



European Union Election Observation Mission Aceh 2006/7

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EUROPEAN UNION OBSERVATION MISSION: ELECTIONS IN ACEH A GREAT SUCCESS DESPITE INTERFERENCE

“The elections in Aceh Barat have been a great success and I am confident that the results reflect the wishes of its citizens. However they were spoiled by interference by local elements of the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI),” said Glyn Ford, member of the European Parliament and Chief Observer of the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) to Aceh commenting on the second round elections held in the districts of Aceh Barat and Aceh Barat Daya, province of Aceh, on 4 March 2007.

On polling day, the Mission observed and photographed military personnel interfering in the election process by collecting electoral material after closing of polls at the sub district election commission (PPK) of the sub-district of Samatiga, Aceh Barat, in contradiction with the electoral regulations. The Mission was informed of another event on 26 February in the sub district of Pante Ceremeun, Aceh Barat, where local military leaders invited all heads of villages to a meeting to supposedly advise on “how not to vote.” One head of village confirmed the meeting and the warnings made during the event to EU EOM observers.

Given that the TNI has publicly denied any form of interference or intimidation by the TNI in the election of Aceh Barat, and described the EU EOM’s report as ‘slander’ in today’s edition of *Kompas* newspaper, the Chief Observer of the EU EOM has decided to release photographs showing the presence of TNI personnel in the PPK Samatiga. The photographs are available on the EU EOM Aceh website at <http://www.eueomaceh.org>

At a meeting with the press in Jakarta this afternoon, the Chief Observer emphasized the small scale of the interference by elements of the TNI in the Aceh Barat election, which in his view does not diminish the integrity of the election. “If we consider the entire province of Aceh, the interference in Samatiga sub-district affected the vote of less than 1 per cent of the total population,” he said. Glyn Ford also reiterated his respect for the TNI, and believes that the evidence points to interference by local military elements of the TNI in Aceh Barat, not to the TNI as an institution. Nevertheless, the EU EOM hopes that the events in Aceh Barat will not happen again in the future, especially as Indonesia prepares to hold general elections in 2009.

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