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# DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEMS IN PAPUA

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**Presentation by Catholic Churchleaders in Papua**

in

**A PERSONAL MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ABDURRAHMAN WAHID**

**JAKARTA**

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**By**

**The Office for Justice & Peace**

**Jayapura Diocese**

# **DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEMS IN PAPUA**

## **I. BACKGROUND**

### **I.1. Basic attitude of the Papuans**

First of all it is worthwhile to note that the Papuans have a very fundamental attitude, namely the desire to "regulate themselves". Throughout the history of their existence, Papuans have proven to be able to regulate themselves so as to be able to maintain their existence for centuries. This fundamental attitude has also been shown by the Papuans to everybody and whatever agency that indicated any tendency to reduce their chances to regulate themselves. Such an attitude was shown in their encounter with the Dutch government, missionaries, traders and newcomers in general. It was not surprising, therefore, that any agency that wants to "control" the Papuans usually resorted to violence. In view of that fundamental attitude, it was also not surprising that December 1, 1961 was written with golden letters in the pages of Papuan history, as at that time the Dutch government gave a very agreeable perspective with that fundamental attitude, namely initiating "the process of freedom". Loss of such perspective in an international political game in the sixties left a deep scar in them.

### **I.2. Three factual elements**

While bearing the above fundamental attitude in mind, special attention should be given to three factual elements that also underlie Papuan problems today:

1. **A complex of experience during the last decades, commonly referred to as the collective "Memoria Passionis", or "memory of suffering".** These suffering experiences

found their sources in:

- a. the development policy followed by the Indonesian government during that last 38 years;
- b. the occurrence of dozens of human right violations in Papuan territory during its integration in the Republic of Indonesia.
- c. the behavior of the Indonesian armed forces in this territory, commonly marked by arrogance and high-handed show of power.

**2. Events during Papuan history, such as:**

- a. Program toward freedom initiated by the Dutch Government on December 1, 1961 by (1) nominating representatives of local community to 50% of the total members of *Nieuw Guinea Raad* (parliament); (2) flying Morning Star Flag beside the Dutch flag; and (3) socializing the national anthem "Oh Papua, My Land".
- b. The adoption of New York Agreement (NYA) of 1962 as the basis of transfer of the *Nederlands Nieuw Guinea* from the Dutch to the Indonesian governments. This basic agreement was taken without the participation of Papuans themselves in the negotiation.
- c. The Determination of People's Opinion (PEPERA) in 1969 was implemented incorrectly as it was accompanied by intimidation, coercion, torture, and unilateral interpretation of conditions of the implementation that was laid down in the NYA, so that it was legally flawed.

### **3. Protest of the public has not been heard nor responded seriously by the ruler, thus**

- a. The Papuans have never felt that their dignity and identity as real men were recognized;
- b. The Papuans have never felt that they were recognized and protected as full Indonesian citizens with all rights and obligations, as it was provided in paragraph 4 of the preamble of the constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (the 1945 Constitution).

#### **I.3. Silence because of helplessness**

The sufferings summarized above finally produced a community that was deeply disappointed, scared, felt isolated, used as an object of projects and that kept its anger for so many years. It is quite natural that one day this "memory of collective suffering" would reveal itself and become a source of "strength in the struggle", provided an opportunity is given to it.

#### **I.4. Explanatory material**

A number of writings help further clarification of what have been summarized above. We attach those writings:

1. Report of Father Haripranoto S.J. in 1967, entitled "Retrospection on the New Order in one and a half years in the Capital city of West Irian";
2. Article prepared by the Secretariat for Justice and Peace (SKP) of Jayapura Diocese, March 1999, entitled "Papuan National Dialogue, a story of "Memoria Passionis";
3. Report of the Group of Concern with Community, Kiwirok Sub-district, June 2000, entitled "The Case of Heapkauweng Taplo's Murder".

4. A number of special reports published by the Secretariat for Justice and Peace, Jayapura Diocese, on human right violations in Papua.

## **II. The Development of M (Freedom) Aspiration Movement**

The development of M Aspiration Movement (GERASEM) takes place through the following stages:

1. Initially (May 1998 - July 1998 period) the disappointment of Papuan community was revealed in a number of demonstrations, a part of which was related to certain policy elements, such as: transmigration program, denial of traditional rights on land, exploitation of natural resources, lack of opportunity for local community to take part in state administration, etc. and some others were related to human right violations.
2. After the bloody event in Biak (July 6, 1998), the protests began to change its tone to be "more political", as Papuan community felt deeply frustrated when the peaceful demonstration during the reform era in Biak continued to be responded by the security apparatus with violence only.
3. On the eve of the National Dialogue (February 1999) the political tone resounded even stronger. It was not surprising that in the direct meeting between 100 representatives of Papuan People (Team of 100) and President Habibie, it was expressed clearly that the Papuan People have been fed up, have not had confidence any longer in the Indonesian government and strongly demanded that Papuan freedom/sovereignty be recognized according to the fact that had been established back in 1961.
4. The statement before the President and his cabinet was welcomed enthusiastically by wide sections of Papuan community. This response served as a very strong indication

that wide sections of the community really supported the revealed direction of struggle. Furthermore, the people began to organize themselves through Command Posts, a very simple mass organizing, nevertheless it became an effective means of popularizing the "M (freedom) aspiration" struggle. The M aspiration has become a daily talk of the community of all strata.

5. Internally GERASEM organization has not been developed rapidly, so that its leadership and program appeared somewhat abstract. Leadership began to be an open discourse after November 12, 1999, when Theys Eluay announced a plan to fly the Morning Star flag throughout Papuan territory as from December 1, 1999.
6. From December 1, 1999 some new figures/leaders emerged and began to direct GERASEM by bringing Papuan aspirations to the local and central parliaments. Meanwhile, President Abdurrahman Wahid's visit on December 31, 1999 was utilized to deliver an initial step for the organizational consolidation by the announcement about the convocation of a Papuan Congress. At the same time President Wahid agreed to change the name of Irian Jaya into Papua, and for the first time the Indonesian government officially apologized for human right violations that had been committed.
7. Recently, the organizational consolidation was conducted in two phases: (a) the convocation of a Great Deliberation, 24 - 28 February 2000; and (b) Papuan Congress II, May 29 - June 4, 2000. In the latest development, a "political party" was formed as a means to promote the M Aspiration, so that on June 23, 2000 the Papuan National Front (FNP) was officiated under the leadership of Mr. Herman Wayoi, a historical Papuan figure.

8. During this organizational consolidation process there was a shift in the emphasis of different aspects of struggle. If in the early stage of the struggle much emphasis was given to "the settlement of human right violations", in the latest development emphasis was given more to the "straightening of history" as the basis and direction of struggle.

As supplementary materials we can mention:

1. The resolution of the Papuan Congress II;
2. Article by Dr. Benny Giyai, entitled "Toward a New Papua", May 2000.

### **III. Response of the Government and the Security Apparatus**

As GRASEM developed the ruler did not stay aloof and it did take a stand; however, such a stand was not always clear and it was not clear either who took such decision. We are able to note a number of examples, as follows:

1. At the beginning of the social movement (May 1998 - February 1999 period) the government as well as the security apparatus accepted the fact that in the reform era, demonstrations should be left alone. There was not any pro-active response and usually all problems were regarded by the regional ruler as "material to be submitted to the authorized party". There was an exception though, namely a response against peaceful demonstration in Biak in July 1998, which was ended by TNI with an extraordinarily harsh violence. By so doing, TNI continued to lose confidence from the people.
2. While the political tone developed (M aspiration), the government confined itself by repeating (especially through the Governor's statement) that the M aspiration was only the opinion of a handful of people.

3. After the meeting with President Habibie (February 1999), for the time being all parties kept silent, as if they did not know what to do. There were only some incidents of intimidation against those having relation to Team 100; it was not known who stood behind those incidents.
4. On April 17, 1999 the police began to take a firmer stand by issuing an announcement of the Head of Regional Police, containing (a) prohibiting the functioning of Command Posts, as they were regarded as "political units" that incited the community; and (b) prohibiting all forms of socialization of the results of meeting with President Habibie. This statement got a strong reaction from the elements of the M movement leadership, and finally it was not properly implemented.
5. By a letter of the Immigration Department (dated June 28, 1999), five persons having relation to the activities of Team 100 were prevented to go abroad for 6 months. It has never been clear who requested or stimulated the issuance of such letter. Some people even raised doubt whether these 5 prominent figures has ever officially prevented, or in another word: it was possible that the letter of somewhat "artificially made".
6. Instead of responding to the people's aspiration, the government began to force through a plan for regional division to make it three provinces. This plan was considered by wider section of the community as a plan of the central government only, and was rejected from the very beginning as a political maneuver. It was very surprising that the government turned deaf ear to the people's voice in this case, on the contrary it went so far as to inaugurate secretly two new Governors on October 12 in Jakarta. This measure got a strong reaction from the people and finally the new government "froze" this plan.

7. In addition to forcing through regional division, the government also tried to socialize the "special autonomy" designed to be a response to the aspiration of Papuan people. For reasons that the autonomy concept was not clear as well as because the special autonomy was regarded as an "answer that would not answer the real problem", this concept was rejected by the people.
8. Under such heated atmosphere, in several places (Sorong, Genyem) the Morning Star flag was flown again (at the beginning of July 1999), and the police apparatus made use of such an incident to take action against the leadership elements of Papuan Command Posts, especially at Sorong.
9. A change in attitude was shown by the security apparatus after the meeting at Sentani on November 12, 1999. This meeting was attended by the security apparatus as well as by Yorris Raweyai. The plan to fly the Morning Star Flag throughout Papua was announced during the meeting, and the security apparatus responded by stating: "they may do so, as it is the expression of the people's aspiration". This attitude took many people by surprise and it aroused suspicion that the flag hoisting would be used to take very harsh measure. Suspicion increased as from the very beginning the civilian government stated that the plan could not be accepted and constituted a breach of law. The situation was even more confusing as in the period of two weeks the security apparatus changed its stand from "allowing" (the flag unfurling) to "unfurling the flag means a violation against the law". Such a change in attitude encouraged the judge at Sorong, who was trying the perpetrators of flag flying at Sorong, to send the defendants home, because he did not know who to follow, in view of the fact that his superior in Jayapura agreed with the flag flying. The situation became all the more confusing.

10. Finally, the celebration of December 1, 1999 was held very orderly and solemnly, while the security apparatus let the Papuan Task Force itself to be fully responsible for the security at that time.
11. What was equally interesting, in November 1999 both the Head of Regional Police (November 5) and the Commander of Military Region (November 26) were replaced. The new officials began to socialize an "affection approach" and tried to find a way to win back people's confidence in the security apparatus. So, it was quite unexpected that one day after December 1 celebration the security apparatus once again resorted to violence, this time to end flag flying in Timika (where the flag had been flown since November 10, 1999). The same measure was repeated at Nabire at the end of February 2000 by placing Papuan Task Force as the main target. Once again some people were shot to death on the spot. Meanwhile at Fakfak (beginning of March 2000) for the first time Red-and-White Task Force clashed with Papuan Task Force. A frightening atmosphere began to take shape, especially by inciting a group of people to fight against another group (a horizontal conflict began to emerge).
12. During the course of both Great Deliberation and Papuan Congress II the security apparatus allowed the Papuan Task Force to maintain order. A very disturbing event (and difficult to understand) took place when after the Deliberation as well as The Congress some leaders were summoned by the police to be interrogated and charged with "getting involved in unlawful activity". Meanwhile both events were held with the consent of the security apparatus and in both cases the leaders of the security apparatus stated that the results of the meetings could be accepted. Thus the attitude of the security apparatus was considered as highly ambiguous.

13. Such ambiguity was once again proven after the Papuan Congress II, as it was found out that "TNI personnel" was involved in an enquete where ordinary people of a hamlet were asked to fill in a form to state whether they supported M (freedom) or O (autonomy). Although officials denied their involvement, it was confirmed that TNI personnel were involved in such activity (in Taja as well as in Biak, and probably in some other places as well).

Based on points elaborated above, it is clear that the atmosphere enveloping Papuan community becomes unclear, floating, as if everything is allowed. This development occurs as the ruler, which is expected to give the guarantee of the rule of law, did not take decisive steps, on the contrary it tended to "allow" everything to happen. Consequently, in all facets of life, law is felt no longer functioning.

### **III. Considerations into the Future**

Seeing into the future, we can draw one's attention to a number of considerations or suggestions, as follows:

1. First of all, an atmosphere of openness should be created. Such an atmosphere could only be created, if all parties are ready to take a stand of "listening to others first" in order to perceive what are really happening and what the backgrounds are.
2. An understanding of the situation should necessarily be revealed in a clear confession by the ruler (state agencies, parliament, civilian government as well as the armed forces/police) that mistakes have been committed. Such a confession is highly needed

in order to avoid an impression that only one party can be at fault: namely the people. Meanwhile the other party is free of mistakes.

3. In order that the atmosphere we have in mind could be created, all kinds of unreasonable interrogation should be totally stopped; ambiguous attitude of the security apparatus is not helpful at all, especially if it is mixed with the utilization of religious elements. The holding of enquete in the aftermath of Papuan Congress II by TNI personnel was yet another indication why a change in the climate is heavily depended on the honesty of the security apparatus.
4. In view of the emphasis on the straightening of history as desired by the Papuans, it is highly recommended that an evaluation of historical facts be held together in a freshening atmosphere of openness.
5. The revocation of Military Operational Region status of the whole Papuan territory in October 1998 should be followed by visible reduction in non-organic TNI elements, which frequently took unnatural and concealed measures. There is a strong impression that their role does not reduce after the revocation of the Military Operational Region status.
6. As long as the security apparatus continues to resort to violent actions, such as the one recently occurred in Nabire, TNI/Police would remain to be experienced as human right violators; a charge that was supported by facts. It would be excellent that the domination of the security apparatus in Papuan territory is terminated, and the civilian government is given a chance to prove itself as the power holder in the territory.
7. A transparency of all elements of the ruling power is highly needed, so that what is right could be seen by the public as right, and what is wrong could be seen as wrong.

8. A dialogue is urgently needed to reestablish the role of each element of security controller; in this case it is particularly important to hold a negotiation with traditional leaders about the status and role of Papuan Task Force, so that its status and function could be seen clearly by wider sections of the public. At the same time all efforts made by TNI to form a rival task force (Red-and-White Task Force) should be totally stopped. This factor is very important, because in our observation a polarization between these two "security elements" is very dangerous to social atmosphere and would polarize all natural struggles into unchecked radical horizontal clashes.
9. Not less urgent is law enforcement (especially land law) in Papua. As the state recognition of elements of traditional rights was not clear, in addition to the spirit of M. Aspiration struggle, the public began to act beyond acceptable limit and began to take justice in their own hands. This tendency became more obvious in a number of ongoing land cases as well as the closure action on a number of government as well as private offices. It is necessary to reformulate land law so as to respect traditional rights and at the same time to guarantee the interests of ordinary people in a wider sense of the word.
10. In order to create a dialogue climate, the progressive step taken by President Wahid, such as the admission of state mistakes and the "oral" official announcement of the name of Papua should be followed up by (a) handling a number of cases of human right violations seriously in the form of the establishment of human right court; and (b) formal announcement of the name of Papua as a form of recognition of Papuan people's identity.
11. Another condition for a real dialogue is the government readiness to review all economic policies that did not empower Papuan people.

12. A recognition of the Papuan National Front (FNP) is highly expected, as in our evaluation the FNP could be used as the principal means to raise GERASEM to the level of healthy and natural political dialogue and struggle.
13. In particular the government should necessarily give a chance to civil servants and intellectuals to play more active role in social movement in Papuan territory. Up to now it is obvious that intellectuals have not been present in the reorganization of social movement, since they were "afraid", and were not allowed "to speak freely" because of their status as civil servants, etc. The absence of this group is very harmful to the importance of the present struggle and perpetuates an "ambiguity", because it is not clear which side those community figures really belong to.
14. Finally, it can be said that religious institutions are still trusted in Papuan territory, so that they could be relied as a mediating element in dialogues that are unconditionally necessary. Churches are ready to take up such a role, provided that it remains clear that churches (or religious elements) would not be misused by the government.

The above are our views as the leadership of Catholic Church in Papua, and we thank you for your attention.

Jakarta, June 27, 2000

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