

Divided And Betrayed!

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Papua, the western half of the island of New Guinea, has been a province of Indonesia since 1969. Formerly the Dutch territory of Netherlands New Guinea, administrative responsibility was ceded to Indonesia in 1963. In 1969, Indonesia's sovereignty over the territory was acknowledged after the 'Act of Free Choice' (*Penentuan Pendapat Rakyat*) was conducted. This controversial vote, characterised by intimidation and fear, was held despite serious reservations by the United Nations.² To this day, the majority of indigenous Papuans harbour serious misgivings about this vote.

Beset by some of the most grinding poverty, lowest average life expectancies and worst unemployment in the Indonesian Archipelago, the Papuan people have been peacefully voicing their aspirations for greater participation in their political and economic affairs. The indigenous Papuans are some of the most marginalised and victimised people in Indonesia. In Papua, the expression of political beliefs and opinions often leads to arbitrary detention, torture and extra-judicial killings by security forces.³

The exploitation and expropriation of Papuan ancestral lands and natural resources are major grievances. For example, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the enormous Grasberg gold and copper mine, located near Timika in southern West Papua and operated by New Orleans, USA-based Freeport McMoRan's Indonesian subsidiary, provided the largest single source of taxes to the Indonesian government's coffers.⁴ The traditional way of life of the local indigenous people has been irreparably damaged, with few benefits trickling down to them.

After the fall of Suharto in 1998 the Papuan people, working with religious and civil society groups, have been peacefully voicing their aspirations, demanding an open dialogue with the government to settle numerous grievances.

Since 2003, Papua experienced a number of negative developments, including a marked increase in violence and intimidation by security forces, impunity and conflicting central government policies.

Increasing violence and heightened militarization

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² *Report of the Secretary-General regarding the Act of Self-Determination in West Irian*, Document A/7723. See also: Saltford, John (2003) *The United Nations and the Indonesian Takeover of West Papua, 1962-1969: The Anatomy of Betrayal* (London: Routledge Curzon).

³ For reports on these violations over the last years see the annual chronology (and comments) as published by the Office for Justice & Peace of the Catholic Diocese of Jayapura (SKP Jayapura) in *Memoria Passionis di Papua* (1999, 2000 and 2001). The 2002-3 edition of *Memoria Passionis di Papua* is being prepared.

⁴ Leith, Denise (2002) *The Politics of Power: Freeport in Suharto's Indonesia* (Manoa: University of Hawaii Press).

In 2003, the level of violence in Papua increased, especially in the Central Highlands. On 4 April, the arsenal of the military post (Kodim) in Wamena was broken into⁵. A military operation was immediately launched, as if the identity of the perpetrators and their hiding place was a foregone conclusion. No proper official investigation was conducted. The military operation moved systematically from one village to the next claiming many victims: people were killed, others detained and mistreated, while scores of people fled the area due to a well-founded fear of persecution. On 5 November 2003, security forces extra-judicially executed 10 men suspected of involvement in separatist activity in Yalengga. No official investigation or inquiry was conducted. Questions were raised about the ease with which the Indonesian Army (TNI) accused the Free Papua Movement (OPM) and Papua National Army (TPN) of engineering the event, without examining other possible suspects. Protests by the community were to no avail. The result was that the local community became the target of the military operation, regardless of guilt or innocence.

Alarmed by the reports from religious leaders in Papua, as well as by NGOs, the National Commission for Human Rights visited the area in September 2003 and reported the findings of its investigation to President Megawati Sukarnoputri (November 2003). The Commission decided that the 'Wamena Case' be reinvestigated by the Commission, as it had found strong indications of human rights abuses by the TNI.

In the wake of the upcoming general elections, security forces claim that OPM/TPN elements might want to disturb the elections and, therefore, preventive security measures, including additional security forces, are being dispatched to remote parts of the territory. Military operations are being conducted in the Sarmi area where one suspected OPM leader has been killed and others are being chased⁶.

From Timor Leste to Papua

One of the events determining the social atmosphere in Papua is the formation of a militia group: the Red and White Defense Front (Front Pembela Merah Putih or FPMP) in Timika⁷. The FPMP is led by Eurico Guterres, the feared nationalist leader of militias who operated with the complicity and support of the Indonesian security forces in East Timor in 1999. Meeting at the office of the local military commander (Koramil) in Timika, the leadership of the FPMP Timika-branch was decided on and published on 12 November 2003 in the *Radar Timika* newspaper.

The disturbing appointment of General Timbul Silaen on 1 December 2003 as the new Head of the Regional Police in Papua is a serious cause for concern since he has been reported as one those responsible – during his tenure as East Timor police chief – for human rights abuses in East Timor in 1999, although he has been cleared by the central government-sponsored court that tried his case.

Alarming new restrictions on freedom of expression

In a relatively short time-span, a joint instruction by the Governor of Papua, the military leader (Pangdam), the police chief (Kapolda) and the chief attorney prohibited observances commemorating the 10 – 11 November 2001 murder of local political leader Theys Eluay, as well as the 1 December celebrations of the Papuan historical day. This directive was followed on 11 November 2003 by a warning of the chief attorney of Papua to withdraw from circulation a recently published booklet from circulation that recounts the murder

⁵ A detailed report has been published by a coalition of NGOs, including SKP, LDP, ELSHAM, LBH and KONTRAS, *Laporan awal investigasi kasus Wamena (Initial Report of the Investigation of the Wamena Case)*, Jayapura, 7 May 2003.

⁶ OPM leader Mr. Warisman was killed by the military on 12 March *Cepos 20 February 2004*; the military operation is still underway and is now assisted by the Mobile Brigade (Brimob) of the police forces (*Cepos 18 March 2004*).

⁷ *Radar Timika*, 12 November 2003

of Theys Eluay. On 13 November, security forces pulled down the memorial for Theys Eluay in Entrop. The explanation given by the authorities was that the text on the board was considered "as containing sentences with a bad connotation."⁸

Once more, the "creation of suspicion" was brought to the fore by the news from Jakarta, where the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces (KSAD), General Ryamizard Ryacudu, called attention to the need to monitor the security situation in Papua, because foreign elements have supposedly started to "play their games."⁹ Parliamentary Commission (DPR) member Tasril Ananta Baharuddin¹⁰ said that the latest method of intervention by foreign elements in Papua is through research institutes or civil society organisations, groups that were accused of undertaking covert activities under the pretence of democracy, human rights and environmental conservation. Such statements indicate that research institutes and civil society organisations are viewed as "supporting the separatist movement." Add to it the latest move by Commission I of the Central Parliament in Jakarta that advises the government to apply martial law in combination with a joint military operation in Papua. Meanwhile, respected institutions in Papua, such as the Governor, Parliament of Papua, the police, and civil and religious organisations have publicly taken a stand against this opinion of the parliamentary commission, regarding it as baseless.¹¹

Continuing impunity

To this date, a number of important cases involving human rights violations by the security forces are pending due to a refusal by the authorities to cooperate with criminal investigations. One such example is the Abepura case (December 2000), scheduled by the Human Rights Court in Makassar. Police authorities simply refuse to hand the suspects – active duty police officers – over to the court explaining that both suspects are still serving.

The end of Special Autonomy: the Papuan people betrayed

The Special Autonomy Law (UU 21/2001) promised genuine political participation and a more equitable allocation of resources to the Papuan people. The international community — including the United States and the European Union — was greatly encouraged by this policy that was heralded by Jakarta as a new openness to its troubled provinces, Papua and Aceh. In the case of Papua, the implementation of a Presidential Decree (Inpres No. 1/2003) in January 2003 ordering the accelerated division of Papua into two or more new provinces completely contradicts the law on Special Autonomy. In practice, Presidential Decree No. 1/2003 overrides the Special Autonomy Law. In fact, the spirit and goal of Special Autonomy – as negotiated by Papuan community leaders – has been undermined by Jakarta. The process of the province's partition has caused competition and division among the elite in Papua. There are a number of different agendas often linked to personal ambitions, which are co-opted by political /economic interest groups in Jakarta. The result is an increasing lack of solidarity among the leaders in Papua, while the people suffer for want of effective, unified leadership.

Conclusion

Given the tumultuous past years for Papua, we conclude that positive, peaceful aims and wishes of the religious in Papua – including the Buddhists, Catholics, Hindus, Muslims, Protestants – are losing out

⁸ *CePos*, 14 November 2003

⁹ *Media Indonesia*, 27 November 2003

¹⁰ *Media Indonesia*, 27 November 2003

¹¹ *CePos*, 23 - 26 January 2004

against the cynical political scenario manipulated by the central government, and against heavy-handed use of force by security forces. International monitoring of the human rights situation in Papua is required. Moreover, Indonesia must be pressured to put an end to all efforts – covert or overt – to create militia or paramilitary groups that serve political purposes and fuel horizontal conflicts in the Papua community. The international community could better monitor the human rights situation in Papua if Indonesia – a member of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) – ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.