

Opinions and Information on the Pilkada Aceh Elections 2006

Key Findings from an IFES Survey



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This report details the key findings from a survey conducted in Aceh from late September to mid-October 2006. This survey was designed to elicit the attitudes of residents of Aceh on the upcoming pilkada, as well as gauge their levels of information on this election so that those working to support the election process can effectively address areas of need during the election process. A total of 1,233 interviews were conducted throughout Aceh for this survey (excluding Sabang and Simeulu). The sample was designed to be representative of the Acehnese population and the margin of error for a sample of this size is plus/minus 2.85%. All interviews were conducted face-to-face in the homes of respondents in either Bahasa Indonesia (54%) or Acehnese (46%).

The survey findings reveal that the vast majority of residents of Aceh are aware of the upcoming Pilkada and a solid majority is likely to take part in this election. Acehnese also have positive expectations for the Pilkada, with a majority expecting the elections to be fair, and to aid in the establishment of peace in the province. The survey also reveals, however, that the majority lacks information on key parts of the election process, as well as electoral institutions responsible for implementing the election process. These findings point to the need for effective interventions in the month leading up to the election so that the optimism surrounding the pilkada can be translated to an effective election process that gives voice to the hopes of the people of Aceh.

Key Findings

- Seventy-eight percent of residents of Aceh are aware that local elections (Pilkada) will take place in 2006. A majority of both men and women are aware of the pilkada, although men are slightly more likely to be aware than women (84% versus 72%). More than three-quarters of both urban and rural residents are aware of the pilkada. The vast majority of those aware of the election also know that the elections will be held to elect the Governor and their Bupati/Walikota (85% each).
- Those who are aware of the upcoming pilkada learned about the elections through both media and non-media sources. Fifty-four percent of these respondents say they learned about the election through TV, 46% mention newspapers, and 38% the radio. Among non-media sources, the most often-mentioned are posters and pamphlets (53%), local officials such as their Geuchik or Kepala Desa (48%) and their neighbors (49%). The survey data indicates that both urban and rural residents used a mix of media and non-media sources to learn about the election, but urban residents are slightly more likely to use media sources while rural residents are slightly more likely to use non-media sources.
- The information sources used to obtain information about the pilkada are similar to the information sources residents of Aceh use to obtain information about events taking place in Aceh. Forty-two percent report that they use TVRI to obtain information about events in Aceh, while 54% use other television stations. Eighteen percent uses RRI and 20% use other radio stations. Serambi Indonesia is the most popular newspaper with 37% saying they read it, while 18% use other newspapers. A majority of residents of Aceh (57%) use their neighbors or family and friends to obtain information, while 28% use their Geuchik or Kepala Desa, and 15% gather information from informal gathering spots such as coffeehouses.
- The vast majority of residents of Aceh express at least some likelihood that they will vote in the upcoming pilkada. Fifty-six percent say that they are very likely to participate in the elections, while 33% say they are somewhat likely to participate. Only 2% say they are unlikely to participate in the election. There is little difference among men and women and among residents of rural and urban areas in the likelihood to vote. Most of those expressing a likelihood of voting say that they will do so to exercise their right to vote (69%) and because it is their duty to vote (57%).
- Despite the fact that the majority of residents of Aceh are aware of, and likely to participate in the pilkada, most of them lack information about the election process as well as political affairs in Aceh. When asked to rate their level of information about the election process for the upcoming pilkada, the vast majority say that they do not have very much (68%) or any information (11%) on the election.

Only 15% say that they have a great deal or fair amount of information on the election process. Residents of rural areas are more likely than those in urban areas to say they do not have much or any information on the pilkada (83% versus 67%). The data indicates that even a majority of those with access to multiple media sources say they do not have much or any information on the pilkada, indicating a lack of information on the electoral process in the media.

- The lack of information on political affairs is highly correlated with a lack of interest in political affairs among residents of Aceh. Overall, a majority (66%) says that they are not too or not at all interested in political affairs while 26% say they are interested in political affairs. Residents of urban areas are more likely to be interested in political affairs than residents of rural areas (40% versus 22%).
- The general lack of information on the election process goes hand-in-hand with a lack of information on political affairs in Aceh. Only 17% describe themselves as being very well-informed or somewhat well-informed about political affairs in Aceh, compared to 69% who say lack information on political affairs.
- The majority of residents of Aceh are also unaware of the institution charged with organizing the pilkada. Respondents to the survey were given a list of three institutions (KIP, KPU, and KPUD) and asked which was responsible for implementing the pilkada. Only 18% identify KIP as the body responsible implementing the pilkada. Thirty percent say they do not know, 29% name the KPUD, and 23% name the KPU. The percentage correctly identifying KIP goes up with education. Correct identification also goes up with access to media sources. 10% of those with access to no media sources or to just one media source correctly name KIP, compared with 23% with two or three media sources, and 40% with access to four or more media sources.
- The lack of identification of KIP being responsible for implementing the pilkada stems from the fact that few residents of Aceh have heard about it. Just 9% say they have heard a lot of things about KIP and 6% say they heard some things about it. Twenty-eight percent say they have heard very few things about KIP, and a majority (57%) says they have heard nothing about KIP. Among those who have heard at least a little about the KIP, the vast majority (81%) say they are satisfied with the work KIP is doing, while 12% say they are dissatisfied.
- Knowledge of basic electoral procedures was also gauged by asking respondents whether a series of statements on the election process were correct or incorrect. On a positive note, 93% are aware that one has to be registered to vote in the pilkada and 88% are aware that a voter must have a valid ID in order to vote in the election. A majority (56%) is also aware that the law that will govern the election is based on the Law on Governing Aceh (LOGA), although 34% say don't know whether this is correct or not. On the other hand, most respondents (71%) are under the incorrect assumption that voting for Governor and for the Bupati/Walikota will take place on separate days. There is mixed awareness that in order for a candidate to win in the first round, they must be the leading vote-getter with a minimum of 25% of the vote. Thirty-one percent say that a candidate with the most votes, even if he/she does not get 25% of the vote, would be the winner of an election. Thirty-five percent say that this is incorrect and 34% say they don't know whether this is correct or incorrect.
- With regard to identification used for registration, 77% among those who say they are registered also say that they used their Merah Putih KTP for registration, compared to only 3% who say they used their national KTP. Eighteen percent used their family card. All respondents to the survey were also asked what type of identification they currently have. Ninety-one percent mentioned the Merah Putih KTP, 59% have a family card, 9% the national KTP, and 8% a driver's license. This data points to the Merah Putih KTP and the family card as likely to be the two most widely-used forms of identification on election-day.
- The majority of residents of Aceh (60%) believe that the upcoming pilkada will be completely or mostly fair and honest. Seven percent do not believe it will be fair and honest and 32% don't know

whether the election will be fair and honest. A majority of residents of eastern, northern, central, and southern parts of Aceh think the election will be fair and honest with very few saying it will not be fair and honest. On another question on the survey, 93% of respondents strongly or somewhat agree that the official results of the pilkada will accurately reflect the vote of the Acehnese people. Respondents to the survey were also given a list of organizations active in the election process and asked to name the organization that would most ensure the integrity of the election process. Twenty-six percent named the KPUD, 16% PANWAS, 14% KIP, 14% international observers, 7% political parties, and 4% domestic observers.

- Residents of Aceh are also optimistic about the peace process and the impact that the pilkada will have on the peace process. Eighty-four percent are aware of MOU that was signed between the government of Indonesia and GAM, and of those aware of the MOU, 95% are satisfied with the implementation of the MOU. When all respondents are asked whether they are confident that the current peace in Aceh will be maintained over the next year, 65% say they are very or somewhat confident that the peace will be maintained while a little over a quarter (28%) are not confident that the peace will be maintained. Ninety-three percent of residents of Aceh agree that the pilkada will aid in the establishment of peace in Aceh.
- Even with the confidence in the maintenance of the peace and the election's role in it, a majority of residents of Aceh say that they are very or somewhat concerned about violence during the pilkada (55%). Thirty-five percent say that they are not concerned about violence during the pilkada. Residents of central region districts (63%) and eastern districts (57%) are more likely to be concerned about violence than those in the northern districts (45%). When asked what groups are likely to instigate the violence, 65% cite supporters of political parties and independent candidates, 27% cite anti-separatist groups, 14% security forces, and 9% former GAM fighters. These responses point to greater fears about violence between partisan groupings rather than the violence that characterized Aceh for the past decades. With this in mind, respondents were asked whether their likelihood of voting for a party or candidate would increase if that party or candidate signed a pledge not to engage in violence during the election process. A majority (52%) says that the likelihood of voting for the party or candidate would increase, while 28% say it would not change and 17% do not provide a reply.
- The vast majority of the residents of Aceh (72%) have not yet made a decision to vote for a particular party or candidate. Twenty-seven percent say that they have made a decision. Those interested in politics, and thus more informed about political affairs, are more likely to have made a decision than those not interested in politics (42% versus 22%). Respondents to the survey were also asked for their primary reasons for voting for a particular candidate. Forty-one percent are looking for a leader who is honest and in a related response, free from corruption (7%). Twenty percent cite fairness as a characteristic for a candidate they would support, and 10% cite his religious outlook. Sixteen percent would like someone who cares for common people and 11% would like a candidate who can address the economic issues facing Aceh. More than twenty percent also cite personality traits such as likable, wise, and one with empathy.
- When respondents are asked for one political group that best represents the aspirations of the people of Aceh, they name many different political parties. Twenty-two percent name the PKS, 18% PPP, 17% PAN, 12% Golkar, 7% PD, and 2% PDIP. The responses were almost identical when respondents were asked to name the party that best represents their views and aspirations: 23% PKS, 19% PPP, 18% PAN, 12% Golkar, 8% PD, and 2% PDIP. Seven percent say that none of the parties represent their aspirations and 9% don't know.
- Residents of Aceh are also generally likely to have more positive rather than negative impressions of the major parties operating in Aceh. Eighty percent have a positive impression of PPP compared to 9% who have a negative impression. The data for other parties is as follows: PKS (74% positive, 12% negative), PAN (73%, 12%), PD (62%, 19%), Golkar (59%, 28%), PBR (52%, 22%), and PDI-P (47%, 32%). Respondents to the survey were also informed that GAM would not run any official

candidates in the pilkada, but GAM members may run as independents. When asked whether an independent or party-affiliated candidate associated with GAM would make it more or less likely for them to support that candidate or party, 36% say that it would make them more likely to support the party or candidate, 40% say it would have no impact on their vote, and 7% say that it would decrease their likelihood of voting for that party or candidate.

- Economic conditions are the primary focus of the residents of the province when they are asked about the biggest problems facing both Aceh and their communities. With regard to Aceh, the issues most prominently cited as the biggest problems facing the province are economic difficulties (87%), lack of jobs (68%), high prices of goods (29%), lack of good education facilities (19%), lack of infrastructure (16%), and a lack of good health facilities (10%). These issues are also cited with similar frequency with regard to the biggest problem facing local communities. The lack of education and health facilities as well as the general lack of infrastructure is more likely to be mentioned by rural residents than urban residents.
- When asked to rate the current condition of various aspects of life in Aceh, a majority has positive views on the security situation in their communities as well as the political freedoms available to them, but a majority has negative evaluations of the economic situation. Seventy-nine percent rate the economic conditions as bad or very bad, compared to 20% who rate them as good or very good. Similarly, 82% rate the availability of jobs as being bad while 17% rate it as good. On the security situation in their communities, 96% rate it as good and only 3% rate it as bad. Eighty-four percent their ability to freely express their thoughts on politics as good, and 90% have a similar assessment of their ability to move around freely.
- Since the signing of the MOU between the Indonesian government and GAM, responsibility for ensuring the provisions of the MOU has fallen on the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM). Sixty-three percent of the residents of Aceh are aware of the AMM, with the highest awareness in northern districts (72%) and the lowest awareness in the southern districts (53%). Among those who are aware of the AMM, almost all (97%) are satisfied with its role in ensuring the provisions of the MOU. -