CSIS INDONESIA
LEADING IN STRATEGIC THINKING

Policy Brief

THE COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE EARLY WARNING DATASET: A SNAPSHOT OF VIOLENCE AND INTERVENTION IN INDONESIA IN 2021

July 2022

Lina Alexandra, Fitriani, and Alif Satria

THE COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE EARLY WARNING DATASET: A SNAPSHOT OF VIOLENCE AND INTERVENTION IN INDONESIA IN 2021

CSIS INDONESIA
LEADING IN STRATEGIC THINKING

A Policy Brief by CSIS Indonesia

Lina Alexandra, Fitriani, and Alif Satria

The CSIS Policy Brief is a means by which members of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) research community can quickly disseminate their research findings and encourage exchanges of ideas.

The author(s) welcome comments on the present form of this Policy Brief. The views expressed here are those of the author(s) and are not intended to be attributed to CSIS Indonesia.

Key Takeaways

- Indonesia's small-scale violence can risk escalating into mass atrocities. A public violence monitoring tool is needed to inform, empower, and ensure accountability of state policies on violence.

- Collective violence in Indonesia is mostly small-scale, but their frequency has been increasing. Collective violence is almost twice as frequent at the end of 2021 compared to the beginning of 2021.

- While collective violence most often occurs in East Java, it is most intense and severe in Papua. Notably, the intensity of violence in Papua is four times larger than the national average.

- Interventions by state and non-state actors to stop collective violence often succeed, but they are rare. Only one in four incidents were intervened last year – – in the 2010s two in four were intervened.

Introduction

Compared to the period of 1960s and early 2000s that experienced various systematic state-to-civilian violence and other major episodes of communal and separatist violence, contemporary Indonesia is relatively peaceful.[1] However, while major atrocity crimes are relatively absent, Indonesia continues to face other forms of small-scale violence and violations of rights –– ranging from resource-based conflict in Kalimantan, vigilantism violence in Sumatra, and hate speech campaigns against vulnerable minorities such as Shi'as in Madura and Ahmadiyyas in West Java.[2] Recognizing that atrocity crimes do not happen overnight,[3] it is important to monitor and manage the risks that these small-scale violence and conflicts bring.

The Collective Violence Early Warning (CVEW) Dataset was developed by CSIS in 2021 to comprehensively monitor the trends of these collective violence and conflict. For that purpose, the CVEW Dataset records all reported collective violence incidents in Indonesia –– ranging from mob violence, separatism, to law enforcement violence.[4] After a brief description of the dataset and how it was developed, this policy brief provides quick and concise answers to important policy questions on the trends of collective violence in Indonesia. This includes questions such as: when and where do collective violence most often occur in Indonesia? Who are the actors that are most often involved in collective violence? How often are collective violence incidents intervened by third parties?

---

[1] Gerry van Klinken, *Communal Violence and Democratization in Indonesia: Small Town Wars*, (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2007), 31; Nancy Lee Peluso, "Violence, Decentralization, and Resource Access in Indonesia," *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice*, No. 19 (2007), 24-25; Patrick Barron, Sana Jaffrey, and Ashutosh Varshney, "When Large Conflicts Subside: The Ebbs and Flows of Violence in Post-Suharto Indonesia," *Journal of East Asian Studies,* No. 16 (2016), 191-192; Alex J. Bellamy, "The Other Asian Miracle? The Decline of Mass Atrocities in East Asia," *Global Change, Peace, and Security*, (2014), 2-5; Claire Q. Smith, "Indonesia: Two Similar Civil Wars; Two Different Endings," in *How Mass Atrocities End: Studies from Guatemala, Burundi, Indonesia, the Sudans, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Iraq*, ed., Bridget Conley-Zilkic, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 83.

[2] Patrick Barron, Sana Jaffrey, and Ashutosh Varshney, "How Large Conflicts Subside: Evidence from Indonesia," *Indonesian Development Paper*, No. 18 (2014), 11-12; PUSAD Paramadina, "Meninjau Kembali Peraturan Bersama Menteri 2006 dan Peran Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama: Temuan dari Pangkalan Data," *Laporan Riset*, (2020), 4; Tobias Basuki and Alif Satria, "Instrumen Hukum Penodaan Agama dan Peraturan Bersama Menteri: sebuah Pencegah atau Sumber Konflik?" *CSIS Analisis* 46, No. 1 (2017), 56-57.

[3] Riwanto Tirtosudarmo, *The Politics of Migration in Indonesia and Beyond,* (Singapura: Springer Nature Singapura, 2018), 42-43.

[4] The dataset defines collective violence as the intentional use of physical force or threat of physical force perpetrated either by or against a group of people. These include, as noted by Varshney, Tadjoeddin, and Panggabean's definition, group-on-group violence (e.g., ethnic conflicts), group-on-individual violence (e.g., vigilantism), individual-on-group violence (e.g., terrorism), group-on-state violence (e.g., separatism), and state-on-group violence (e.g., law enforcement violence to disperse demonstrations).[4] In cases where crimes are violent and involves a group of perpetrators, it is also recorded. This adopts the definition of collective violence by Ashutosh Varshney, Mohammad Zulfan Tadjoeddin, and Rizal Panggabean, "Creating Datasets in Information-Poor Environments: Patterns of Collective Violence in Indonesia, 1990–2003," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 8, No. 8 (2004), 363.

The Collective Violence Early Warning Dataset

Why is a new collective violence dataset necessary?

Having a reliable database that can provide an overview of ongoing trends of violence, including its frequency, geographic distributions, as well as rate of intervention, would serve as a useful collective violence monitoring tool. Findings from CSIS' 2020 Study on the Establishment of National Network for Atrocities Prevention notes that multiple state and non-state stakeholders commonly view that having a violence monitoring and measuring mechanism would be greatly beneficial to Indonesia's atrocity prevention initiatives.[5] Such database is crucial in providing stakeholders early warning notice of possible escalation, as well as to find possible risk mitigation avenues to conduct atrocities prevention. This database is especially crucial as Indonesia approaches 2024 when it will hold simultaneous local and national level election which, in the past, has become catalyst for violence.[6]

Unfortunately, Indonesia lacks such comprehensive monitoring tool when the National Violence Monitoring System (NVMS), built by the World Bank, Habibie Centre, and Republic of Korea stopped recording in 2014. While international datasets such as ACLED and the Political Instability Task Force Worldwide Atrocities Dataset do record violence in Indonesia, they are not sufficiently tailored to fully analyze Indonesia's experience –– they do not utilize local-level news sources, record important variables such as interventions, or incorporate knowledge of historical intricacies of certain conflicts (e.g., who are the vulnerable minorities). Additionally, while national databases such as The Habibie Center's DETEKSI or Wahid Foundation's Report of Freedom of Religion and Belief exist, they only record a specific form of collective violence and thus can only provide limited understanding on the risk of atrocity crimes.

How was the CVEW Dataset developed?

The dataset was developed in three stages. The first stage involved extensive research for selecting the newspapers which will become the dataset's main source of data and developing the dataset's codebook which will determine how information from the news sources will be coded. In the end, the dataset monitored over 75 provincial-level online newspapers and coded over 57 unique variables for every collective violence incident. The second stage involved training a dedicated coder team consisting of nine individuals and monitoring their data entry for the next 12 months. During this stage, biweekly review sessions were held to ensure consistent quality of data entry. The third stage involved a data cleaning and verification month to remove duplicates, standardize naming conventions, and verify unclear and/or conflicting information.

[5] CSIS Indonesia, "Towards a National Network for the Prevention of Social Conflict and Atrocity Crimes in Indonesia", *Spotlight on R2P,* APR2P, University of Queensland (2021).
[6] Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, "The Anti-Shi'a Movement in Indonesia," *IPAC Report*, No. 27 (2016), 16; KontraS Surabaya, "Laporan Investigasi dan Pemantauan Kasus Syi'ah Sampang," (2012), 7-8.

There are, notably several data collection limitations that needs to be mentioned. The first, of which, regards to the unstable access of some online local news source. Throughout the data recording period, the dataset had to change a total of eight news sources six provinces (Yogyakarta, Gorontalo, Papua, West Papua, South Sulawesi, and Banten) due to their immediate suspension of access and/or increased inconsistency in reporting. A second limitation that the data collection phase experienced was instances which collective violence incidents were reported in national-level media but was not reported in the provincial-level news sources that the team observed. During these instances, the team chose to record these incidents due to their significance, and moving forward, incorporated two national-level media to the news sources we monitored.

Why is the CVEW Database unique?

The CVEW database is unique in two ways. First, it incorporates variables derived from applicable risk factors outlined in the United Nations Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes as well as Indonesia's 2014 National Action Plan on Social Conflict Management. These include variables such as whether an actor is a vulnerable minority in Indonesia (a non-state collective that is a numerical minority and/or has been the target of discrimination or systematic violent campaigns), the name or affiliation of the involved actors, and whether an incident is reportedly connected to a previous incident. These variables were absent from other datasets (e.g., NVMS, ACLED) and are notably important to measure warning signs of possible atrocity crimes: the main groups that are increasingly targeted, specific actors' mobilizing capacity, and escalation of violence.

Second, the database was constructed using provincial-level online news sources. Online versions of newspapers were used not only for their ease of access, but also for their bigger content volume –– offline copies of newspapers are often accessible online in addition to other published articles that they do not incorporate in their offline papers. News sources were selected on several criteria, including the frequency and consistency of their publication, the geographic scope of their publication (sampled from their previous month's publications), and the factuality of their news (verified through the National Press Council's media list and interviews when necessary). In the instance that an online newspaper become suddenly inaccessible, it is replaced by another paper which undergoes the same selection criteria.

General Trends of Collective Violence in 2021

How often does collective violence occur? Where do they mostly occur?

Between January and December 2021, Indonesia experienced a total of 1,221 incidents of collective violence –– an average of 101 incidents per month, or 3.3 incidents per day. Concerningly, the frequency of these incidents was found to have steadily increased throughout the year. Whereas Indonesia experienced a total of 206 incidents in Q1 of 2021, in Q4 this number increased by 70% to a total of 370 incidents. While a steady rise of

collective violence was observable since the beginning of the year, it began to spike significantly in August due to a rise in vigilante violence and peaked in October with the increase of identity-based violence and violent crimes. It is important to note that these identity-based violence largely occurs between schools and villages (e.g., Desa Watobuku vs. Desa Lohayong), not religious or ethnic groups.

Geographically, incidents of collective violence in 2021 was most often observed in East Java –– which experienced 178 incidents. However, while collective violence incidents in 2021 most often occurs in East Java, it is most intense and severe in Papua. Notably, if we compare provinces based on the intensity of violence (the amount of violence per population), the highest-ranking province is Papua. Notably, Papua experienced 22.7 incidents per million population –– which is four times the national average. These incidents were comprised almost equally of vertical violence (56%), which largely consists of separatist violence, and horizontal violence (41%). Additionally, when compared from the severity of the violence (the number of resulting deaths and casualties), Papua is also the highest-ranking province. In 2021, collective violence in Papua resulted in a total of 176 casualties.

How big is the casualty of collective violence?

Following trends observed in the early 2010s, collective violence in Indonesia in 2021 is largely comprised of small-scale, mundane violence. In fact, most of these incidents are non-lethal. Notably, only one in six collective violence incidents result in a death. When incidents do have casualties, they result in an average of 1.15 casualties per incident. There are, however, several outliers where violence were relatively large-scale and resulted in mass casualties. In Yahukimo, Papua, for example, conflict between the Kimyal Tribe vs. Yali Tribe in October over the death of a Regent resulted in over 47 casualties. In Central Maluku, Maluku, violence between police and civilians in Tamilouw Village over the arrest of two suspected criminals led to a total of 25 casualties. In total, throughout 2021, collective violence has resulted in 294 deaths and 1,111 injuries.

Women and children comprise only a small percentage of the total number of casualties caused by collective violence. From the total casualties, only 11.4% of them are women and only 9.8% of them were children under 10. While most of these female and child casualties occurred in cases of vigilantism violence, the type of collective violence that has the highest percentage of female casualties is sexual violence. The CVEW Dataset records that over 87.5% of sexual violence victims were women and over 57.5% of them were children. It is vital to note, however, that this low percentage of female and child casualties are most likely caused by the under-reporting of gender and age identities in the news. Most articles on collective violence is not gender- and age-sensitive –– they rarely mention the victims' gender and age unless it was sexual violence.

What are the main causes and form of collective violence in Indonesia?

Most collective violence in Indonesia throughout 2021 is caused by vigilantism motives. The CVEW Dataset records that 40.7% of collective violence are caused by the need

to enact revenge over crime, insults, or disputes. Due to its high frequency, vigilantism has also resulted in the highest number of casualties. Notably, vigilantism accounts for over 45.2% (636 individuals) of all casualties in 2021. Another type of violence that has caused a relatively high number of casualties is, concerningly, law enforcement violence. Violence by law enforcements has resulted in a total of 115 casualties in 2021 –– or around 8.3% of all casualties. While this percentage seems small, it is important to note that with 115 casualties, violence by law enforcements is the second highest type of known violence in terms of casualty.

Most collective violence in Indonesia is done in the form of unarmed attacks. Data records that there was a total of 846 unarmed attacks throughout 2021 –– around 69.2% of all collective violence that year. This was followed by armed attacks which were seen in 186 incidents (15.2% of all collective violence), then infrastructure attacks/closures which were seen in 143 incidents (11.7% of all collective violence). Due to its common occurrence, understandably, unarmed attacks are the form of violence with the highest casualty rate –– resulting in over 1027 deaths and injured. However, if measured by each form of violence's lethality (number of casualties caused per incident), the most dangerous form of violence is bombings which, throughout 2021, results in an average of 4.4 casualties per incident.

Who were the actors involved in collective violence incidents?

Based on its affiliation category, the most common actors to participate in collective violence throughout 2021 are non-state actors. Overall, non-state actors have participated –– either as victims or perpetrators –– in 97.4% of all collective violence. State actors were involved in over 278 collective violence incidents (22.7%) and private company actors participated in only 84 collective violence incidents (6.8%). From all these recorded actors, there was a total of 102 groups of vulnerable minorities which were involved in over 85 collective violence incidents. Out of these, most of them were ethnic minorities such as ethnic Papuans and traditional community groups (e.g., Ratu Kesultanan Kadariah Pontianak, Suku Anak Dalam, Dewan Adat Dayak Satui). In total, there were 77 ethnic minorities group that were involved in collective violence in Indonesia.

Based on the identity of both parties in the incidents, the most common type of violence throughout 2021 is horizontal violence –– violence between non-state actors, including private companies. Overall, 74.5% (910 incidents) of collective violence in 2021 were horizontal conflicts. Comparatively, only 21% (257 incidents) of collective violence in Indonesia were vertical –– violence between non-state actors, including private companies, with government. Understandably, due to its high frequency, horizontal violence also accounts for the highest number of casualties –– over 1,049 casualties were caused by horizontal violence. That said, it is important to note that measured by the number of casualties per incident, vertical violence has a marginally higher lethality rate. Throughout 2021, vertical violence resulted in an average of 1.17 casualties per incident. For horizontal violence, this average is 1.15 casualties per incident.

Findings on Intervention to Collective Violence

How important is intervention in preventing escalation?

An important aspect to preventing atrocity crimes and/or mass violence is the state and community's capacity to intervene and deescalate conflict when it is still at a small scale. Studies by Posen and Fearon and Laitin both point to how a state's inability to exercise legitimate violence in specific regions can contribute to conflict onset –– either through evoking the security dilemma between ethnic groups which justifies preemptive violence or giving opportunities for rebel groups to mobilize and recruit members.[7] Tajima's study on Indonesia, complementing previous studies on state capacity, found that ethnic conflicts only occur when both state and communities lack robust mechanisms to restrain violence –– in areas where state presence is weak but community security measures are "robust", communal violence between groups rarely occurs.[8]

Consequently, the state and society's ability to prevent violence are important risk factors that various atrocity crimes tools incorporate to their analysis framework. The United Nation's 2014 Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes specifically mention the importance of state capacity in Risk Factor 3 (Weakness of State Structures) –– when states ability to address atrocity crimes are diminished due to a lack of preventive structures, populations are "left vulnerable to those who may take advantage of the limitations … or opt for violence to respond to [threats]."[9] The role of non-state actors is mentioned in Risk Factor 6 (Absence of Mitigating Factors) –– when societies lack empowerment processes and resources that directly or indirectly can protect vulnerable communities, escalation of violence to such groups can more easily occur.[10]

How much collective violence is intervened?

Based on the CVEW Dataset, third parties, including both state and non-state actors, intervened in over 288 incidents of collective violence throughout the 2021 –– which counts for 23.5% of all collective violence incidents during the year. This is notably quite a significant reduction if compared to the rate of intervention in the early 2010s. The study by Barron, Jaffrey, and Varshney on the findings of the NVMS Dataset found that while security forces were only able to intervene in 10% of all collective violence incidents during Indonesia's conflict period (1998-2005), from 2006 onwards this number steadily increased to around

[7] Barry Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 35, No. 1 (1993), 43-44; James Fearon and David Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *The American Political Science Review* 97, No. 1 (2003), 80.
[8] Yuhki Tajima, *The Institutional Origins of Communal Violence: Indonesia's Transition from Authoritarian Rule*, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 8-10.
[9] United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, *Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes*, (New York, NY: UNOSAPG, 2014), 12.
[10] United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, *Framework of Analysis*," 15.

50%. This increase in intervention rate played an important role in limiting further escalation of low-level conflict and preventing such violence from resulting in mass casualties.[11]

The rate of intervention, however, differs between provinces. On average, third parties intervened in around 8.4 incidents of collective violence per province in 2021. However, the deviation range from this average is quite large. The province with the highest number of interventions is East Java which experienced over 51 interventions throughout the year. The lowest provinces, on the other hand, are Gorontalo, Riau Islands, and South Sulawesi which experienced 0. If provinces were ranked based on the percentage of collective violence intervened, however, the highest-ranking province is in fact Maluku. Throughout 2021, third parties in Maluku successfully intervened around 58% of all incidents of collective violence (22 out of 38 incidents) in the province. This is then followed by West Sulawesi, South Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan, and North Sumatra.

Who intervenes in collective violence?

Across these provinces, the most common actor that was found to have intervened in collective violence incidents are state actors. Notably, state actors were present in over 234 interventions to collective violence –– around 81.2% of all interventions in 2021. These include the military, police units, to even public servants such as village or district-government apparatus. From these, the most common state actor to have intervened are police, more specifically sub-district police (Polres), which were present in 40% of all state interventions. Non-state actors were second, which recorded to have intervened in 47 incidents –– around 16.3% of all interventions. These include youth, civilians, and security guards. Average civilians were the most common intervening non-state actor, present in 79% of all non-state interventions.

While the nation-wide intervention rate of non-state actors is relatively low, it varies to a degree when analyzed on a provincial level. Notably, in some provinces non-state actors intervenes far more often than state actors. In North Kalimantan, for example, almost 75% of all its interventions were conducted by non-state actors. In North Maluku, this number is around 66.7% and in Central Kalimantan, it is 50%. Some conflict prone provinces, however, such as Papua, sees extremely low levels of non-state intervention. Notably, only 5.9% of third-party interventions in Papua involves non-state actors. This, however, is understandable as collective violence in Papua largely takes the form of separatism violence (54.5%) and involves the use of firearms (57.5%) –– the kind of violence that civilians are unequip to deescalate.

How successful are interventions?

While intervention to collective violence throughout 2021 is uncommon, it is important to note that when intervened, most collective violence incidents are then

[11] Patrick Barron, Sana Jaffrey and Ashutosh Varshney, "When Large Conflicts Subside: The Ebbs and Flows of Violence in Post-Suharto Indonesia," *Journal of East Asian Studies*, No. 16 (2016), 209.

successfully deescalated. Notably, the CVEW Dataset found that the success rate of third-party interventions is around 74.4%. Moreover, while state and non-state actors vary greatly in the frequency of their interventions, their individual success rates are relatively the same. Throughout 2021, state interventions to collective violence incidents have a success rate of 68.8%. For non-state interventions, this success rate is 63.8%. Most interestingly, when interventions are done collaboratively and involve both the state and non-state actors, it has a success rate of 100%. Although, unfortunately, there were only 7 cases where such collaboration occurred.

There are differences, however, in the successful intervention rate of various collective violence type. Throughout 2021, the type of collective violence that has the highest rate of successful intervention is identity-based violence. Out of the 58 identity-based violence that occurred, 19 (32.8%) of them were successfully deescalated. This is then followed by violence caused by governance issue (24%) and then vigilantism violence (21%). On the other hand, the type of violence that has the lowest percentage of successful intervention is separatism violence. Notably, only 1.8% of third parties intervention were successful in deescalating violence done for separatist causes. This is then followed by, concerningly, violence by law enforcements. Throughout 2021, only 4.8% of violence by law enforcements were successfully deescalated.

Policy Recommendations

Based on these findings, this policy brief forwards several recommendations:

1. State needs to make monitoring data on collective violence publicly available

Notably, collective violence incidents in Indonesia are on the rise and thus it is of public interest that transparent data is available to all. At least, data from police criminal records and Ministry of Home Affairs' social conflict data should be made accessible for credible research institutions. Additionally, having public data from Jakarta is important so non-state stakeholders can contrast and compare their data and hold state policies and actions on collective violence accountable.

2. Monitoring and evaluation of state capacity to prevent violence in Papua is urgent

Compared with other provinces, Papua has the highest intensity of violence per population –– four times higher than the national average. More importantly, Papua also has the highest number of casualties from collective violence in 2021. This is particularly concerning as Papua has one of the highest ratios of security forces per population compared to other provinces. Understanding that collective violence in Papua is comprised almost equally of both vertical and horizontal violence, this evaluation of state

capacity should be done both in the context of their efficacy in dealing with separatism as well as stopping conflict between communities.

3. Jakarta needs to empower local practices of violence interventions by state and non-state actors

Third party interventions to collective violence incidents are uncommon. Only one in four collective violence incidents are intervened. This is unfortunate understanding that when third parties intervene, they often succeed. More interestingly, this high success rate is true for both state and non-state actors. Nonetheless, it is also important to note that the CVEW Dataset defines intervention as the act to stop an ongoing violence, which differs from the prevention. Hence, more should also be done to identify and empower prevention initiatives before the violence happens –– as successful ones result in a lack of violence and therefore may not necessarily captured by the media.

4. A research agenda should be developed involving state and non-state actors to understand the why of collective violence

As of now, the CVEW can effectively provide descriptive trends of violence. However, there needs to be a deeper statistical analysis using CVEW data to understand why these patterns occur –– why is violence highest in Papua? Why the frequency of violence increased and spiked at certain months in the year? Adding qualitative research methodology may also provide better explanation of the root causes of conflicts and how to address them

5. Collaborative analysis updating collective violence trends using the CVEW database should be sustained

This way, users and stakeholders within state bodies can attain a periodic update on collective violence trends. This is key to design an effective early warning strategy and dealing with the root causes needed to prevent collective violence. Continuing analysis of this database is particularly important as Indonesia enters the campaign year of 2023 and the election year of 2024.

csis.or.id
csis@csis.or.id
@csisindonesia
CSIS Indonesia

Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS Indonesia)
Jl Tanah Abang III No 23-27
Gambir, Jakarta Pusat 10160
Indonesia