

Aceh is rich in resources - it's one of the world's main natural gas producers.	Before the tsunami struck, up to 40% of children in Aceh suffered from malnutrition or undernourishment.
In 1999, the eastern state of East Timor finally gained independence from the rest of Indonesia after decades of war that left a fifth of the population dead.	The culture of Aceh has developed differently from the rest of Indonesia. People practise a more conservative form of Islam, and their traditions go back for generations, long before Sumatra became part of Indonesia.
Until the tsunami, foreign journalists were not allowed in Aceh province unless they were given permission by the Indonesian government.	Exxon-Mobil contributed \$5 million to the tsunami relief effort.
Some scientists believe there is a link between some earthquakes and oil and gas drilling. Removal of oil or gas releases pressure and changes the dynamics of the earth's crust.	In May 2003, the Indonesian government sent 40,000 more troops to Aceh after peace talks collapsed.
ExxonMobil's natural gas operation in Aceh brings in \$1.2 billion a year for the Indonesian government.	ExxonMobil laid off 1,200 workers at its natural gas liquification plant after falling output from the Arun gas field. Thousands protested.
Mangrove forests that protect tropical coastlines have largely been removed in Aceh to make way for more housing, and development projects like prawn farms supported by the World Bank.	In 1999, up to a million people - a quarter of Aceh's population - joined a demonstration in the capital, Banda Aceh to demand a free vote on the province's independence.
During nearly 30 years of fighting between the Indonesian army and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), more than 14,000 people have died. Both sides have been accused of atrocities.	The world's biggest oil company, ExxonMobil (formerly Mobil) has been extracting natural gas from the Arun gasfield in northwest Aceh since the 1960s. It is estimated that the company has made \$40 billion from these operations.

Indonesia has an overseas debt of \$132 billion, and pays back \$13.7 billion each year to overseas banks. Most of this debt built up more than twenty years ago when the dictator, President Suharto, was in power.	Since the tsunami relief effort began, most overseas aid to Indonesia has been channelled through the government.
The USA has increased military aid and training of the Indonesian army as part of the 'war on terror'.	Aceh's independence movement, GAM is protesting against the exploitation of the province's resources, particularly natural gas and timber. They claim that less than 10% of revenues stay in Aceh.
Aceh's coral reefs were already severely damaged before the tsunami. Dynamite had been used by fishermen and to dredge new channels. Quarried and crushed coral was also a raw material for the building trade.	ExxonMobil hired members of Indonesia's military to protect its gas plant and facilities at Arun.
ExxonMobil was extracting one cubic mile of natural gas every year from the Arun gas field. The gas field lies very close to the epicentre of the earthquake that struck on December 26 2004.	The Indonesian army has US-made F-16 bombers, Twinpack helicopters and Hercules transport planes, but most of Indonesia's military equipment is imported from the UK.
11 Aceh villagers took ExxonMobil to court for human rights abuses. They accused security forces working for the company of murder, torture, disappearances and sexual assaults in the area surrounding the Arun gas plant.	Aid workers can't visit some areas in Aceh because they are just too dangerous, and their movements are severely restricted by the Indonesian army. The Indonesian government has asked all overseas aid workers to leave the region by the end of March 2005.