I came to know Dema when he was hiding at Komunitas Tikar Pandan, an NGO for cultural programs in Banda Aceh.\(^1\) It was on 10 December 2011, and Dema had arrived there shortly after midnight. I still remember that he rushed to enter our building when we had just finished our weekly ‘movie night’ screening program. At the moment, he just told us very briefly that the Wilayatul Hisbah (the ‘Shari‘a police,’ WH) were hunting punks outside our office and he wanted to be away from them.\(^2\) No one at Komunitas Tikar Pandan knew him before. But, as the news spread quickly about the punk raid which had just happened that evening, it was not difficult for us to identify Dema due to his physical appearance, with spiked hair and chain-filled clothes, as someone from the hunted group.

We had heard the news about the punk crackdown through social media just before Dema entered our office. The information spread quickly. 65 youths were detained by a combination of civil police and the WH after being accused of falsifying their music concert permit. Dema eventually told us more about the concert he and his friends had organized, how all seemed to be going well with the event until the Banda Aceh authorities came to arrest them. The concert was entitled “Aceh for the Punk: A Music Parade and Fundraiser for Orphanages.” It took place at the Aceh Cultural Centre (Taman Budaya Aceh) and featured punk bands from various parts of Indonesia including Jakarta, Bekasi, Lampung, Jambi, Pekanbaru and Batam. After three bands had performed on stage, officers of the police force and the WH, accompanied by the Deputy Mayor of Banda Aceh, stopped the concert. The officers stormed the venue, rounding up those who were dressed in punk style, mohawk hair,

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2 On the WH, see Feener (2013a, 219–249), as well as the chapter by Jan Michiel and Benjamin Otto in this volume.
tattoos, and chains. They were arrested and brought to the local police station. Many of them were badly beaten. Dema was fortunate and managed to escape from the sweeping. He fled on his motorbike and sought a place to hide from the police. I asked him why he came to Komunitas Tikar Pandan, rather than some other place. He said it was just unintentional. But he did not deny that he was familiar with our cultural-based organization activities and knew already where it was located.

Tikar Pandan's headquarter is housed in a sprawling, decrepit mansion set in a semi-rural area with fences wrought of living trees. It has been popular as a cultural centre in Banda Aceh since 2003. Formed under the conditions of military emergency, Komunitas Tikar Pandan was founded by a group of local artists and student activists, including myself, in order to create a space for creative activities. Framed in terms of a cultural movement and cultural critique, Komunitas Tikar Pandan had chosen the safest way to launch protests against the political violence of Aceh during the conflict. Komunitas Tikar Pandan was also one of the main critics of the BRR (the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency) during the post-tsunami rebuilding program. In 2007, Tikar Pandan further evolved to become the Liga Kebudayaan or ‘Cultural League’ with several divisions working and managing independently but remaining under one “umbrella” called Liga Kebudayaan Komunitas Tikar Pandan or Komunitas Tikar Pandan Cultural League. Those divisions include Sekolah Menulis Dokarim (The Dokarim Writing School), the Dokarim bookstore, TV Eng Ong & Institute Tukang Cerita (Institute of Traditional Story Telling), Metamorfosa Institute, Jurnal Kebudayaan Gelombang Baru (The New Wave Journal) and Tikar Pandan Public Library. In 2011, the Liga Kebudayaan Komunitas Tikar Pandan also launched a new division called Museum HAM Aceh or the Aceh Human Rights Museum. Its facilities include a multi-purpose space which has been used as a museum and as a library dedicated to the memory of the conflict. Komunitas Tikar Pandan also uses this space to run film series, book readings, lectures and discussions concerning violence and human rights issues.

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3 For further discussion of Komunitas Tikar Pandan, see Grayman (2012). Komunitas Tikar Pandan’s engagement in advocating the rights of Punk and other minority groups in Aceh has briefly been sketched in my “Cultural Resistance against Shariatism in Aceh” (2013), and recently in Hendrie (2014). The Komunitas Tikar Pandan website is www.tikarpandan.org.
4 For more on the Aceh Human Rights Museum program, see http://www.museumhamaceh.org/.
5 This project has been organized by Komunitas Tikar Pandan in cooperation with several human rights-based organizations, such as LBH Banda Aceh (Legal Aid Agency of Banda Aceh), KontraS Aceh (Commission for “the Disappeared” and Victims of Violence) and Koalisi NGO-HAM Aceh (Coalition of Human Rights NGOs Aceh).