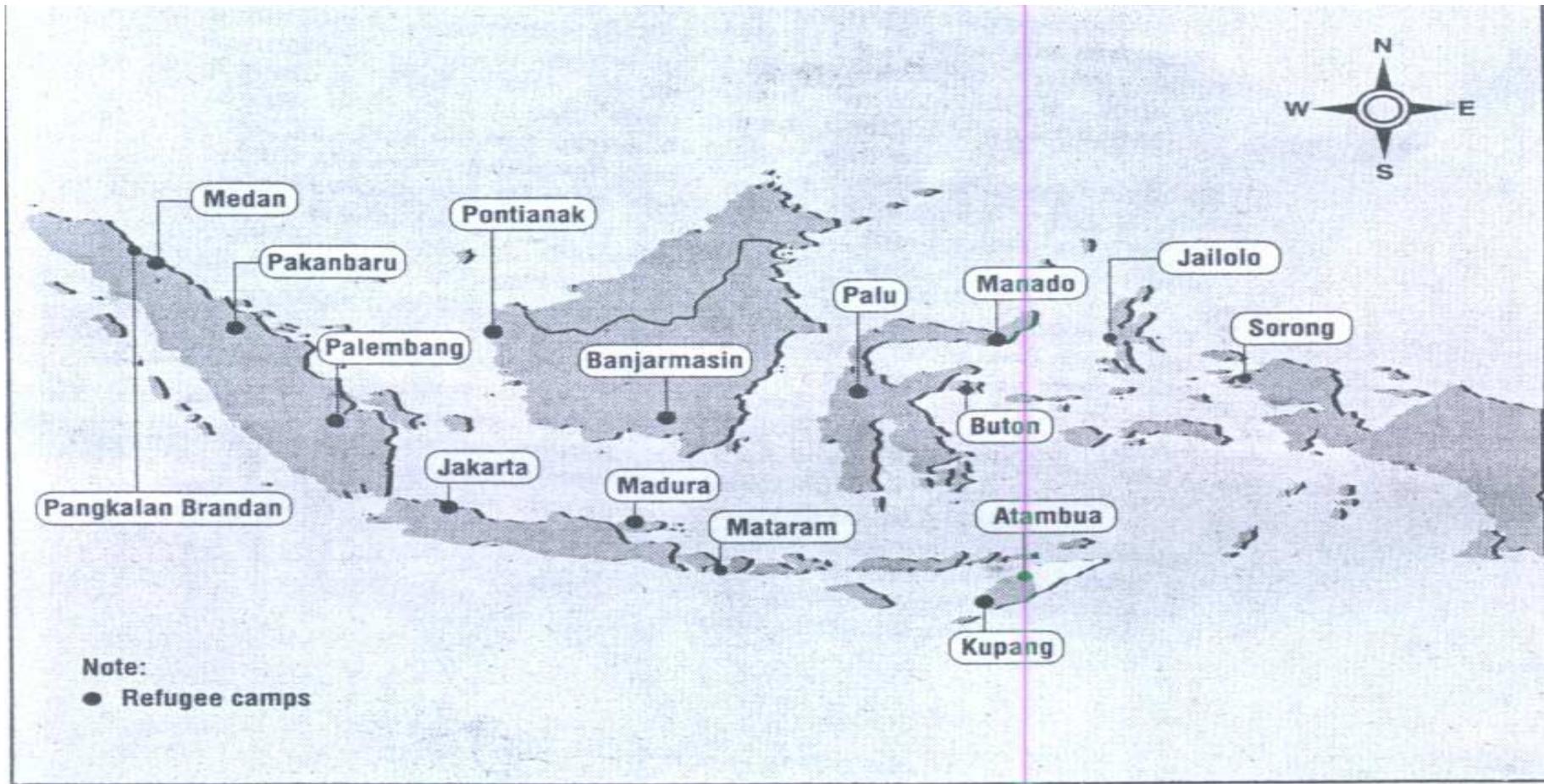
Source: Many sources in *The Jakarta Post*, 2001

Map 2. The Estimated of IDP's Flow in Indonesia on 2001

Source: WFP, VAM Unit Jakarta, http://www.idpproject.org/database/