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Human Security in the Law on Governing Aceh: Legal Design and Implementation Gaps in Addressing Roots of Structural Conflict

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Abstract

The Law on Governing Aceh (UUPA, Law No. 11/2006) was enacted after the 2005 Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to end three decades of conflict between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian government, its revision is now pending as the Special Autonomy Fund ends in 2027. This study asked to what extent the UUPA addresses the roots of Aceh's structural conflict through the seven dimensions of human security. Research on the Aceh conflict and on special autonomy has developed separately, and a Scopus mapping of 544 documents (2005-2026) found none combining human security and autonomy. Qualitative content analysis was applied to the UUPA, the MoU, and the Jinayat Qanun, coding each provision as substantive (concrete authority, resources, or enforceable obligations) or symbolic (normative recognition only), legal coverage was then compared with implementation evidence for 2006-2026. Provisions coded as substantive appeared in six of the seven dimensions, while food security was not explicitly regulated. Implementation was uneven, Aceh received about Rp108 trillion in Special Autonomy Fund since 2008, yet its poverty rate was 12.34% in March 2026, and by June 2026, 7,267 hectares of land had been distributed to ex-combatants and conflict victims, while 24,430 hectares were proposed but not realised. This study contributes an article-level human security assessment of a special autonomy law that links legal design to implementation evidence. In the dimensions assessed, the problem lies less in a legal vacuum than in implementation, so the UUPA revision should prioritize accountability mechanisms, not only fund percentages.

KEYWORDS

law on governing aceh; human security; special autonomy; implementation gap; structural conflict.

Introduction

The armed conflict between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the government of the Republic of Indonesia that lasted since 1976 was a prolonged separatist conflict in Southeast Asia, with an intensity of violence that lasted intermittently for nearly three decades until 2005 (Aspinall, 2014; Miller, 2008a). The signing of the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 15 August 2005 was an important turning point that ended the armed conflict, after previous peace efforts such as the Humanitarian Pause (USAID, 2000) and Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (UN Peacemaker, 2002) failed to survive (Lee, 2020). The Helsinki MoU paves the way for the granting of special autonomy status through Law Number 11 of 2006 concerning the Government of Aceh (the Law on Governing Aceh, UUPA), which Miller (2008a) described as a form of power-sharing that was expected to support the political stability and socio-economic development of Aceh after the conflict. Nevertheless, Lee (2020) notes that the peace approach taken tends to be illiberal, prioritizing the cessation of violence through elite accommodation rather than comprehensive structural transformation, thus leaving the question of the extent to which the UUPA really answers the root cause of the

three-decade uprising, or whether it is merely a short-term political compromise between the central elite and the local elite .

This question becomes even more urgent when it is associated with the realization of the Special Autonomy Fund, the main fiscal instrument of the UUPA which according to Sustikarini (2019) is scheduled to expire in 2027. A number of studies show that although Aceh has received a large amount of special autonomy funds (reaching Rp56.67 trillion during 2008-2018), its management has not been optimal in improving the welfare of the people of Aceh (Hasan & Sari, 2020). Safwadi (2020) even found that the special autonomy fund has not consistently accelerated the convergence of the Human Development Index (HDI) between districts/cities in Aceh. These findings indicate a gap between the design of the special autonomy policy and its real achievements on the ground, which invites deeper questions about what security and welfare dimensions are actually answered or ignored by the UUPA.

To answer the gap between policy design and real achievements in a more systematic manner, this study uses the human security framework (UNDP, 1994) to evaluate the extent to which the UUPA accommodates the human security dimensions of the Acehnese people, as an alternative to the state-centric security approach that has dominated the study of Aceh conflict resolution. The application of the human security framework in the context of Aceh is actually not new: (Alles, 2012) for example, used this approach to examine the depoliticization of natural disasters after the 2004 tsunami in Aceh, but its application is still limited to the context of disasters and has not been widely directed to systematically evaluate political autonomy policies such as the UUPA.

The study of the Aceh conflict has developed into an established study in the international academic literature. Aspinall (2007b) analyses how Acehnese natural resources and ethnic identity are constructed into grievances that trigger separatism, while in other studies Aspinall (2007a) traces the shift in the discourse of Aceh's struggle from Islamism to secular nationalism. Miller (2008) provides a comprehensive analysis of Jakarta's security and autonomy policy towards Aceh before and after the Helsinki MoU, while Schulze (2009) examines the role of the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) in the transition from conflict to peace in 2005-2006. Other studies examine the road to Helsinki and The building blocks of peace (Morfit, 2007; Thorburn, 2012), democratization and power-sharing (Hillman, 2012; Törnquist, 2011), territorial accommodation (Eaton & Shair-Rosenfield, 2024), and post-tsunami conflict transformation (Klitzsch, 2014; Waizenegger & Hyndman, 2010). These studies have consistently emphasized the political and state security dimensions in the resolution of the Aceh conflict but have not explicitly used the human security framework as an analytical tool.

In terms of special autonomy policies, a number of recent studies have examined the UUPA and its implementation from various angles. Sustikarini (2019) analyzed the Special Autonomy Fund as a post-conflict "peace dividend", but found that its benefits were not optimal in reducing poverty due to the "elite-based peace" pattern. Wijatmoko, Armawi, and Fathani (2023) evaluated the management of special autonomy fund and oil and gas revenue sharing fund in North Aceh, concluding that the two funds have not succeeded in achieving the sustainable development targets even though they have been disbursed for more than 13 years. Tarfi, Ismail, Idami, and Efendi (2023) examine the redistribution of agricultural land for former combatants as part of post-conflict peacebuilding, while Rahmatunnisa and Djuyandi (2024) document the dynamics of conflicts between ex-GAM elites in the post-Helsinki elections. Further studies assess the legal structure for poverty alleviation in North Aceh (Wijatmoko et al., 2024), fund management and poverty effects (Kusmanto & Hasan, 2025), the elite-centred character of the settlement (Hajad & Aprita Sari, 2025), and the electoral resilience of the Aceh Party (Nivada et al., 2026).

From the point of view of law and legal pluralism, Razi and Mokhtar (2020) identified the challenges of implementing Qanun Jinayat as a form of legal pluralism in Aceh, while Din and Abubakar (2021) placed the position of Qanun Jinayat within the framework of the Indonesian constitution using the theory of asymmetric autonomy. Prasetyo, Shyyab, and Embong 2025) criticize the practice of caning in Aceh from a human rights perspective in an asymmetrical decentralized system, comparing it to the application of sharia law in Malaysia. The study of memory and the legacy of conflict also developed: Sabila, Arafat, Agustina, and Yusuf (2024) examine he heritage sites of the Aceh conflict as part of the dark heritage, while Rahman, Saifuddin, Rosemary, Susanti, Safrina, and Ridha (2026) analyze how the memory of conflict and tsunami are layered in the post-crisis recovery process in Aceh. Zulkarnaen and Suzanna (2018) also documented the development of Aceh's conflict patterns after the Helsinki agreement, including the issue of terrorism and local elections. Other studies address the Jinayat Qanun and caning (Berutu & Irfanudin, 2023; Hakim et al., 2025; Novendra & Reyhan, 2024), the amendment of the UUPA, the Governor's authority, guardian institutions, and transitional justice (Darmoyo & Purnama, 2024; Ridwansyah & Orsantinutsakul, 2022; Sulaiman, 2023; Taqwadin, 2026), and single dimensions such as food insecurity (Faisal et al., 2026), health care (Smith, 2015), education (Shah & Lopes Cardozo, 2014), and social-ecological peace (Yanuardi et al., 2022). As a cross-regional comparison, Sopaheluwakan, Fatem, Kutanegara, and Maryudi (2023) examines the policy of special autonomy in West Papua from the perspective of decentralization and recognition of customary forests, which shows a similar pattern: the implementation of special autonomy in Indonesia tends to be administrative-fiscal oriented and has not been systematically evaluated through a comprehensive human security framework.

Overall, the existing literature shows that the study of the Aceh conflict and the study of the UUPA/special autonomy have each developed into their own mature fields of study, but they are rarely explicitly integrated into the seven-dimensional framework of human security. To verify this gap more systematically on a broader literature scale, this study conducted bibliometric mapping using VOSviewer of Scopus records (544 unique documents, 2005-2026); the search protocol, document types, deduplication, VOSviewer version, counting method, and thresholds are reported in the method section.

The network visualization in Figure 1 shows nine thematic clusters. The red cluster is centred on law, religion, and rights (human rights, Islamic law, sharia, legal pluralism, gender, criminal law, qanun, law enforcement, Banda Aceh). The green cluster links Aceh, conflict, Islam, GAM, elections, and democracy. The purple cluster contains autonomy, governance, legal system, moderation, Timor-Leste, and political violence. The blue cluster combines special autonomy, implementation, central government, education, peace agreement, armed conflict, and law. The cyan cluster covers tsunami, disaster management, Asia, Southeast Asia, Atjeh, South Asia, and economic growth, and the yellow cluster covers human, altruism, health care, narrative, interview, organization and management, disaster, disaster planning, and tsunamis. Smaller clusters concern nationalism, Sri Lanka, ethnic conflict, and ethnicity (brown); a large node for Indonesia with governance approach, sustainability, and decision making (orange); and post-conflict, religion, leadership, and ethnography (pink). "Autonomy" and "special autonomy" appear as clear nodes, but in separate clusters from the red cluster on human rights and Islamic law. The label "human

Figure 1.Network Visualization: a cluster of research keywords related to Aceh, conflict, and autonomy (VOSviewer, Scopus data 2005–2026)

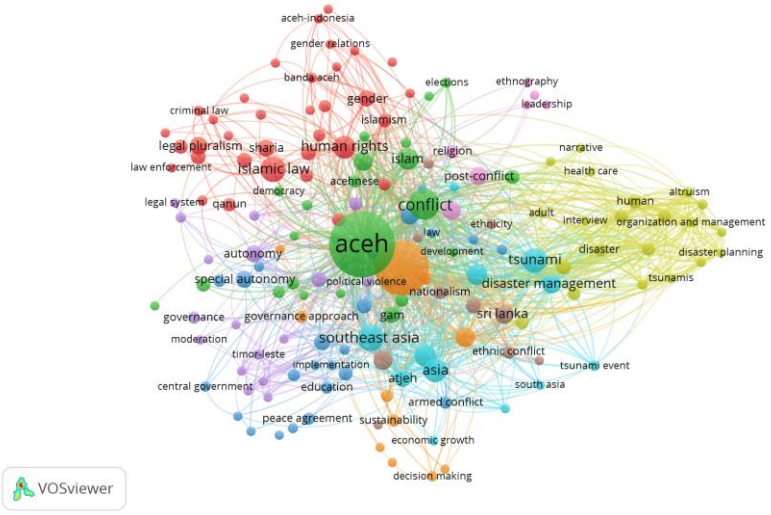


Figure 2.Density Visualization: research intensity on each theme (VOSviewer, Scopus data 2005–2026)

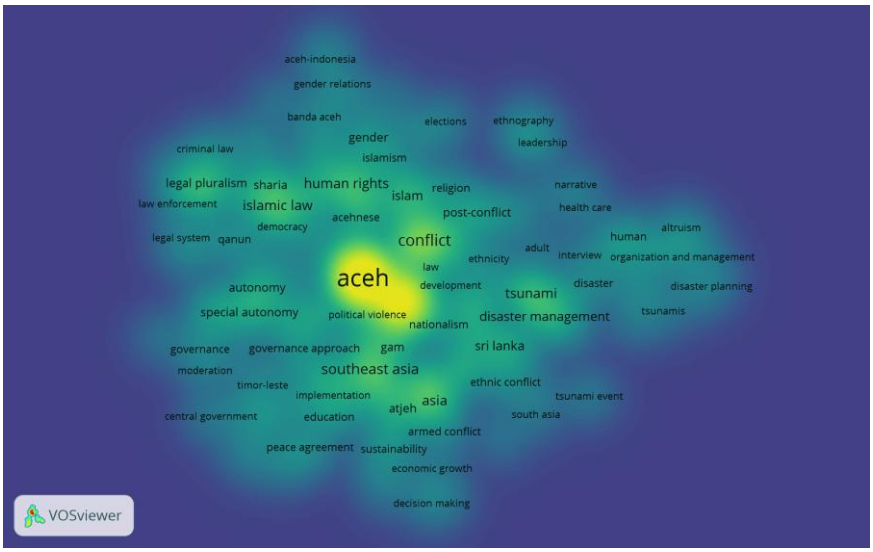


Figure 3.Overlay Visualization: temporal trends of publications by year average (VOSviewer, Scopus data 2005–2026)

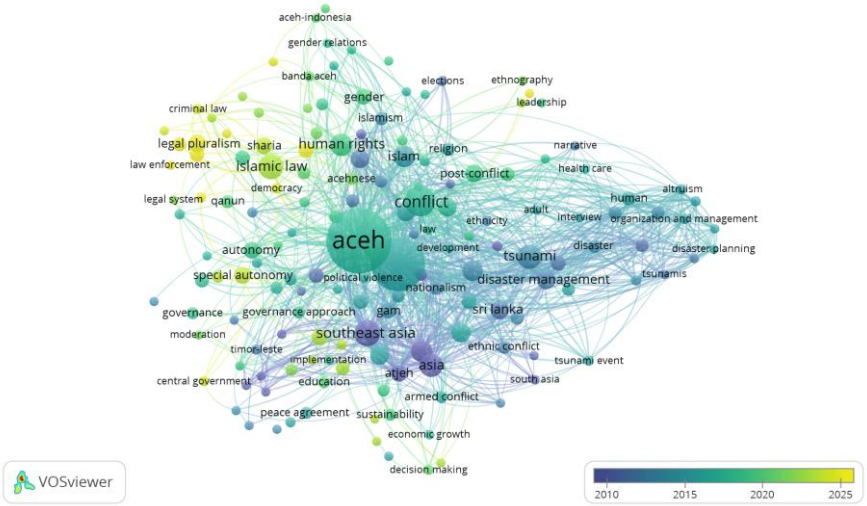


Table 1. A Priori Indicators of Policy Content in the UUPA by Human Security Dimension

Human Security Dimension	A Priori Indicators of Policy Content
Economic security	Oil and gas revenue sharing, special autonomy funds, economic empowerment programs
Food security	–
Health security	–
Environmental security	Authority to manage Aceh's natural resources
Personal security	Enforcement of customary law, qanun jinayat
Community security	Recognition of customary institutions, identity of Acehnese
Political security	Local Party Authority, Election Mechanism

Source: Authors' analysis based on UNDP (1994) and the UUPA (Republic of Indonesia, 2006).

security" is not displayed on the map; because label display depends on occurrence thresholds and layout, this study does not treat the missing label as evidence, and relies instead on the document counts reported below.

The density visualization in Figure 2 shows the highest intensity around "aceh" and "conflict". Moderate intensity appears around "Islamic law", "human rights", "tsunami", "disaster management", and "Southeast Asia", and around "autonomy" and "special autonomy". The area around autonomy and special autonomy is bluish-green (medium intensity), which shows that the theme of autonomy/UUPA has been researched but as a relatively stand-alone theme, with little interaction with non-legal human security themes such as economic security, environmental security, or community security.

The overlay visualization in Figure 3 colours each keyword by the average publication year of its documents. Regional and disaster keywords (Southeast Asia, Asia, Atjeh, Sri Lanka, tsunami, disaster management) have older averages, roughly 2010–2016, while legal pluralism, criminal law, law enforcement, and central government have the most recent averages, around 2024–2025. "Special autonomy", "Islamic law", "implementation", and "education" lie in between, at roughly 2020–2022. Research on Acehnese autonomy has thus been relatively consistent over the period without a significant renewal of analytical approaches toward human security.

To check the visual findings, the titles, abstracts, and keywords of the 544 unique documents were counted directly. Three documents mention "human security" and 108 mention "autonomy", but none mentions both. Six documents refer to the UUPA or the "Law on Governing Aceh" by name, and 20 do so when variant designations are included. Because the absence of two exact terms does not prove that no relevant study exists, the 20 documents were screened manually; each addresses a single issue, such as the legal position of the Jinayat Qanun (Din & Abubakar, 2021; Novendra & Reyhan, 2024), the Governor's authority (Darmoyo & Purnama, 2024), the amendment of the UUPA (Sulaiman, 2023), guardian institutions (Ridwansyah & Orsantinutsakul, 2022), local peace education policy (Zainal et al., 2021), or the legal structure for poverty alleviation in North Aceh (Wijatmoko et al., 2023). The result is therefore a query-dependent indicator, not proof, and it is limited to one database (Scopus), mostly English-language records (531 of 544), keyword data for 73% of records, and title–abstract matching. The study of the UUPA/autonomy has so far been dominated by the approach of constitutional law and local political governance, while "security" after the Aceh conflict has been studied more through Islamic law/human rights or disaster management than through a seven-dimensional human security framework.

To further understand the framework used to fill the literature gap, the following section describes the concept of human security that is the basis of this research theory. The concept of human security was first formulated systematically in the Human Development Report published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1994). The report marks a paradigmatic shift in security studies, from the traditional focus on state security, which emphasizes the defense of territory from external military threats to security centered on individuals and communities. UNDP (1994) formulated seven interrelated dimensions of human security: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. The concept has since been debated between narrower definitions centred on threats of violence and broader definitions that include economic and social welfare (Paris, 2001). In this study the seven dimensions are not treated as exhaustive categories or as sensitizing concepts only, but as a deductive coding framework: they are applied as predefined codes to the text of the UUPA. They were chosen because the UUPA covers fiscal, legal, political, and socio-cultural matters at once, because the categories are an established and citable classification that others can reuse, and because they make visible what the law leaves out.

Since its introduction, the concept of human security has been the subject of a long academic debate, especially regarding its scope, which is considered too broad and difficult to operate (Paris, 2001). Paris (2001) criticized that including almost all forms of threats to human welfare under one umbrella risks making human security lose its analytical power as a policy framework. Despite these criticisms, this approach was chosen in this study because it is precisely in its broad scope that it is useful: the UUPA as a comprehensive autonomy policy (covering fiscal, legal, political, and socio-cultural aspects) requires an evaluation framework that is able to reach various dimensions of welfare at once, rather than a traditional security framework that focuses only on stability and order. To avoid the loss of precision that Paris (2001) warns of, the breadth is bounded: each dimension has explicit indicators (Table 3), the provisions that count as evidence and those that do not are specified, and an overlap rule applies, under which a provision is coded to more than one dimension only if it independently meets the indicators of each and one primary dimension is assigned according to its stated purpose. The debate on human security versus state security is thus used as a critical analysis knife in this study: the extent to which the policy design of the UUPA is truly oriented towards the security and welfare of Acehnese individuals/communities (human-centered), or is it basically still oriented towards state-centered stability and control even though it is framed in the language of autonomy and development.

In addition to human security as the main theoretical framework, this study uses two supporting concepts that function to help interpret the discussion section, without standing as separate theories. First, the concept of structural violence that was put forward (Galtung, 1969) is used to identify the indirect roots of the Aceh conflict (e.g., economic inequality and political marginalization) which according to Galtung are as important as direct violence in understanding a conflict. This concept helps explain why conflict resolution that only stops at the cessation of armed violence (negative peace) does not necessarily answer the root of the problem (positive

peace). Second, the concept of asymmetric decentralization is used to explain the institutional context behind the UUPA's design. Lele (2023) argue that asymmetric decentralization tamed separatist conflict in Aceh because separatist elements took part in designing the policy and most promised outcomes were achieved, in contrast to Papua. Studies of the elite-centred character of the Aceh settlement (Hajad & Aprita Sari, 2025; Sustikarini, 2019) suggest that this accommodation may reduce armed conflict without ensuring broader structural change. This is an important reference to explain why the UUPA can be effective in reducing armed conflicts but potentially does not answer the overall dimension of human security.

Based on the theoretical framework and supporting concepts above, this study compiles an analytical framework by mapping the key articles of the UUPA into seven dimensions of human security (UNDP, 1994). The logic of its operationalization is as follows: each relevant article of the UUPA is classified into one or more dimensions of human security based on the substance it regulates; The content of each article is then assessed qualitatively, whether it is substantive (concrete authority, resources, or enforceable obligations) or symbolic (normative recognition only, without such authority, resources, or obligations); and the results of this mapping are further compared with real implementation data to identify gaps between policy design and achievements on the ground, with the concept of structural violence (Galtung, 1969) and asymmetric decentralization (Lele, 2023) used to interpret the gap.

The framework in Table 1 maps the seven dimensions to the policy content that was expected in the UUPA before the article-by-article review began. It is an a priori framework derived from UNDP (1994) and from the authors' reading of the UUPA's general structure, and it is tested in the results section; dimensions for which no content was anticipated, namely food and health security, are marked with a dash.

Three gaps follow from this review. The topical gap: no study assesses the UUPA across all seven human security dimensions; existing work addresses sharia, finance, institutions, or elites one at a time. The theoretical gap: human security in Aceh has been applied to disasters and single sectors, not to the design of an autonomy statute, so it is unknown which dimensions of the roots of the conflict the statute addresses. The methodological gap: studies of the UUPA rarely distinguish what the law provides from what has been implemented, and lack a transparent coding procedure linking the two.

Unlike previous studies that examined the UUPA through sharia, fiscal, or elite-political lenses, this study evaluates the UUPA provision by provision against the seven dimensions of human security and compares legal design with implementation evidence. It thereby offers a new perspective on whether special autonomy addresses the roots of structural conflict.

Departing from this background, this research is formulated to answer how the special autonomy policy through the UUPA responds to the dimensions of the human security of the post-conflict Acehnese people, and the extent to which the policy answers the root of the structural conflict that underlies the Aceh conflict. This overall question is broken down into three research question:

RQ1. What were the structural roots of the Aceh conflict between 1976 and 2005?

RQ2. How does the UUPA regulate the seven dimensions of human security?

RQ3. To what extent did the implementation of the UUPA from 2006 to 2026?

Accordingly, this study aims to identify the roots of the conflict as a basis for judging the suitability of the UUPA's design; to map how far the UUPA regulates each of the seven dimensions (UNDP, 1994), distinguishing those regulated substantively, symbolically, or not at all; and to evaluate the gap between policy design and implementation using available data and evaluation reports.

Academically, this study bridges two literatures that have each matured but remain largely unconnected: Aceh conflict studies and UUPA/special autonomy studies. Of the 544 unique Scopus documents analyzed, none mentions both "human security" and "autonomy" in its title, abstract, or keywords, which is treated as an indicator, not as proof, of the gap. The study offers an analytical framework that links the two and enriches the debate on human security versus state security in post-conflict autonomy policies in developing countries. In policy terms, it is directly relevant to the revision of the UUPA being discussed in the House of Representatives at the time of writing (Antaranews, 2026; DPR RI, 2026), as the 20-year Special Autonomy Fund scheme ends in 2027. Its findings on the one dimension not explicitly addressed (food security) and on fund governance (Afriansyah, 2023) can inform a revision that responds to the welfare of the Acehnese people, not only to the continuity of the fiscal scheme.

To keep the analysis focused, the study covers 2006–2026, from the enactment of the UUPA to the latest available evidence in October 2026, and analyzes policy documents (the UUPA, the MoU, Qanun Aceh No. 6/2014 on Jinayat Law, and official evaluation reports). The period starts with the enactment of the UUPA in 2006 and runs to the latest available evidence in October 2026. Two components use different windows: the bibliometric mapping covers 2005–2026, starting from the Helsinki MoU, and the fund data start from 2008, when the Special Autonomy Fund began.

Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a multi-stage descriptive-analytical design. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to understand the meaning and substance of a policy in depth, not to measure the relationship between variables statistically (Creswell & Poth, 2017). More specifically, this study uses the document analysis method, which is a systematic procedure to review written documents, both legal documents, policies, and evaluation reports, as the main data source (Bowen, 2009). Bowen (2009) emphasized that document analysis is suitable for use when researchers want to trace the context, changes, and development of a policy over time, as relevant to the purpose of this study to trace the implementation of the UUPA from 2006 to 2026. The design combines four components in sequence: (1) a documentary synthesis of the structural roots of the conflict from the MoU and historical and institutional sources, which answers RQ1; (2) deductive qualitative content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018) of the UUPA, the MoU, and Qanun Aceh No. 6/2014, which answers RQ2; (3) a comparison of the legal coverage found in stage 2 with implementation evidence, which answers RQ3; and (4) a bibliometric mapping of Scopus records, which supports the identification of the research gap and does not answer a research question on its own.

Operationally, the unit of analysis in this study is the articles and paragraphs (pasal and ayat) of the UUPA and the Qanun that are relevant to the seven dimensions of human security. The UUPA (Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 11 of 2006) has 273 articles in 40 chapter, and all 273 were screened. The MoU (Government of the Republic of Indonesia, 2005) was used as the benchmark for the commitments that the UUPA was meant to implement. Among the derivative

Table 2. Data Sources by Type and Analytical Role

Source type and role	Document, issuer, and year	Identifier or access	Use and selection rationale
Primary: legal and treaty texts, coded in full (Tier 1)	Law No. 11/2006 on the Government of Aceh (UUPA), Republic of Indonesia, 2006	JDIH Aceh	Main object of coding; 273 articles
	Qanun Aceh No. 6/2014 on Jinayat Law, Aceh Government, 2014	JDIH Aceh	Implements Arts. 125–126; direct effect on personal security
	Helsinki MoU, Government of Indonesia and GAM, 15 August 2005	PA-X agreement 450	Benchmark of commitments on amnesty, reintegration (3.2), and demobilisation (4.2)
Primary: legal texts used as reported (Tier 1)	Constitutional Court Decision 35/PUU-VIII/2010	Mahkamah Konstitusi	Legal status of Art. 256
	Qanun Aceh No. 17/2013 on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Aceh Government, 2013	JDIH Aceh	Enactment date of the qanun for Arts. 229–231
Primary: official statistics and records (Tier 1)	BPS-Statistics Indonesia Aceh Province, press release of 25 July 2025	aceh.bps.go.id	Poverty rate, March 2025
	DPR RI, 17 April 2026	emedia.dpr.go.id	Official record of the legislative discussion on the revision
Independent evaluations and official analyses (Tier 2)	Multi-Stakeholder Review of Post-Conflict Programming in Aceh, December 2009	Report	Programmes, donors, funds, and disbursement to 2008
	International Centre for Transitional Justice, 2010	Report	Assessment of accountability under the MoU
	Amnesty International, 2013	Report ASA 21/007/2013	Human rights violations during the conflict and accountability
	Miller, 2008b, and Djuli & Rahman, 2005 (Accord series, Conciliation Resources)	Published analyses; the latter is a participant account from the GAM side	Context of the conflict and of the Helsinki negotiations (RQ1)
	Darmawan, Databoks, 9 October 2026	databoks.katadata.co.id	Poverty rate, March 2026, reported from BPS data
Opinion pieces and media reports of statements by named officials (Tier 3)	Afriansyah, Ministry of Finance (DJPb), 2023	djpb.kemenkeu.go.id	Opinion piece by a Ministry of Finance official; unspent regional budget balances (SiLPA) of all regional budgets in Aceh, 2017–2021
	Bisnis.com, 16 April 2026	kabar24.bisnis.com	Cumulative Special Autonomy Fund, about Rp108 trillion
	Antara News Aceh, 17 June 2026	aceh.antaranews.com	Land distributed, as stated by ATR/BPN Aceh
	Antara News Aceh, 20 September 2023 and 14 February 2024	aceh.antaranews.com	Statements by the caretaker governor and the Wali Nanggroe
	Antaranews and Aceh Tribunnews, 2026	antaranews.com; aceh.tribunnews.com	Statements by the DPR RI Legislative Body on the 2.5% proposal
Bibliometric metadata (empirical dataset)	Scopus records, 544 unique documents, exported 15 July 2026	Scopus	Mapping of the research gap; distinct from the literature cited for context

Source: Author's personal analysis

Table 3. Operationalization of the Human Security Concept: Indicators for Coding

Dimension	Expected human-security outcome (UNDP, 1994)	Policy input counted as evidence	Not counted
Economic security	Assured income and livelihood	Revenue shares, fiscal transfers, or economic authority assigned to Aceh (e.g., Arts. 181, 183); livelihood programmes	General budget procedure with no Aceh-specific allocation
Food security	Access to food	Provisions on food supply, farmers' or fishers' access, or land for food production	Natural resource management with no link to food
Health security	Freedom from disease; access to care	Entitlement to health services or funding for them (Arts. 224–226)	General social welfare with no health content
Environmental security	Healthy physical environment	Authority or duties for environmental protection and management (Arts. 148–150, 157, 262)	Joint management of oil and gas (Art. 160), coded as economic

Dimension	Expected human-security outcome (UNDP, 1994)	Policy input counted as evidence	Not counted
Personal security	Safety from violence and abuse	Criminal enforcement, human rights institutions, or remedies (Arts. 125–126, 227–231)	General religious provisions with no effect on safety or rights
Community security	Cultural identity and group security	Recognition of customary institutions and Acehnese identity (Arts. 96–99, 114–117, 211, 213(2), 221)	General cultural promotion with no institutional content
Political security	Participation and civil and political rights	Local parties, elections, and consultation (Arts. 8, 65–95)	Routine administrative procedure

Source: Author's coding scheme based on UNDP (1994) and the UUPA (Republic of Indonesia, 2006)

Table 4. Classification Rules and Examples from the UUPA

Code	Rule	Example
Substantive	Concrete authority, resources, or an enforceable obligation, with an identifiable duty-bearer	Art. 183(2): Special Autonomy Fund of 2% of the national DAU for 15 years and 1% for 5 years
Symbolic	States a norm or aim without a mechanism, a duty-bearer, or resources	Art. 155(1): the economy is directed to productivity and welfare on the basis of Islamic values, justice, and participation
Absent	No provision meets the indicators of the dimension, or the provision has been declared without binding force	Food security: no provision on food, farmers, or fishers; Art. 256, declared without binding force by Constitutional Court Decision 35/PUU-VIII/2010
Flag: Conditional	Operational content is delegated to a qanun or another regulation	Art. 224(4)–(5): free health care for orphans and the poor, with details to be set by qanun
Flag: Dual effect	May protect and restrict at the same time	Arts. 125–126 with Qanun Aceh 6/2014, which allows caning of 10 to 200 times

Source: Authors' coding scheme.

Table 5. Implementation Matrix: Indicators, Sources, and Decision Rule

Dimension	Implementation indicator	Principal sources	Period
Economic	Special Autonomy Fund disbursed; poverty rate; unspent budget balances (SiLPA)	Mulia (2026); BPS-Statistics Indonesia Aceh Province (2025); Darmawan (2026); Afriansyah (2023)	2008–2026
Food	Any provision or programme on food security	UUPA text	2006–2026
Health	Free care under Art. 224(4) and its qanun	UUPA text	2006–2026
Environmental	Authority and enforcement under Arts. 148–150, 157, 262	UUPA text; official reports where available	2006–2026
Personal	Human rights institutions (Arts. 227–231), deadlines in Arts. 259–260; Qanun 6/2014 penalties	UUPA text; International Centre for Transitional Justice (2010); Pemerintah Aceh (2014)	2006–2026
Community	Recognition and operation of customary institutions	UUPA text; Antara News Aceh (2024)	2006–2026
Political	Local parties, elections, consultation (Art. 8)	UUPA text; Constitutional Court Decision 35/PUU-VIII/2010	2006–2026
Reintegration (MoU benchmark)	Land and funds (MoU 3.2.3–3.2.5); demobilisation (MoU 4.2)	MoU; Multi-Stakeholder Review (2009); Antara News Aceh (2023, 2026)	2005–2026

Source: Authors' compilation. Decision rule: the gap is rated on three tests: mechanism (an operating institution or regulation), resources (funds or land actually allocated), and outcome (an official indicator of change). Substantial = all three met; moderate = two; weak = one or none; not assessable = fewer than two of the three tests can be evaluated with an official indicator. Where sources conflict, the higher tier is preferred and the difference is reported.

regulations, only Qanun Aceh Number 6 of 2014 on Jinayat Law (Qanun Aceh, 2014) was coded in full, because it implements the UUPA provisions on Islamic criminal law (Arts. 125-126) and has direct consequences for personal security; other qanuns and government regulations were not coded and are used only as they are reported in the sources in Table 2. To consider amendments, Constitutional Court Decision 35/PUU-VIII/2010, which declared Article 256 of the UUPA to be without binding force, was include, and Article 256 is therefore coded as absent; other judicial reviews were not traced. Documents were selected using purposive sampling techniques, with inclusion criteria: (a) legal products or official policies that govern the implementation of Aceh's special autonomy; (b) published in the period 2006–2026; (c) having a direct relationship with at least one dimension of human security. Documents were excluded if they were drafts, repealed before 2006, or regulated only matters unrelated to the seven dimensions. The repositories searched were JDIH Aceh and the Peace Agreements Database. The final corpus coded in full consists of three documents: the UUPA, the MoU, and Qanun Aceh No. 6/2014. Evidence on implementation was drawn from the sources in Table 2 if it (a) concerned the implementation or outcomes of a UUPA or MoU provision between 2006 and October 2026, (b) came from an identifiable institution, official, or peer-reviewed outlet, and (c) contained a verifiable figure, finding, or named statement.

Sources were excluded if they were anonymous, repeated an earlier source without new information, or could not be traced to a publication date. The data sources in this study are organized by source type and analytical role, as summarized Table 2.

The research covers Aceh Province, Indonesia, the territory to which the UUPA applies (Article 3). The analysis is of documents, and no fieldwork was carried out. The main instrument is a codebook built from explicit definitions of each UNDP (1994) dimension, with the policy input counted as evidence (what the provision regulates) separated from the human-security outcome it is expected to support (Table 3). Each provision is then classified with the rules in Table 4. The coding sheet, which records the article, dimension, code, flags, and the supporting text, serves as an audit trail. To maintain coding consistency, each dimension of human security is operationalized into more concrete indicators as presented in Table 3. This indicator is used as a guide in tracking and classifying the content of articles at the coding stage.

A provision is classified as substantive or symbolic using the rule in Table 4. Mixed xases are handled with two flags: conditional, when the operational content is delegated to a qanun or regulation. And dual effect, when a provision may protect and restrict at the same time, as with the Jinayat provisions. Provisions that meet the indicator of more than one dimension are coded to each of them only if they independently purpose. Three decision rules agreed during the reliability check are also applied: a provision is substantive only if its obligation is directed to citizen or communities or is accompanied by resources or a mechanism; the primary dimension follows the object that the provision regulates; and the conditional flag is not given when the amount or core obligation is fixed and the qanun only divides the allocation.

Implementation evidence was organized in an implementation matrix (Table 5), which specifies for each dimension the indicator, the sources, and the observation period, together with a single decision rule for rating the gap. Reintegration is added as a benchmark from the MoU because the UUPA contains no provision on reintegration or combatants (Article 67 mentions amnesty only for candidacy), and its basis is MoU point 3.2.

Data in the form of the official text of the UUPA and the Qanun was obtained from the official database of the Aceh Legal Documentation and Information Network (JDIH) and the Peace Agreements Database (for the MoU), as well as the official website of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. Data in the form of evaluation reports and statistics were obtained from the official websites of the issuing institutions and BPS-Statistics Indonesia; media reports were found through targeted searches in Indonesian for statements by named officials on the UUPA, the MoU, and the Special Autonomy Fund, and the search continued until October 2026. The bibliometric dataset was collected as follows: the Scopus query was TITLE-ABS-KEY("aceh" AND ("conflict" OR "peacebuilding" OR "autonomy" OR "human security" OR "reintegration" OR "gam")), for the years 2005–2026, exported on 15 July 2026. It returned 550 records (408 articles, 79 book chapters, 38 books, 16 reviews, and 9 other types) with no language restriction. After 6 duplicates were removed, 544 documents remained, of which 531 were in English; 403 of the 550 records had keywords. In VOSviewer (version 1.6.20) the co-occurrence of author and index keywords was analyzed with full counting and a minimum of three occurrences, which left 160 of 1,570 keywords, and no thesaurus was applied. The counts of documents containing "human security", "autonomy", and the UUPA were made on the exported titles, abstracts, and keywords, and the 20 documents that refer to the UUPA were screened manually. The literature cited for context is separate from this dataset.

After the data is collected, the analysis is carried out using content analysis following the stages stated by Krippendorff (2018), i.e., unitizing: assigning articles and paragraphs as coding units; sampling: screening all 273 articles of the UUPA, not only those expected to be relevant, so that provisions outside the a priori expectations are not missed; coding: classifying each article into one or more dimensions of human security using a deductive scheme developed from the framework of analysis in the previous section, while assessing its nature as substantive or symbolic with the flags in Table 4; and inferring: drawing conclusions about the pattern of policy alignment based on the results of coding. This fourth stage is then followed by a comparative analysis between the policy design (UUPA on paper) and the reality of implementation based on secondary data, as presented in the results section and further interpreted in the discussion section. The comparison used the indicators, sources, and periods in Table 5. Implementation was rated weak, moderate, or substantial with the three-test rule in the note to Table 5, and rated not assessable where fewer than two of the three tests could be evaluated with an official indicator. Evidence from Tier 3 sources, including opinion pieces by officials, is reported as the statement of the official concerned. To confirm that food security is Absent, the full text of the UUPA, which is in Indonesian, was searched for the terms pangan (food), ketahanan pangan (food security), petani (farmers), nelayan (fishers), ternak (livestock), kelaparan (hunger), and gizi (nutrition), and for pertanian (agriculture) and perikanan (fisheries). None of the first seven terms occurs as a separate word in any article (pangan appears only inside the word lapangan, meaning field or employment). Pertanian and perikanan occur only in Articles 156(3), 161, 169, and 181, where they are listed as natural resources whose management or revenue is regulated, or as sectors of the Sabang free-trade zone; these provisions regulate resource authority and revenue, not access to food or the livelihood of farmers and fishers, and are coded Economic.

Coding reliability. To check the consistency of the coding, a systematic sample of 30 UUPA articles (every ninth article, starting from Article 4) was drawn. Ten of these articles (Articles 4, 31, 58, 85, 112, 139, 166, 193, 220, and 247) were coded independently by the first and second authors with the codebook in Tables 3 and 4, and the two authors did not see each other's codes. The remaining 20 articles of the sample were divided equally between them. Agreement on the primary dimension, the code, and the flag was 90% each (9 of 10 articles). Cohen's κ for the code (Substantive, Symbolic, Absent) was 0.84 (Cohen, 1960). Three articles had one disagreement each: the code for Article 4, the primary dimension for Article 139, and the flag for Article 193. The authors resolved all three by returning to the definitions in the codebook and added the resulting decision rules to it, so a third coder was not needed. Ambiguous provisions were coded with the Conditional or Dual effect flags rather than forced into a single category. The coding sheet is retained as an audit trail. Because κ rests on only ten articles, it is an indicative estimate. The remaining articles were coded by the first author.

In addition to coding consistency, the credibility of the data in this study was maintained through source triangulation, which is comparing findings from primary legal documents with independent evaluation reports from different institutions (governments, international donor agencies, and non-governmental organizations) to corroborate interpretation and reduce unilateral bias from only one type of source. Triangulation of this kind supports credibility but does not by itself validate the coding or establish causal interpretation, because documents may reproduce the same institutional bias (Patton, 1999). Four further steps were taken: sources were

appraised and graded in three tiers by their evidentiary weight (Table 2); contradictory evidence was looked for and reported where found; the provenance of each document (government, donor, media, or independent) was noted as a possible source of bias; and the coding scheme was checked by the reliability procedure above. This study analyzed public legal documents, official reports, and published media reports. It involved no human participants, so ethical approval was not required

Result and Discussion

Structural Roots of the Conflict (RQ1)

The armed conflict between GAM and the government of the Republic of Indonesia (1976–2005) stemmed from three interrelated structural problems. These three roots were identified by comparing the grievances reported in the conflict literature with the commitments of the Helsinki MoU: a problem was kept as a root if it was reported as a grievance by independent sources and was answered by a specific MoU provision. Ethnic and religious identity (Aspinall, 2007b, 2007a) was considered as a further structural cause; it is treated here as the discourse through which the three grievances were mobilised, not as a separate cause. First, economic inequality: oil and natural gas reserves were discovered in North Aceh in 1971, and most of the profits left Aceh (Aspinall, 2007b; Miller, 2008b) shows how natural resources were turned into collective grievance. The MoU responded by entitling Aceh to retain 70% of revenues from hydrocarbon and other natural resources (MoU 1.3.4). Second, political repression and human rights violations: the Military Operations Area (DOM) status in the period 1989–1998 caused deaths among civilians, and estimates differ in what they count. Komnas HAM's 1998 investigation found 944 Acehnese killed or disappeared, most sources place DOM-era deaths at 1,600 to 6,000, and the figures are disputed (International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), 2010; Miller, 2008b); Amnesty International (2013) reports that an earlier Amnesty report estimated 2,000 civilians killed in 1989–1993 and that between 10,000 and 30,000 people were killed in the whole conflict. These figures are not combined into one estimate, and no displacement figure is given because no source was found that could be verified. The MoU responded with a Human Rights Court and a Commission for Truth and Reconciliation (MoU 2.2–2.3). This marks serious disturbance to the personal security and community security of the Acehnese people. Third, the marginalization of local politics: the centralistic system of the New Order did not provide room for autonomous local political representation, and GAM's negotiators described local political parties as a "bottom line" issue in Helsinki (Djuli & Rahman, 2005); the MoU provided for them (MoU 1.2.1).

The two previous peace efforts, namely the Humanitarian Pause (2000) and Cessation of Hostilities Agreement/CoHA (2002), failed to survive because it did not reach the root of the structural problem and led to the status of martial law in 2003 (Lee, 2020). The new peace momentum emerged after the December 26, 2004 tsunami. According to GAM negotiators, the tsunami gave the international community strong reasons to press Jakarta to come to the table, and GAM saw no alternative to taking the road available to end the war (Djuli & Rahman, 2005); this is their account, and the relation between the tsunami and the peace process remains debated (Waizenegger & Hyndman, 2010). The Helsinki negotiations, facilitated by Martti Ahtisaari's Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), took place in five rounds, resulting in the Helsinki MoU signed on August 15, 2005 (Djuli & Rahman, 2005; Government of the Republic of Indonesia, 2005).

The Helsinki MoU explicitly contains commitments on the economic, political, and legal dimensions of the roots of the conflict. Aceh would exercise authority within all sectors of public affairs, except foreign affairs, external defence, national security, monetary and fiscal matters, justice, and freedom of religion (MoU 1.1.2); Aceh would retain 70% of revenues from natural resources (MoU 1.3.4); and GoI would facilitate local political parties (MoU 1.2.1). The MoU also contains separate commitments that this study keeps apart: amnesty for persons who participated in GAM activities (MoU 3.1), reintegration measures including land and funds for former combatants, pardoned political prisoners, and affected civilians (MoU 3.2.3–3.2.5), and the demobilisation of 3,000 GAM troops (MoU 4.2). The MoU was then operationalized through the UUPA, which was passed on August 1, 2006, less than a year after the signing of the MoU.

Legal Design of the UUPA by Human Security Dimension (RQ2)

The article-by-article coding followed the codebook in Tables 3 and 4. Table 6 summarises the result for each dimension. Appendix A lists the key provisions behind Table 6 with their dimension, code, and flags, and Appendix B lists the 30-article reliability sample. A direct review of the full text of the UUPA, which was carried out as a follow-up to the a priori framework in Table 1, shows that the UUPA's content on the seven dimensions is broader than originally anticipated, although it remains uneven.

Education (Arts. 215–220) is not coded as a separate dimension because the UNDP (1994) categories do not include it; it is treated as a cross-cutting mechanism and its provisions are coded under the dimension they serve, for example the education allocation in Art. 182(3) under economic security. Dayah education is regulated in Art. 218. The findings in Table 6 correct the initial assumption that the UUPA was only oriented towards the division of political power. Under the decision rule in Table 4, provisions coded Substantive appear in six of the seven dimensions (economic, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security), but within each dimension some provisions are Symbolic or Conditional, so "substantive" does not mean that every provision of a dimension carries authority, resources, and obligations. Only food security is not regulated in the body of the law. Political security remains the dimension with the most extensive article coverage (21 articles specifically for local political parties), consistent with the record of GAM negotiators that this issue was one of the most fought points in the Helsinki negotiations (Djuli & Rahman, 2005). To assess the extent to which this legal coverage is realized in practice, the following section traces the implementation evidence in each dimension, based on the secondary implementation data available.

Implementation Evidence (RQ3)

The implementation evidence covers 2006–2026 and uses secondary implementation data, not fieldwork. Evidence is graded by tier (Table 2) and rated with the three tests in the note to Table 5 (mechanism, resources, outcome); where fewer than two tests can be evaluated with an official indicator, the dimension is reported as not assessable.

Economic security. The Special Autonomy Fund has been received by Aceh since 2008, and its cumulative amount is reported at about Rp108 trillion (Mulia, 2026). This is a media-reported figure (Tier 3) and not an audited one. The Ministry of Finance's regional office in Aceh reports unspent budget balances (SiLPA) of all provincial and district/city governments in Aceh of Rp5.31 trillion at the end of 2021, equal to 12.66% of the 2020 regional budget expenditure of Rp41.94 trillion (Afriansyah, 2023); the provincial government's balance was Rp3.93 trillion, and its use of the previous year's SiLPA as a share of expenditure rose from 3.35% in 2017 to 29.01% in 2021 (Afriansyah, 2023). These figures cover all regional budgets and not the Special Autonomy Fund alone, and the source is an opinion piece by a ministry official (Tier 3), so they are used as an indicator of absorption problems in regional budgets and not as a measure of the Special Autonomy Fund's

Table 6. Legal Coverage of the Seven Human Security Dimensions in the UUPA (Summary of Article-by-Article Coding)

Dimension	Key provisions	Code	Summary
Economic	Arts. 160, 181–183	Substantive (Conditional)	Aceh receives a share of revenues from oil and gas through two components: the general revenue share of 15% of oil and 30% of gas (Art. 181(1)b), plus an additional Aceh-specific share of 55% of oil and 40% of gas (Art. 181(3)), a combined 70% for both, in line with MoU 1.3.4. At least 30% of the additional share goes to education (Art. 182(3)). The Special Autonomy Fund runs for 20 years (Art. 183(2)). Allocation details are delegated to qanun (Arts. 182(6), 183(5)). Oil and gas are jointly managed by the Government and Aceh (Art. 160)
Food	None	Absent	No provision regulates food supply or the access of farmers or fishers. The Indonesian-language text was searched for pangan, petani, nelayan, and pertanian; the last occurs only in Art. 156 (natural resource management) and Art. 169 (processing of agricultural products in the Sabang free-trade zone), neither of which regulates food access. Provisions that may affect food indirectly are not counted
Health	Arts. 224–226	Substantive (Conditional)	Every resident has an equal right to health services; the Aceh Government must provide them at minimum service standards (Arts. 224–225). Orphans and the poor (anak yatim dan fakir miskin) are entitled to comprehensive health services without charge (Art. 224(4)); details are left to qanun (Arts. 224(5), 225(3)). Psychosocial and mental health programmes for conflict victims are discretionary (Art. 226, "may") and are coded Symbolic
Environmental	Arts. 148–150, 157, 262	Substantive (Conditional)	Duties to respect, protect, and fulfil rights in environmental management (Art. 148), integrated protection of natural resources and biodiversity (Art. 149), management of the Leuser ecosystem with a ban on forest-business permits (Art. 150), reclamation duties with a guarantee fund (Art. 157), and a six-month review of existing Leuser permits (Art. 262). Joint management of oil and gas (Art. 160) is not counted here, since it regulates resource revenue and not environmental protection
Personal	Arts. 125–127, 227–231, 259–260	Substantive (Dual effect, Conditional)	Muslims in Aceh must obey sharia and all residents must respect it (Art. 126), with details left to qanun (Art. 125(3)) and implemented through Qanun Aceh 6/2014, which allows caning of 10 to 200 times. This is coded Dual effect because the same provisions may protect and restrict personal security; the existence of regulation is recorded separately from its effects. A Human Rights Court (Art. 228) and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Art. 229) were to be established within one year (Arts. 259–260); the rights of women and children are protected in general terms (Art. 231, Symbolic)
Community	Arts. 96–99, 114–117, 211, 221	Substantive and Symbolic	The UUPA establishes the Wali Nanggroe institution as customary leadership that is not a political or government institution (Art. 96), lists the customary institutions and provides that social disputes may be settled through them (Art. 98), and sets up mukim and gampong governance (Arts. 114–117). The government is obliged to recognise, respect, and protect ethnic diversity, with equal rights for all ethnic groups (Art. 211, Substantive), while the protection and development of culture and the arts (Art. 221) is coded Symbolic. This table records what the text provides, not how it operates
Political	Arts. 8, 65–95	Substantive	Direct elections of regional heads (Art. 65), candidacy by parties, local parties, or individuals (Art. 67, Dual effect), voters' rights (Art. 72), and a separate chapter of 21 articles on local political parties (Arts. 75–95), the most extensive coverage of any dimension; consultation with the Aceh legislature on matters directly concerning Aceh (Art. 8). The provision limiting individual candidates to the first election (Art. 256) was declared without binding force by Constitutional Court Decision 35/PUU-VIII/2010 (Mahkamah Konstitusi Republik Indonesia, 2010) and is coded Absent

Source: Authors' coding of the UUPA (Republic of Indonesia, 2006).

Table 7. Implementation Rating by Dimension

Dimension	Mechanism	Resources	Outcome	Rating
Economic	Met	Met (Tier 3 figure)	Not shown (two poverty observations)	Moderate
Food	No provision	–	–	Not applicable
Health	Not assessed	Not assessed	Not assessed	Not assessable
Environmental	Not assessed	Not assessed	Not assessed	Not assessable
Personal (human rights institutions)	Delayed: qanun passed six years after the deadline; Human Rights Court not established as of 2013	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not assessable
Community	Met (institution operates)	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not assessable
Political	Met	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not assessable on outcomes
Reintegration (MoU benchmark)	Met (land programme operates)	Partly met (7,267.28 ha distributed; no target)	Not shown	Weak

Source: Authors' assessment using the decision rule in Table 5. A test that is only partly met is not counted as met

APPENDIX A. KEY PROVISIONS BEHIND TABLE 6

Table A 1. Key Provisions Coded by Dimension

Article	Primary dimension	Code	Flag	Basis
155(1)	Economic	Symbolic	–	Direction and values of the economy; no mechanism or funds
160	Economic	Substantive	–	Joint management of oil and gas with an implementing agency
181(1)b	Economic	Substantive	–	Revenue shares: 15% of oil, 30% of gas, 80% of forestry and other sources
181(3)	Economic	Substantive	–	Additional share of 55% of oil and 40% of gas
182(3)–(4)	Economic	Substantive	Conditional	At least 30% to education, at most 70% to development; details by qanun (182(6))
183(1)–(2)	Economic	Substantive	Conditional	Special Autonomy Fund for 20 years, 2% and 1% of DAU; use by qanun (183(5))
(none)	Food	Absent	–	No provision on access to food or on farmers' and fishers' livelihoods (search terms in Data Analysis)
224(1)–(3), 225(1)	Health	Substantive	Conditional	Right to health services, minimum service standards, duty of the Aceh Government; qanun (225(3))
224(4)–(5)	Health	Substantive	Conditional	Free care for orphans and the poor; details by qanun
226	Health	Symbolic	Conditional	Psychosocial programmes are discretionary ("may")
148	Environmental	Substantive	Conditional	Duty to respect, protect, and fulfil rights in environmental management; qanun (148(3))
149	Environmental	Substantive	–	Integrated management and protection duties
150	Environmental	Substantive	–	Leuser ecosystem; ban on forest-business permits
157	Environmental	Substantive	–	Reclamation and guarantee fund
262	Environmental	Substantive	–	Review of Leuser permits within six months
125	Personal	Substantive	Conditional, Dual effect	Scope of sharia includes jinayah; qanun (125(3))
126	Personal	Substantive	Dual effect	Duty to obey and respect sharia
127(1),(3)	Personal	Substantive	–	Government responsibility and funding
227(1)	Personal	Symbolic	–	List of rights without mechanism
228, 259	Personal	Substantive	–	Human Rights Court; one-year deadline
229–230, 260	Personal	Substantive	Conditional	Truth and Reconciliation Commission; procedure by qanun; one-year deadline
231	Personal	Symbolic	Conditional	General duty on the rights of women and children; qanun

96	Community	Substantive	–	Wali Nanggroe institution, not a political institution
98	Community	Substantive	Conditional	Customary institutions and customary dispute settlement; qanun (98(4))
114–117	Community	Substantive	Conditional	Mukim and gampong structure
211	Community	Substantive	–	Duty to recognise, respect, and protect ethnic diversity; equal rights
221	Community	Symbolic	–	Protection and development of culture and the arts
8	Political	Substantive	Conditional	Consultation with the Aceh legislature; details by qanun
65, 72	Political	Substantive	–	Direct elections and voters' rights
67	Political	Substantive	Dual effect	Candidacy by parties, local parties, or individuals, with candidate requirements
75–95	Political	Substantive	–	Local political parties (21 articles)
256	Political (Absent)	Absent	–	Declared without binding force by Constitutional Court Decision 35/PUU-VIII/2010

Source: Authors' coding of the UUPA (Republic of Indonesia, 2006).

APPENDIX B. RELIABILITY SAMPLE (30 ARTICLES)

Table B 1. Final Codes of the Systematic Sample (Every Ninth Article, Starting from Article 4)

Article	Primary dimension	Other dimension	Code	Flag	Coded by
4	Political	–	Symbolic	Conditional	First and second authors (independent)
13	–	–	Absent	–	First author
22	–	–	Absent	–	Second author
31	–	–	Absent	–	First and second authors (independent)
40	–	–	Absent	–	First author
49	–	–	Absent	–	Second author
58	Political	–	Substantive	–	First and second authors (independent)
67	Political	Community	Substantive	Dual effect	First author
76	–	–	Absent	–	Second author
85	Political	Economic	Substantive	–	First and second authors (independent)
94	Political	–	Substantive	–	First author
103	–	–	Absent	–	Second author
112	–	–	Absent	–	First and second authors (independent)
121	–	–	Absent	–	First author
130	–	–	Absent	–	Second author
139	Political	Community	Symbolic	Conditional	First and second authors (independent)
148	Environmental	Community	Substantive	Conditional	First author
157	Environmental	Community	Substantive	–	Second author
166	Economic	–	Symbolic	Conditional	First and second authors (independent)
175	Economic	Personal	Substantive	Conditional	First author
184	–	–	Absent	–	Second author
193	Economic	Community	Substantive	–	First and second authors (independent)
202	Personal	Political	Symbolic	–	First author
211	Community	Political	Substantive	–	Second author
220	Community	Political	Symbolic	Conditional	First and second authors (independent)
229	Personal	Community	Substantive	Conditional	First author
238	Political	Community	Substantive	–	Second author
247	Community	–	Symbolic	Conditional	First and second authors (independent)
256	–	–	Absent	–	First author
265	–	–	Absent	–	Second author

Source: Authors' coding of the UUPA (Republic of Indonesia, 2006). Final codes after resolution of three disagreements (Articles 4, 139, and 193).

performance.

The same source attributes the pattern to weak budget planning and low absorption, with realisation of spending at 88–92% of the budget and spending concentrated in the fourth quarter (Afriansyah, 2023). The latest data from the Central Statistics Agency show a poverty rate of 12.33% in March 2025 (BPS-Aceh, 2025; BPS Indonesia, 2025). Because only these observations are used, no claim is made about Aceh's rank among Sumatran provinces or about its trend since 2008.

Food security. No provision exists, so there is no implementation to assess (Table 6). This is a finding about the legal text and is not a claim about whether food programmes exist outside the UUPA.

Health and environmental security. No official implementation indicator for Arts. 224–226 or for Arts. 148–150, 157, and 262 was collected in this study, so these dimensions are reported as not assessable. Claims about health implementation are therefore not made in the Discussion.

Personal security. Three matters are kept apart. First, the Human Rights Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission were to be established within one year of the UUPA (Arts. 259–260); Amnesty International (2013) reports that victims do not understand why the MoU's commitments on a human rights court and a truth commission remain unimplemented and that two truth commission initiatives had stalled. A qanun on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was passed on 31 December 2013, about six years after the deadline in Art. 260; the status of the Human Rights Court after 2013 was not established in this study. Second, Qanun Aceh 6/2014 on Jinayat Law is in force and allows caning of 10 to 200 times (Qanun Aceh, 2014). Peer-reviewed studies discuss the caning penalty from a human rights perspective (Prasetyo et al., 2025), its media representation (Hakim et al., 2025), and the protection of minority rights (Berutu & Irfanudin, 2023); these studies are cited as evidence that the effects are contested. Third, because the coding records the existence of regulation separately from its effects (Dual effect), the finding for this dimension is that the regulation is implemented while its effect on personal security is contested.

Community security. The Wali Nanggroe institution operates, and the incumbent has publicly urged the next president to implement the unfinished points of the MoU (Agus, 2024). No indicator of how customary institutions function in dispute settlement was collected, so no claim is made that they have a real function beyond what Arts. 96–99 provide.

Political security. Political security is rated on institutional presence, not on human-security outcomes. Direct local elections and local political parties are in place, and the Aceh Party has remained a dominant electoral force over two decades (Nivada et al., 2026). Electoral dominance by a former-GAM-linked party does not by itself establish political security, and no official indicator of political-security outcomes was used, so the dimension is reported as not assessable on outcomes.

Reintegration (MoU benchmark). The legal basis is the MoU, not Arts. 96–99: GoI committed to allocate suitable farming land and funds to the authorities of Aceh for the reintegration of former combatants and the compensation of political prisoners and affected civilians (MoU 3.2.5), together with reintegration measures and a Reintegration Fund (MoU 3.2.3). The MoU states no hectare target or number of beneficiaries, so no authoritative target exists and no percentage of completion is calculated. The Ministry of ATR/BPN recorded land distribution of 7,267.28 hectares to 3,818 beneficiaries (former combatants, political prisoners, and conflict victims) until mid-2026, and the Government of Aceh has proposed redistributing an additional 24,430 hectares of land from HGU that are indicated to be abandoned, which as of this research had not been realized (Antara News Aceh, 2026). The two figures are reported separately in absolute hectares. The Multi-Stakeholder Review (2009) reports that Rp9.0 trillion was committed to reintegration and peacebuilding, directly and indirectly, and that direct assistance to the end of 2008 totalled Rp3.7 trillion, of which 96% was allocated and 81% disbursed; 38 donors, including government, and 89 implementing organisations delivered 140 programmes (MSR, 2009). The same review reports that many former combatants and conflict victims claim they have yet to receive assistance, and that 81% of civilian conflict victims surveyed had received none. These 2005–2008 funding data and the 2026 land data describe different programmes, periods, and mechanisms, so they are reported side by side and not compared as one measure of implementation.

Comparing Table 6 (policy design, article-by-article verification results) with the implementation data in the results section shows that the gap between the design and implementation of the UUPA is not primarily a matter of which dimensions are regulated and which are not (because it turns out that six of the seven dimensions of human security are substantively regulated in the body of the UUPA), but rather about the extent to which the provisions that have been regulated by law are actually realized in practice. In economic security, the gap is most striking: Special Autonomy funds of about Rp108 trillion since 2008 (Mulia, 2026), have been transferred under Article 181 and Article 183, yet Aceh's poverty rate remained at 12.33% in March 2025 and 12.34% in March 2026 (BPS-Aceh, 2025; BPS Indonesia, 2025; Darmawan, 2026; Sumberpost, 2025). This study does not claim that the funds caused or failed to cause these outcomes; it reports that the outcome indicator did not improve while the mechanism and resource tests in Table 5 were met. By borrowing the concept of asymmetric decentralization from Lele (2023), this pattern is consistent with the argument that post-conflict arrangements work when the promised outcomes are actually delivered. One possible interpretation, which this study does not test, is that large allocations of funds for infrastructure can serve the political legitimacy of local–central elites without necessarily translating into an improvement in the structural welfare of the wider community (Hajad & Aprita Sari, 2025; Sustikarini, 2019). The high SiLPA reported by (Afriansyah, 2023), an opinion piece by a Ministry of Finance official covering all regional budgets in 2017–2021 and not only the Special Autonomy Fund, also points to possible weaknesses in the capacity of the regional bureaucracy in absorbing and managing large funds: a problem of governance implementation, not a void in legal regulation.

In personal security, the gap is in another form: not the lack of implementation, but the implementation that runs according to the mandate of Articles 125-127 but has the potential to create new insecurity for certain groups. The application of Qanun Jinayat shows how the fulfillment of one form of personal security (the enforcement of religious norms that are seen as community identity) can clash with other dimensions of human security: in this case, legal protection for women and children victims of sexual violence, which is contested in the literature (Amin et al., 2025; Berutu & Irfanudin, 2023). This finding is in line with the criticism of Prasetyo, Shyyab, and Embong, (2025) that the practice of caning in Aceh needs to be reviewed from a human rights perspective within the framework of asymmetric decentralization. The concept of structural violence (Galtung, 1969) is relevant here. In this study, a condition is read as structural violence when (a) harm to a group's basic needs arises from an institutional arrangement rather than from a single perpetrator, and (b) the harm is avoidable by changing that arrangement. The Qanun

Jinayat evidence meets this reading only partly, because the studies cited disagree on the extent of the harm. The reading is therefore presented as an interpretation, not a finding. Vertical conflict resolution (state–GAM) through the Helsinki MoU does not automatically eliminate the potential for new structural violence in horizontal relations at the community level, although this dimension is regulated quite in detail by law.

A similar pattern can be seen in the reintegration dimension (part of personal and community security for ex-combatants). The legal basis for land reintegration is MoU point 3.2.5, which commits the Government of Indonesia to allocate land and funds for ex-combatants, political prisoners, and affected civilians. The MoU sets no hectare target. Against this instrument, the realised distribution of 7,267.28 hectares to 3,818 beneficiaries (Antara News Aceh, 2026) shows that implementation is incomplete two decades after the Helsinki MoU, while the additional 24,430 hectares from HGU land have only been proposed and are not a legal target (Antara News Aceh, 2026). Articles 96–99 concern customary institutions and the Wali Nanggroe and are not the legal basis for land redistribution.

Political security is the dimension in which the UUPA is most detailed in design (Chapter XI, 21 articles on local parties, Articles 75–95), and the electoral participation of former GAM members and the dominance of the Aceh Party are consistent with the commitments of the MoU. Participation and party dominance are, however, indicators of political inclusion, not proof that political security as a human security outcome has been achieved. This study therefore does not treat political security as an exception or as the most consistently implemented dimension. It reports that the participation indicator was met and that no outcome indicator was assessed.

Based on the pattern of these findings, the main argument of this study is that the UUPA is an autonomy policy that is legally designed (on paper) quite comprehensive and substantive in almost all dimensions of human security, namely economic, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security, with only food security that is not explicitly regulated, but its implementation shows an uneven pattern and in several key dimensions (economic and personal/community reintegration security) far behind its own legal mandate.

This pattern demands a revision of the simple argument of human security versus state security. Instead of concluding that the UUPA is only state-centered and ignores human-centered, the verified findings paint a more nuanced picture: the UUPA is textually designed to be quite comprehensive in terms of human security, but the implementation gap (not the regulatory vacuum) is the main problem in the socioeconomic welfare dimension. In other words, the problem of the UUPA is not primarily about "what is regulated", but rather about "what is actually carried out". The observed association is that the dimensions with the clearest implementation gaps are those whose outcomes depend on sustained funding and administration, but this study, as a document analysis, cannot establish which factors cause implementation to succeed or fail. Process tracing or comparative cases would be needed to test this proposition

Thus, this study fills the gap identified in the literature review section: within the Scopus query and export date reported in the Method (TITLE-ABS-KEY, 2005–2026, exported 15 July 2026; 544 unique documents after removing duplicates), no document used "human security" and "autonomy" together. This result depends on the query, indexing, and terminology, and is not proof that no relevant scholarship exists. By showing that the evaluation of the UUPA through the human security framework produces a more nuanced picture than both success story claims and total failure claims that both simplify the reality of Indonesia's special autonomy policy as the study of the Sopaheluwakan, Fatem, Kutanegara (2023) about West Papua. The UUPA has succeeded in addressing the root of the conflict textually in almost all dimensions of human security, but its implementation has not been adequate, especially in the economic and reintegration dimensions, a finding that reinforces the warning of Sustikarini (2019) regarding the risk of the UUPA simply becoming an "elite-based peace" in its implementation, even though the legal design itself is quite progressive.

Theoretically, these findings show the importance of distinguishing between policy evaluation at the normative design level (what is legally regulated) and the implementation level (what is actually implemented). Criticism Paris (2001)

that human security risks becoming too broad a concept to operationalize needs to be responded to with methodological caution: studies that only examine policy texts without implementation data risk concluding incorrect successes (because the UUPA textually appears comprehensive), while studies that only examine implementation data without examining policy texts risk wrongly attributing implementation failures to legal vacancies that actually do not occur.

In terms of policy, this finding has direct relevance to the UUPA revision process (status as of 16 October 2026). The House of Representatives (DPR RI, 2026) lists the revision in its legislative programme, and the Legislation Body (Baleg) has set a target of completing it by the end of 2026 so that it can take effect from 2027, along with the end of the 20-year Special Autonomy Fund scheme (Antaranews, 2026). This is a legislative target. It is not an enacted amendment, and its content and timing are not guaranteed. The main proposal in the revision is to increase the portion of the Special Autonomy Fund from 2% to 2.5% of the national General Allocation Fund, even without a specific time limit (Aceh Tribunnews, 2026; DPR RI, 2026). The findings of this study show that the increase in the amount of funds alone, without being accompanied by improvements in governance and implementation accountability mechanisms, given that the main problem identified is not in the void of legal regulation but in the implementation gap, there is a risk of repeating the same pattern of "elite-based peace" as the previous two decades of the Special Autonomy Fund (Sustikarini, 2019). Therefore, this study recommends that the UUPA revision process should not only focus on negotiating budget percentages or adding new arrangements for unregulated dimensions (such as food security), but especially on strengthening accountability mechanisms and monitoring the implementation of existing provisions, especially on the economic security dimension (overcoming SiLPA) and personal/community security reintegration, as further elaborated in the conclusion section.

Conclusion

This research answers three research questions asked in the introduction as follows. First, the root of Aceh's structural conflict behind the birth of the UUPA stems from three interrelated problems: economic inequality due to the exploitation of natural resources without adequate profit sharing, political repression and human rights violations throughout the DOM period, and local political marginalization due to the centralistic system. Second, the results of the article-by-article verification show that the UUPA regulates six of the seven dimensions of human security in a fairly substantive manner, namely economic, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security, each with clear legal obligations and operationalization mechanisms through derivative qanun; Only food security is not explicitly regulated.

Third, the implementation of the UUPA shows an uneven pattern: in the economic security dimension, the legal mechanism and the funding were in place (rated moderate), but the poverty rate was still 12.34% in March 2026; in the reintegration dimension, 7,267.28 hectares had been distributed to 3,818 beneficiaries under MoU point 3.2.5, while a further 24,430 hectares had only been proposed (rated weak). Conclusions on implementation are limited to the dimensions for which adequate evidence was available. Health, environmental, personal, community, and political security are not rated, because fewer than two of the three tests in Table 5 could be evaluated with an official indicator.

Thus, this study concludes that the UUPA is an autonomy policy that is quite comprehensive in legal design to reach human security, but its implementation, in the dimensions where it could be assessed, falls short of the legal mandate, a conclusion that is more nuanced than the initial assumption that the UUPA is solely oriented towards state security. The main problem of the UUPA is not in the void of legal regulation, but in the gap between the legal mandate and the realization of its implementation.

This study contributes an article-by-article application of the human security framework to a special autonomy law, which separates what the law regulates from what is implemented. It shows that, for the UUPA, the problem lies in implementation and not in a regulatory vacuum. This distinction is useful for the evaluation of other special autonomy laws. Based on the above conclusions, this study submitted recommendations to three main stakeholders:

- To the Central Government and the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia: because the gap found is in implementation, and not in a legal vacuum, the ongoing UUPA revision process (a legislative target, not yet an enacted amendment) should not only focus on negotiating percentage of the Special Autonomy Fund (proposed to increase from 2% to 2.5% of the DAU) or adding new arrangements for the unregulated dimension (food security), but especially strengthening the accountability and supervision mechanism for the implementation of existing provisions. A feasible mechanism is a requirement that Aceh publish an annual report on Special Autonomy Fund use and unspent balances (SiLPA), reviewed by the central government and the House of Representatives. Measurable indicators are the share of the allocation spent within the budget year and the poverty rate reported by BPS.
- To the Government of Aceh: it is necessary to improve the governance and accountability of the absorption of Special Autonomy Funds to overcome the high SiLPA problem, as well as accelerate the completion of the reintegration program of ex-combatants and conflict victims, which until mid-2026 has distributed 7,267.28 hectares to 3,818 beneficiaries, while the additional 24,430 hectares have only been proposed. The legal basis for this obligation is MoU point 3.2.5; Arts. 96–99 of the UUPA concern customary institutions and the Wali Nanggroe and do not mandate land redistribution. A measurable indicator is a published verification list of beneficiaries and hectares by district, updated every year.
- To policymakers related to Qanun Jinayat: it is necessary to review provisions that have the potential to reduce legal protection for vulnerable groups, especially women and children victims of sexual violence, so that the enforcement of one dimension of human security (personal/community security through sharia, as mandated by Articles 125-127 of the UUPA) does not compromise the human security dimension of other groups. The studies cited in this article disagree on the extent of the effect, so the first step is an independent review of cases of sexual violence handled under the qanun, conducted by the Aceh government together with civil society.

In addition to these policy recommendations, it is also important to acknowledge that this study has a number of limitations that need to be considered in reading its findings. First, this study uses a document analysis method, so it does not directly assess lived experience, perceptions, or implementation practices beyond the documentary evidence. The interpretation of the meaning and impact of the policy is therefore limited to written texts and secondary data, and is not the direct experience of the policy recipients (former combatants, conflict victims, civil society groups) or of Aceh government officials. Second, some implementation data: in particular the official version of the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) report, the latest International Crisis Group (ICG) report, and specific implementation data for the health security (Articles 224–226), environmental security (Articles 148–150, 157, and 262), and community security (Articles 96–99) dimensions, are not fully accessible in this study, so the implementation conclusions are not drawn for these dimensions, and the comparison across dimensions is limited to the dimensions with adequate data. Further verification is required for them. Third, the statistical data used (poverty, realization of Special Autonomy Funds) are aggregate at the provincial level, so that it cannot capture variations between districts/cities which are likely to be significant considering that the four districts most affected by the conflict (North Aceh, Bireuen, East Aceh, Pidie) receive reintegration assistance in different proportions from other regions.

For follow-up research, the following directions are suggested: interview-based research or field surveys with former combatants and victims of conflict to capture perceptions of human security from the perspective of policy recipients and affected communities, separately from policymakers, implementers, and civil-society actors, so that the sampling for each group is clear; more in-depth exploration of implementation data, especially for the dimensions of health security, environmental security, and community security in order to test more strongly the implementation gap argument proposed by this study; comparative analysis at the district/city level to identify variations in the implementation of the UUPA in a more granular manner; follow-up research after the passage of the UUPA revision (targeted for completion by the end of 2026) to evaluate whether the new arrangement successfully addresses the implementation gaps identified in this study; and a systematic comparative study between Aceh and other special autonomy cases in Indonesia (Papua, West Papua) through the same human security framework with a similar articleby-article verification method, to test whether the pattern of "substantive in legal design, lagging behind in implementation" found in this study is Aceh-specific or is a general pattern of special autonomy policies in Indonesia.

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Ethics Approval and Informed Consent: This study did not involve human participants or the collection of personal or confidential data; it is based solely on publicly available legal documents (the UUPA and derivative Qanun) and secondary institutional reports.

Data Availability Statement: The primary data analyzed in this study, the text of the UUPA and its derivative Qanun are publicly available through the Aceh Legal Documentation and Information Network (JDIH Aceh) and the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. The secondary implementation data come from publicly available sources cited in the reference list (e.g., BPS-Statistics of Aceh Province, the Multi-Stakeholder Review of Post-Conflict Programming in Aceh, the Ministry of Finance DJPb, and ATR/BPN as reported by Antara News Aceh.

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