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POLICY BRIEF

RIISING TIDE OF COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE INCIDENTS: INSIGHTS FROM THE JANUARY-JUNE 2023 DATA OF THE CVEW DATASET



Lina Alexandra, Farhan Julianto, and Alif Satria



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A Policy Brief by CSIS Indonesia

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Introduction

Since the end of the New Order regime, the trends of collective violence in Indonesia have been shifting into a more complex trajectory within the society. Most notably, the proliferation of small-scale group violence has become a prevalent and concerning phenomenon in Indonesia. Localized conflict, characterized by its multifaceted causes, has emerged as a consequence of a multitude of factors, including unemployment, inequality, change in sources of income, clustering of ethnic groups, and religious issues.¹ This has caused small-scale, collective violence to happen on a widespread scale -- all of which could potentially escalate into mass atrocity crimes.² The Collective Violence Early Warning (CVEW) was developed by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Indonesia to monitor this trends of collective violence in Indonesia.³ To accurately capture this trend,⁴ the CVEW Dataset was built using 73 verified provincial-level news sources from 34 provinces.⁵

This research report presents an updated account of collective violence incident patterns between January and June 2023. This report analyzes the general trends of these incidents through a thorough examination of its frequency, lethality, geographic concentration, underlying causes, and interventions taken. Additionally, the report also provided three specific analyses, namely on the collective violence incidents in Papua, conflicts between foreign and local workers in Morowali, and the escalating social tensions in Maluku.

¹ Patrick Barron, Kai Kaiser, and Menno Pradhan, "Local Conflict in Indonesia: Measuring Incidence and Identifying Patterns," *World Bank Research Report* (2004); Gerry van Klinken, *Minorities, Modernity, and the Emerging Nation: Christians in Indonesia, A Biographical Approach*, Leiden: KITLV Press (2003).

² Patrick Barron, Sana Jaffrey, and Ashutosh Varney, "How Large Conflicts Subside: Evidence from Indonesia," *Indonesian Development Paper*, No. 18 (2014); Cate Buchanan (Ed), *Conflict Management in Indonesia - An Analysis of the Conflicts in Maluku, Papua, and Poso*, Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (2011).

³ The CVEW Dataset Codebook and complete Dataset could be accessed through <http://violence.csis.or.id/>

⁴ Ashutosh Varney, "Analyzing Collective Violence in Indonesia: An Overview," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 8 (2008)

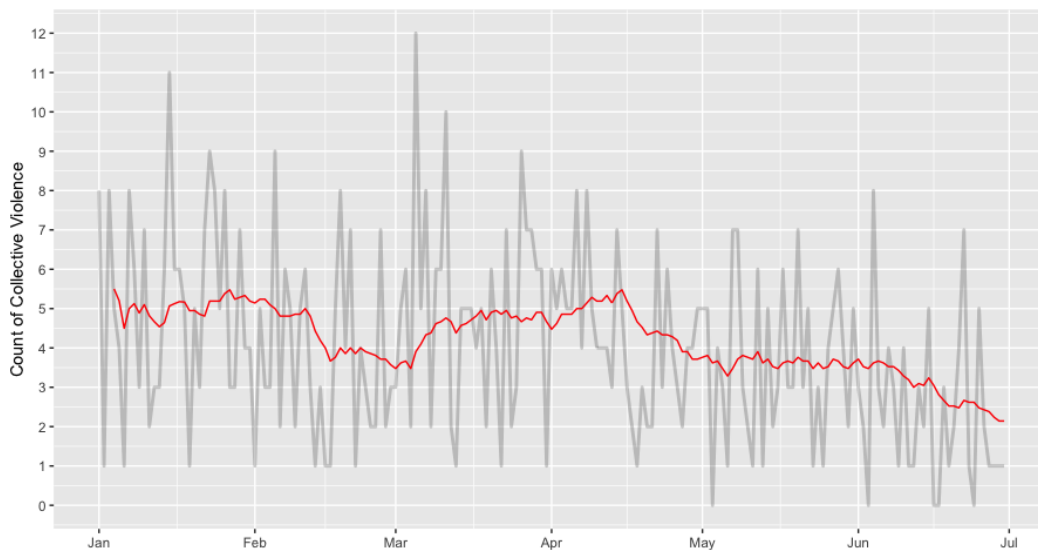
⁵ Despite the establishment of four new provinces in Papua, the Dataset continues to rely on the provinces before their establishment due to the lack of verified news sources in the newly established provinces. Collective violence incidents from the new provinces – South Papua, Central Papua, Papua Mountains, and Southwest Papua – were recorded by their previous provinces before the establishment.

General Findings: Patterns of Collective Violence between January – June 2023

The Frequency and Underlying Issues of Collective Violence

Compared to the previous first semester of 2022, the total number of collective violence incidents exhibited a significant increase in frequency.⁷ From January to June 2023, the Collective Violence Early Warning (CVEW) Dataset⁸ recorded 731 incidents in Indonesia, averaging 122 incidents per month and 4 incidents per day. This represents a rise of 48% from 2022 and 52% from 2021, indicating a steady upward trend of collective violence in the last two years.

Graph 1. Frequency of Collective Violence Incidents, January – June 2023



Source: Centre for Strategic and International Studies (2023)

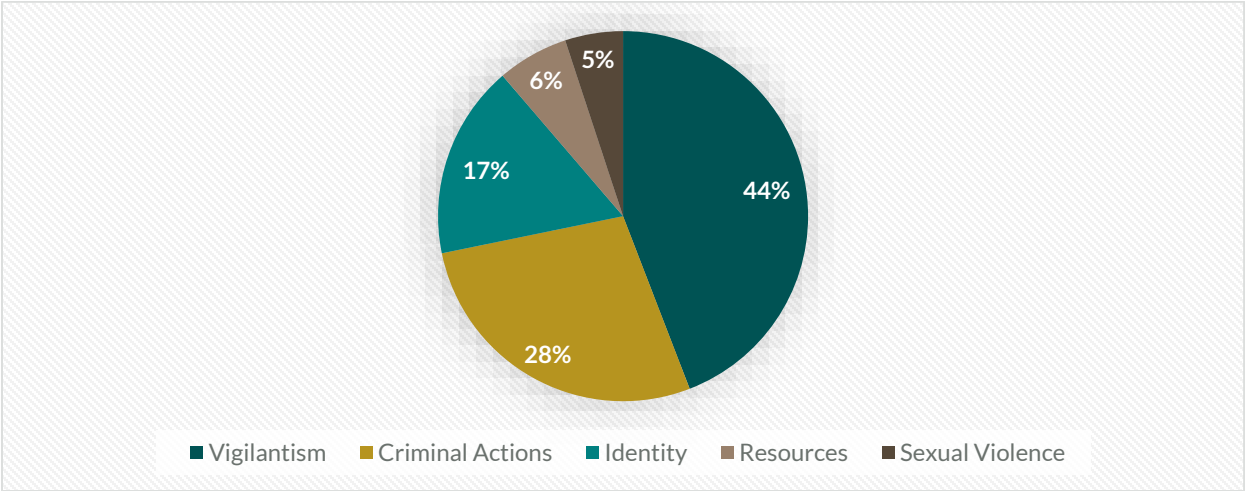
The highest frequency of collective violence incidents occurred on January 2023, with 160 reported cases. Most (38%) of these incidents in January occurred in four provinces. First is East Java with 25 incidents. Most of this (52%) were acts of vigilantism by civilians against criminals or other civilians, followed by conflicts involving teenagers and youth organizations, including

⁷ Lina Alexandra and Alif Satria, "Indonesia's Collective Violence Trends in 2022: Less Common, More Lethal," CSIS (2023). Could be accessed through https://violence.csis.or.id/static/Policy_Brief_CVEW_English.pdf

⁸ The CVEW Dataset is a platform to comprehensively monitor collective violence and conflict trends in Indonesia. It is developed by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) on 2021. The data were collected from provincial and national level selected online news sources. For more info: <http://violence.csis.or.id/>

Perguruan Silat martial arts school (25%). The second province is Papua with 13 incidents, most of which (53%) being separatist violence involving the The West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB). The third province is South Sulawesi with 13 incidents. While most of the cases were vigilantism and criminal cases, there is also a series of conflicts that involve university students in Palopo. Lastly, is DKI Jakarta with 10 incidents. Collective violence incidents in DKI Jakarta were mostly (50%) acts of violent crime.

Graph 2. Underlying Issues of Collective Violence Incidents in Indonesia (January-June 2023)



Source: Centre for Strategic and International Studies (2023)

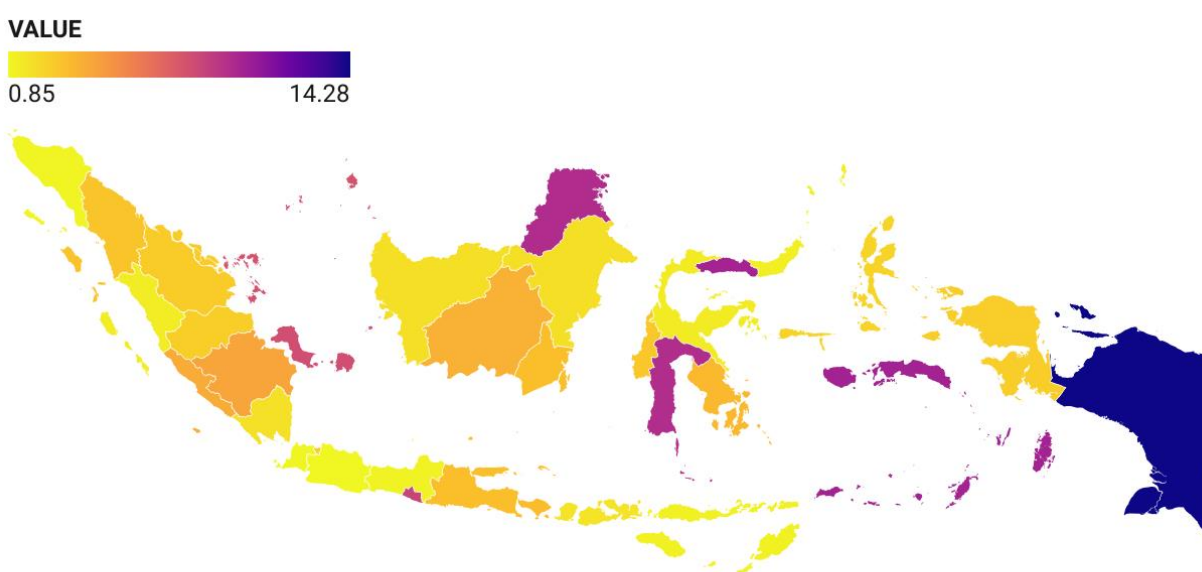
The Geographic Concentrations of Collective Violence

In this period, as in the first semester of the previous two years, East Java remained the province with the highest number of collective violence incidents with 128 incidents. That said, in terms of violence intensity,⁹ Papua remains the highest-ranking province -- averaging 14.3 incidents per million population, significantly surpassing the national average of 2.62 incidents per million population. Following Papua in terms of violence intensity are other Eastern Indonesia provinces, namely Maluku and Gorontalo, which reported 10.1 and 10.06 incidents per million population, respectively.

⁹ Number of cases per million population

It is important to highlight that while Maluku and Papua has consistently become the most intense provinces with collective violence incidents since 2022, the first half of 2023 has put Gorontalo to be among the top three provinces. Gorontalo's violence intensity of 10.06 incidents per million population this semester is a sharp increase the province's violence intensity of last year -- which is only 5.97 incidents per million population. It is also important to note that most incidents in Gorontalo this year is concentrated only among two regions: Gorontalo City and Gorontalo Regency.

Figure 1. Intensity of Collective Violence Incidents in Indonesia by Province, January – June 2023



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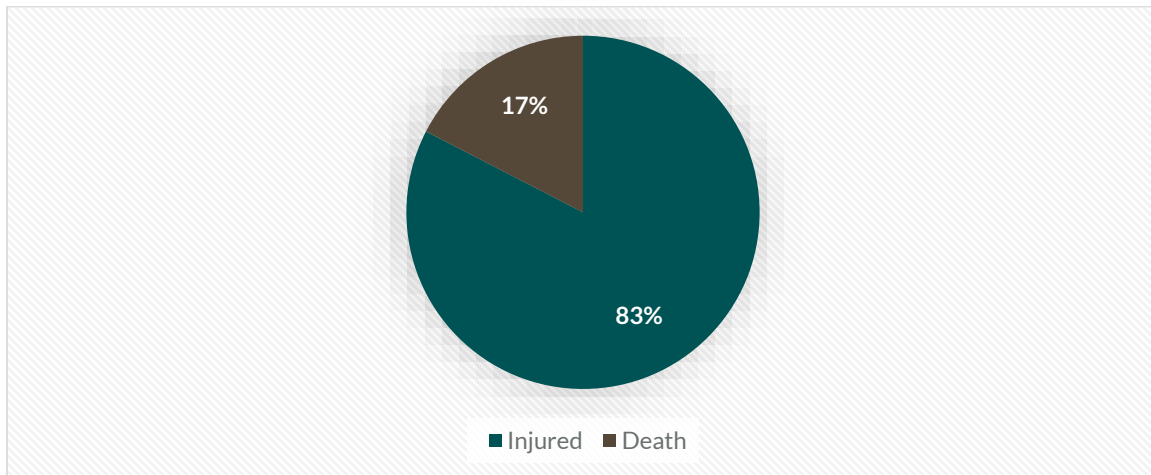
Map: Farhan Julianto, Research Assistant, CSIS. Source: Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

Casualties of Collective Violence Incidents

The rise of collective violence incidents led to an increase in casualties, especially the death toll. From January to June 2023, a total of 895 people became the casualties of collective violence incidents, with 156 fatalities and 739 injured. On average, each incident resulted in 1.2 casualties. Compared to the previous year, the fatalities increased by 41% while the number of injured victims decreased by 45%, indicating a higher lethality rate in this year's incidents. This finding reiterates findings from last year's CVEW Dataset in which collective violence incidents in Indonesia are

becoming more lethal across the years.¹⁰ Meanwhile, the case of widespread infrastructure damage occurred in Morowali, South Sulawesi, causing at least 100 workers' dormitories to be burned, worth attention despite the small number of casualties reported.

Graph 2. Casualties of Collective Violence Incidents (January – June 2023)



Source: Centre for Strategic and International Studies (2023)

In terms of casualties, incidents in Papua still rank the highest. According to the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM), the riot in Sinakma, Wamena, Papua which involved an open clash between police officers and local communities, involving the use of melee weapons, firearms, and tear gas¹¹ was reported to cause 11 deaths, with 8 Papuans and 2 immigrants among the victims.¹² Additionally, 58 people were reported injured during the riot. Another incident worth noting was the clashes between Bandar Ely complex and Yarler complex in Maluku. This incident caused 32 injured civilians from both sides, primarily due to the use of arrows and air rifles.

¹⁰ Lethality in 2022 were mostly dominated by victims of the Kanjuruhan Incident in Malang. While this year's lethality are more distributed among collective violence incidents. For more info: Lina Alexandra and Alif Satria, "Indonesia's Collective Violence Trends in 2022: Less Common, More Lethal," *CSIS Indonesia Policy Brief* (2023)

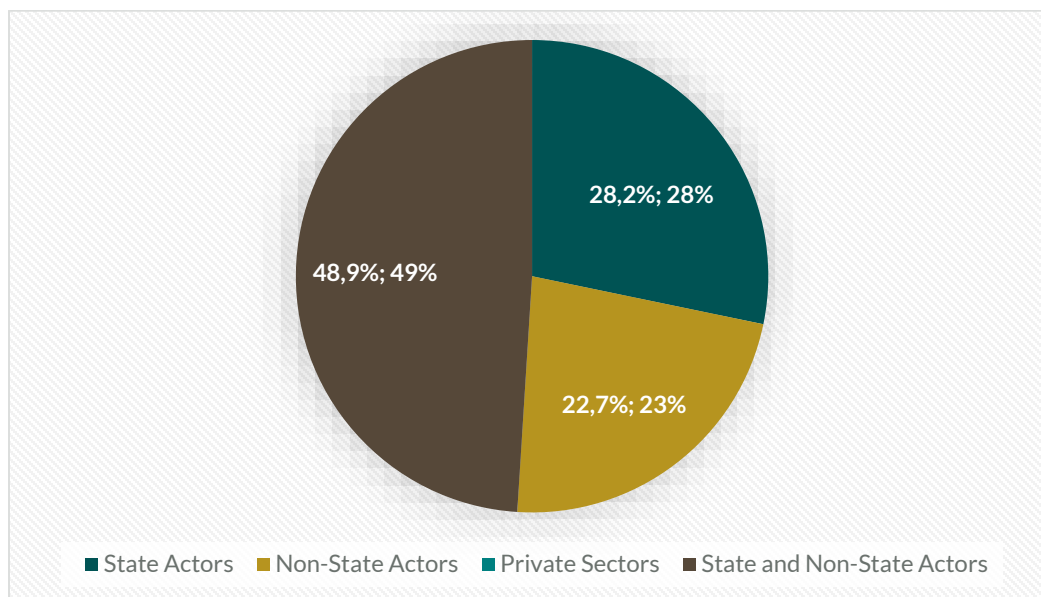
¹¹ Wilda Hayatun Nufus, "Komnas HAM: Ada Pelanggaran HAM di Kasus Kerusuhan Maut di Wamena," *Detik*, 6 April 2023, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-6659736/komnas-ham-ada-pelanggaran-ham-di-kasus-kerusuhan-maut-di-wamena> (4 August)

¹² Fabio Maria Lopes Costa, "Investigasi Kerusuhan Wamena, Sejumlah Korban dan Aparat Keamanan Mulai Diperiksa," *Kompas*, 28 Februari 2023, <https://www.kompas.id/baca/nusantara/2023/02/28/investigasi-kerusuhan-wamena-sejumlah-korban-dan-aparat-keamanan-mulai-diperiksa> (4 August 2023)

Intervention

In regards to intervention, defined as “attempts by third-party actors to deescalate or halt ongoing violence and protect the victims,” the CVEW Dataset has documented 153 interventions across all collective violence incidents in the first semester of 2023. This results in an intervention rate of 20.9%, which is a concerning decline from last year’s figure which records an intervention rate of 23.8%. Moreover, out of total interventions in the first half of 2023, only 40.5% of interventions were successful, a sharp decrease from last year’s 56.1% success rate. Similar to 2022, East Java still continues to be the region with the highest number of intervention success rate with 31% out of 45 interventions. Conversely, Maluku had the lowest intervention success rate at 18% out of 13 interventions.

Graph 3. Intervention Success Rate by Typology of Third-Party Actors (January-June 2023)



Source: Centre for Strategic and International Studies (2023)

In terms of intervening actors, this semester’s findings are similar to the CVEW Dataset from July to December 2022, where state actor interventions are the most commonly found and reported. Throughout the first semester of 2023, state actors conducted over 73.8% of all interventions, whereas non-state actors only conducted 18.9% of interventions. Contrastingly from last year, however, the success rates of state actor intervention in the first semester of 2023 is higher than the success rate of interventions by non-state actors. Whereas interventions by non-state actors

have a 31% success rate, interventions by state-actors have a 42.4% success rate. Nonetheless, similar to last year, interventions involving state and non-state actors continued to be the most effective in de-escalating violence (62.5%).

Specific Findings

Violence in Papua: Separatist Actions and Disinformation-Fueled Vigilantism

Throughout the first semester of 2023, collective violence incidents in Papua are primarily dominated by separatist activities. Notably, out of 63 violent incidents in Papua that occurred between January and June 2023, 49.2% of it was separatist in nature. During this timespan, the TPNPB predominantly targeted the military, police, and government officials -- although more than 30% of casualties were civilians. The regions with the most significant portion of civilian casualties from separatist actions were Puncak Regency, Pegunungan Bintang Regency, and Yahukimo Regency.

A noteworthy incident outside of separatist violence is the civil riot in Sinakma, Wamena, which occurred in February. The riot began when a group of indigenous Papuan detained a grocery seller's car owned by immigrants from outside Papua on charges of child kidnapping. While police were securing the alleged perpetrator, a group of local Papuans attack the law enforcement officers and burnt several facilities in Sinakma. The situation quickly escalated into an uncontrollable riot, prompting the use of firearms and smoke bombs by the police and military.¹³ As a result of the event, a total of 10 people died, 32 people were injured, and over 13 buildings were destroyed.

Several important aspects merit attention from this incident. Firstly, the riot was fueled by misinformation where a grocery seller – who was an immigrant in Papua – was accused with kidnapping a local's child,¹⁴ underscoring the risk of fake news giving rise to collective violence incidents and potential atrocity crimes. Secondly, it highlighted the rising tension between indigenous Papuans and immigrants, driven by negative sentiments towards the latter group

¹³ Farid Assifa, "Korban Tewas Kerusuhan Wamena 10 Orang, Berikut Kejadiannya," *Kompas*, 25 February 2023, <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2023/02/25/091625878/korban-tewas-kerusuhan-wamena-10-orang-berikut-kronologi-kejadiannya?page=all> (4 August 2023)

¹⁴ Fabio Maria Lopes Costa, "Hoaks Penculikan Anak Picu Kerusuhan di Wamena, 9 Warga Tewas," *Kompas*, 23 February 2023, <https://www.kompas.id/baca/nusantara/2023/02/23/hoaks-penculikan-anak-picu-kerusuhan-di-wamena-9-warga-tewas> (4 August 2023)

perceived as threats to economic opportunities for the former.¹⁵ This incident itself is the second time that a riot in Wamena was caused by a conflict between indigenous Papuans and local immigrants. Previously, in 2019, a riot was caused by racist remarks from an immigrant teacher to a Papuan child.¹⁶ Furthermore, the tension between Papuans and immigrants was also exacerbated through the separatism movement, where the separatist group directly threatened to shoot non-Papuans in conflict areas.¹⁷ Thirdly, it also reminds us of the risk of excessive force by the police and military, especially on how it could exacerbate tensions between law enforcement officers and the Papuan community, hindering the overall peacebuilding efforts in Papua.

Morowali Deadly Riot and Anti-Chinese Workers' Sentiments in Indonesia

Another case that requires further attention is the Morowali Riot, which exemplifies the potential for socio-economic sentiments to escalate into uncontrollable conflict. The incident itself was triggered by perceived injustice among local workers following the deaths of two nickel workers due to safety breaches at the Gunbuster Nickel Industry (PT. GNI) in 2022. Concerns arose regarding the implementation of health and safety standards and difficulties in negotiating annual minimum wages with the industry. A series of strikes occurred until an agreement was struck.¹⁸

The actual riot occurred after the conclusion of the strike and was instigated by a viral disinformation video shared in WhatsApp groups showing a significant influx of Chinese workers and a Chinese worker involved in a violent incident with a local worker.¹⁹ This ignited anger among local workers toward the Chinese workers who had previously been employed in the nickel industry. Consequently, clashes between Chinese and local workers resulted in the loss of life on both sides.²⁰

¹⁵ Wilda Hayatun Nufus, "Komnas HAM Sebut Kerusuhan Wamena Bukan Cuma soal Hoax Penculikan Anak," *Detik*, 6 April 2023, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-6659901/komnas-ham-sebut-kerusuhan-wamena-bukan-cuma-soal-hoax-penculikan-anak> (4 August 2023)

¹⁶ "Papua: Ketegangan pendatang dan penduduk asli terlihat jelas, polisi tuding perusuh demo memanfaatkan momen siding PBB" *BBC News Indonesia*, 24 September 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-49808449> (6 September 2023)

¹⁷ Rafan Arif Dwinanto, "KKB Papua Makin Berani, Ancam Serang Warga Yahukimo, TNI Sebut Adu Domba," *Tribun Kaltim*, 10 March 2023, <https://kaltim.tribunnews.com/2023/03/10/kkb-papua-makin-berani-ancam-serang-warga-pendatang-yahukimo-tni-sebut-adu-domba> (6 September 2023)

¹⁸ Febryan A, "Ini Detail Kronologi Kerusuhan Morowali versi Partai Buruh," *Republika*, 16 January 2023, <https://news.republika.co.id/berita/rokqig436/ini-detail-kronologi-kerusuhan-morowali-versi-partai-buruh> (4 August 2023)

¹⁹ Ardito Ramadhan, "Kapolri: Kerusuhan di PT GNI Berawal dari Ajakan Mogok Kerja Ditambah Hoaks TKA Pukul TKI," *Kompas*, 16 January 2023, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2023/01/16/19521241/kapolri-kerusuhan-di-pt-gni-berawal-dari-ajakan-mogok-kerja-ditambah-hoaks> (6 September 2023)

²⁰ Febryan A, *Republika*

A total of two deaths and two casualties were subsequently reported, along with the destruction of over 107 buildings and infrastructures.

Increasing Social Tensions in Maluku

Between January and June 2023, a total of 19 collective violence deadly incidents occurred in Maluku, specifically in Ambon City and Central Maluku Regency. Among these incidences, three notable inter-community incidents are worth of serious attention. These include the conflict between the Banda Ely Complex and Yarler Complex on late January that caused 32 casualties, the conflict between Negeri Wakal Village and Negeri Hitu Village on 26 February that caused 4 injuries, and the conflict between Kampung Baru Village and Kampung Lama Village on 27 February that caused two casualties.

Table 1. Notable Communal Conflict in Maluku (January – June 2023)

Time	Actors	Trigger	Casualties
28 January – 2 February 2023	Banda Ely Complex v Yarler Complex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drunk teenagers were punched by a restaurant owner for not paying for their food An unknown attacker shot a teenager with an arrow 	32 injured
26 February 2023	Negeri Wakal Village v Negeri Hitu Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sound of a chainsaw machine in the forest of Hitu territory Some Wakal villagers conducted a 'provocative action' by swaying a clove branch 	4 injured
27 February 2023	Kampung Baru Village v Kampung Lama Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A teenager from Kampung Baru village was attacked by unknown attacker using arrow 	1 dead, 1 injured

Source: Centre for Strategic and International Studies (2023)

These conflicts were particularly important to note as they were commonly triggered by seemingly trivial causes rooted from past rivalries. Notably, unresolved past conflicts played a significant role in these incidents. For instance, tensions between Negeri Wakal and Negeri Hitu can be traced back

further into the year 2000, a period marked with high tensions and riots in Maluku.²¹ Another example, the conflict between Kampung Baru and Kampung Lama previously occurred at the end of 2022.²² Although the police aimed to mediate peace between conflicting parties, the recurrence of inter-community conflicts indicates that peacebuilding efforts have not been successful in fostering sustainable peace in the province.

Conclusion

Approaching to the general election in February 2024, there is an urgency to observe and respond to these changing trends of collective violence in different parts in Indonesia. Several lessons from the most recent trends are important to pay attention to.

1. **Collective violence in Indonesia, even if they are largely small-scale in nature, should not be ignored nor deprioritized as a policy concern.**

As shown by the CVEW Dataset, collective violence in Indonesia throughout the first semester of 2023 has had a concerning increase in not only frequency, but also lethality. Notably, the number of collective violence in Indonesia this year has increased by 48% if compared to the frequency of violence between January-June 2022, and 52% if compared to the frequency of violence between January-June 2021.

2. **Post-conflict areas in Indonesia such as Papua and Maluku still remains at risk to high intensity of collective violence.**

Notably, data from CVEW Dataset showed that for the third year in a row, these two provinces have consistently ranked in the top three for province with the highest intensity of violence. Throughout the first semester of 2023 alone, Papua and Maluku had an average of 14.3 and 10.1 incidents per million population, respectively -- which are 5.5 and 4 times the national average.

²¹ Kusuma SP, "Konflik di Ambon: Penafsiran Sosiologis atas Pengamatan Konflik Januari-Mei 1999," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial & Ilmu Politik*, Vol. 3, No.3 (2000)

²² Daniel Leonard, "Warga Tulehu Sepakat Bantu Polresta Ambon Ungkap Pelaku Bentrokan," *Antara Maluku*, 2 November 2022, <https://ambon.antaranews.com/berita/142149/warga-tulehu-sepakat-bantu-polresta-ambon-ungkap-pelaku-bentrokan> (4 August 2023)

3. More focus needs to be given to increase the number and success rate of third-party interventions to collective violence.

CVEW Dataset's data from the first semester of 2023 showcases an alarming trend of the decreasing frequency and success rate of violence intervention in Indonesia. Whereas in 2021 and 2022 around 23% of violence were intervened, between January-June 2023, only 21% of violence were intervened. Additionally, while the success rate of interventions in 2021 and 2022 were 74% and 56% respectively, the success rate of interventions in 2023 was only 40.5%.

4. Particular measures needs to be made to further eradicate mis/disinformation and educate society on how to identify them.

As noted above, the CVEW Dataset has seen an increasing trend where misinformation and disinformation has served as triggers to open clashes within society. The Morowali Riot that caused the destruction of over 100 building infrastructures and the Wamena Riot that caused over 42 casualties, for example, were sparked both sparked by disinformation. Here, it is urgent for government to tackle this issue, especially to anticipate the escalation during the election period.

5. More vigilance and collaborative efforts between state and non-state actors need to be done to suppress the risk of violence as Indonesia nears its election year.

Indonesia's past experience have shown that an increase of violence often follows elections. With the upcoming 2024 election getting close, it is important for all elements to be more vigilant. Government should encourage and support initiatives from civil societies (CSO) who have delved into the conflict settlement within the respective areas for a long time. This includes local level initiatives by CSOs to deescalates specific episodes of conflict, and national-level initiatives like the CVEW Dataset that aims to monitor and assist stakeholders to be alert and deal with potential violence escalation risks.



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