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Tentative Indonesian peace deal

Last Updated Sat, 16 Jul 2005 23:02:26 EDT
CBC News

There is a tentative peace deal in the 30-year-old conflict in the Indonesian province of Aceh, the two sides say.

- INDEPTH: [Aceh](#)

Negotiators for the Free Aceh Movement and the Indonesian government reached an agreement Saturday in Helsinki, said Damien Kingsbury, an Australian who is a member of the Acehnese delegation.

An Indonesian government negotiator said a truce could be signed Sunday.



The conflict may have killed as many as 15,000 people as the Free Aceh group fought for an independent, Islamic state and the government in Jakarta tried to keep the country together.

The two sides found common ground on the question of allowing local political parties, such as Free Aceh, in the province. That had been a major sticking point the talks.

The Indonesian government has to approve the agreement before it can come into force.

The peace talks were renewed after the December tsunami; Aceh was hit very hard by the disaster, suffering an estimated 200,000 dead, 400,000 displaced and widespread devastation.




Free Aceh leaders called for a ceasefire after the disaster, and "the Indonesian military also appeared to

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scale back offensive operations," the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue said. It has been trying to mediate between the parties.

There were two rounds of talks in Helsinki. The first was inconclusive, the second was hopeful, the centre said before Saturday's deal.

A previous peace deal, reached in late 2002, failed in May 2003.

with files from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation

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