



U.S. looks to improve ties with Indonesian special forces, stage exercises

By Reuters last updated: 30/05/2019



U.S. Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan (L) shakes hands with his Indonesian counterpart Ryamizard Ryacudu (R) during a press briefing after their meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia, May 30, 2019.

By Idrees Ali and Nilufar Rizki

JAKARTA (Reuters) – Acting U.S. Defence Secretary Patrick Shanahan met his Indonesian counterpart on Thursday as the United States looks to improve ties with an Indonesian special forces unit that have been limited due to human rights abuses in the 1990s.

During a trip to Jakarta by Shanahan's predecessor, Jim Mattis, last year, Indonesia said it was hoping he could help ease American limitations on contacts.

The United States announced in 2010 that it had lifted its outright ban on U.S. military contacts with the Indonesian special forces unit, known as Kopassus, which was accused of rights abuses in East Timor as it prepared for independence.

But legal restrictions meant to ensure the U.S. military does not become entangled with rights abusers prevented contacts with Kopassus from advancing beyond preliminary levels, U.S. officials say.

The two sides said in a joint statement after the meeting between Shanahan and his Indonesian counterpart, Ryamizard Ryacudu, that the United States was looking to normalise relations with Kopassus and hold a joint exercise in 2020.

"Both ministries affirm support for the expansion in our army to army exercise next year, and by normalizing the Army special forces relationship beginning in 2020 with a Joint Combined Exercise Training with KOPASSUS," the statement said.

The meeting also comes amid increasing tensions between China and the United States.

Indonesia has clashed with China over fishing rights around the Natuna Islands detaining Chinese fishermen and expanding its military presence in the area in recent years.

In 2017, Indonesia renamed the northern reaches of its exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea the North Natuna Sea, a change seen as a significant act of resistance to China's territorial ambitions in the South China Sea.

Thursday's joint statement also said both ministries "support the possibility of increased information sharing and exchange of views on an assessment of regional threats by using ASEAN Our Eyes (AOE) as the platform for strategic information exchange among ASEAN Member States."

Indonesia and five other Southeast Asian nations launched the "Our Eyes" intelligence pact last year aimed at combating Islamist militants and improving co-operation on security threats.

Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country, has in recent years struggled to contain a resurgence in home-grown radicalism inspired in part by the Middle Eastern militant group Islamic State.

The two countries also discussed conducting underwater surveys to ensure that the wrecks of World War Two warships in Indonesian waters are left undisturbed. There have been reports of looting of sunken ships by marine salvagers.

"Both ministries discussed the importance of supporting the sanctity of remains entombed in vessels like the World War Two wreck, USS Houston, and of cooperation to identify U.S. remains in Indonesia," they said in the statement.

Two West Papuan people tortured to death by Indonesian prison guards

MAY 4, 2019 FREEWESTPAPU.ORG

On 24th April, ten West Papuan people were brutally tortured by Indonesian prison guards for allegedly trying to escape Abepura prison.

25 year old Maikel Ilinmaton was killed on the day, while his friend Selyus Logo died from his injuries on 3rd May

According to West Papuan media outlet **Tabloid WAN**, after trying to escape, the ten people were handcuffed by the security guards and were then each taken to individual 2 x 2 meter rooms which made it difficult for them to breathe and get fresh

air. They were then kicked and beaten with sticks and wood and shocked with electric voltage. Nine others were in critical condition. They were taken to the Bhayangkara hospital where Selyus Logo tragically died from his injuries on 3rd May. Tabloid WANIS is reporting that the Abepura Prison authorities are trying to cover up the incident and may have paid local media to do the same.

Those responsible for the deaths of Maikel Ilinmaton and Selyus Logo and the torture of the other inmates must be prosecuted and there must be a full investigation into this appalling abuse of human rights.



MAIKEL ILINTAMON

25 year old West Papuan man tortured to death by Indonesian Security officers. He and 9 of his friends were kicked, beaten and electrocuted for trying to escape Abepura prison. His friend Selyus Logo also died from his injuries ten days later.

24th April, 2019

The Free West Papua Campaign calls upon Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and all human rights groups to help investigate and document this terrible case.

Rest in Peace Maikel Ilinmaton and Selyus Logo.

Race, Islam and Power': A troubling tour through a pained land

DUNCAN GRAHAM THE JAKARTA POST 4/5/19

Inside view: Andreas Harsono's new book 'Race, Islam and Power' is a discomforting read for anyone who cares for the moral development of this nation. (Courtesy of Monash University Press)

Visiting outlying islands in this sprawling archipelago reveals an unease felt about Java, "the denominator of Indonesia". From Aceh to West Papua live citizens who see the nation's largest ethnic group as oppressive colonists.

First President Sukarno used a common language, universal education and the non-denominational Pancasila philosophy to create the "unitary state".

When these did not work, persuasion turned to force.

In his new book *Race, Islam and Power*, human rights activist Andreas Harsono explains the damage incurred on "wonderful Indonesia" as a result of violence.

This was never meant to be a jolly travelogue. The author quotes West Sumatran poet Leon Agusta (1938-2015): "They're the two most dangerous words in Indonesia: Islam and Java", to which Andreas adds: "Muslim majority and Javanese dominance".

Despite efforts from people like Andreas to bring human rights issues to the fore, this year's election campaigns focused little on such issues.

Nevertheless, perhaps some voted against Prabowo Subianto because of questions about the former general's actions in the Army. Others might have rejected Joko "Jokowi" Widodo, reasoning that he dodged confronting post-1965 cases of persecution, despite having previously promising to open discussion on human rights.

Little has happened to reconcile the state with the survivors and the families of the real or imagined Communist victims who were never charged under the law. The guilty still control. Dealing with unresolved shame is not a problem exclusive to Indonesia. Australians are grappling with a new understanding of their nation's past as historians are openly having discussions on massacres targeted at the Aborigines right into last century.

Consider the continuing cruelties: In Aceh, men who love each other and unmarried women who love men get whipped in a medieval public ritual in front of smartphones. People who have made mild comments about faith are put behind bars for blasphemy.

Across Indonesia, hate fermented against gays is brewed by religious leaders. Ahmadiyah sectarians get persecuted, as do followers of minority mainstream faiths.

Indonesians love the outsider-imposed label of tolerance, but this is continually threatened; robust analysis mainly comes from foreign academics, safe on campuses far away.

At last comes a critic with credibility from within. As a local, Andreas risks confrontations. In pre-independence East Timor a soldier demanded: "Are you red and white (a nationalist)?" Andreas said he was an impartial journalist. Fortunately only his visit was terminated.

During Soeharto's authoritarian New Order government, Andreas, an Indonesian with ethnic Chinese heritage, would have understood that discrimination is pervasive.

In Salatiga's Satya Wacana Christian University in Central Java, he followed lectures by the late George Aditjondro, a sociologist and author who was so powerful a critic of Soeharto (he likened the president to an octopus) that he fled to Australia to avoid arrest.

His teachings and writings raised questions about Indonesia's governance and the nature of Benedict Anderson's "imagined community". The late US scholar also quashed the view that only Westerners can be colonialists. Andreas has become a torchbearer for the freedoms they championed.

Although he enrolled in electronic engineering school, writing for student unions revealed he had a talent for journalism. After a year with this newspaper, he became the Jakarta correspondent for Bangkok's The Nation English language daily. He also won a prestigious Nieman Fellowship to study journalism at Harvard.

Through reporting, he has seen far more of his country than most. Along the way he realized that daily reporting was not effective enough in providing information that would allow the world to understand Indonesia.

The result is this political travelogue, subtitled Ethnic and Religious Violence in post-Soeharto Indonesia. The title is clumsy, the cover drab. There's no index, but there is a handy list of sources. The prose is excellent.

This is a disconcerting read for anyone who cares for the moral development of this nation. It is also a counterweight to the glossy mags promoting Indonesia as a land fit for hedonists.

This is sweaty and edgy journalism. It can also be dangerous. In 2004, activist Munir Said Thalib was assassinated on a Garuda flight to Europe. The case remains unsolved.

For 15 years Andreas has been where the pain is raw, where the wee folk live, work, travel and get jailed, hearing their authentic stories of discrimination and repression, their anger and puzzlement: Was this the land our heroes promised in 1945?

"What they learned at school was totally different from what they saw in their real life," he writes. "I hear this over and over throughout Indonesia."

Race, Islam and Power has been published in Australia in English, the language Andreas used, as he was "trying to speak to an international audience about violence in Indonesia [...] especially policy makers, academics, opinion leaders".

No local press organizations would handle the work, which proves the author's point about the country's fear of confronting the past; yet society's betterment depends on its citizenry knowing about the state's real history.

Andreas' work aims to build a better nation by exposing truths. Those who agree with George W. Bush's quote "you're either with us or against us" might call the author a traitor; yet critics can be finer patriots than jingoists – and more effective.

Andreas has been a Jakarta-based researcher since 2008 with international NGO Human Rights Watch and he is often its spokesman. His statements are measured and fact-based – as they are in this book.

This is important because villainy thrives when far from public view. When atrocities are revealed, doubt dampens outrage if accusations are shrill and facts vague. Could these gentle friendly folk really be so brutal – and if so, why?

Sadly, tragically, yes. There's been slaughter and dispossession from Sabang to Merauke, a route Harsono has traveled and meticulously studied.

Democracy is "people power", though not for losing politicians trying to force their interests through street protests. They tread a dangerous track.

The same goes for those howling religious hate. This book shows these roads will never lead to the respected nation the founders imagined and the people desire.

Race, Islam and Power
by Andreas Harsono.
Monash University Press,
2019.

Waffling on West Papua

• By Dan McGarry May 22 2019 Daily Post Vanuatu



Foreign Minister Ralph Regenvanu (background) and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres during a visit to Port Vila's seafront.

During his visit to Port Vila last weekend, United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres was confronted with questions about West Papua. The matter was on the agenda during a bilateral meeting held between Mr Guterres and key Government officials, including Prime Minister Charlot Salwai and Foreign Affairs Minister Ralph Regenvanu.

In a joint press conference, Mr Salwai was unequivocal about Vanuatu's continued commitment to support and help drive the decolonisation process globally, and especially in West Papua.

The UN head did little more than acknowledge the PM's words in his own prepared remarks. Mr Guterres also responded to questions on the topic from the media. The following exchange occurred during an interview with Agence France Presse. He had little more to offer there.

The most serious deforestation, the most serious ecological trouble, as well as the most serious human rights abuses in the whole Pacific are happening in West Papua, the interviewer said. Shouldn't the UN be doing more to try and stop the human right abuses, and the ecological disaster that is unfolding there? Mr Guterres did little to raise expectations of a resolution to this crisis any time soon.

"There is a framework in the institutions, namely the human rights council... there are special procedures, there was a panel, that recently made a report on those issues, a report that was then presented internationally. Indonesia also responded. So the UN is doing its job, with a major concern that there and everywhere, human rights are respected." The problem is, he was told, that Indonesia is blocking Pacific island delegations, and they also appear to be blocking the UN Human Rights Commission from visiting West Papua. At the moment, all international media is banned. Again, shouldn't the UN be doing more to open up West Papua?

The Secretary General appeared to grant that there were indeed concerns about access to the area.

"The Human Rights High Commissioner has reaffirmed availability to visit the territory, and that remains our concern, and our objective."

So, if Indonesia says no, he was asked, there's nothing anyone can do, even the UN?

"As I said, we had the institutions working, we have a panel of experts, but there are also from our side strong commitments there and everywhere."

In Indonesia, a flawed certification scheme lets illegal loggers raze away

Hans Nicholas Jong on 16 May 2019



Forest in West Papua. Image by Rhett A. Butler/Mongabay

- *The seizure of more than 400 containers of illegally logged timber in a series of busts since last December has shone a spotlight on Indonesia's mechanism for certifying legal timber.*
- *Some of the wood has been traced back to companies certified under the country's SVLK scheme. That's the same scheme that the EU relies on to ensure that its imports of Indonesian timber are legally harvested.*
- *The seizures and findings by activists highlight increased illegal logging in the relatively pristine eastern Indonesian regions of Maluku and Papua.*
- *Companies engaged in illegal logging exploit a variety of methods, from cutting in abandoned concessions to using farmers' groups and indigenous communities as fronts for harvesting in areas that would otherwise be off-limits for commercial logging.*

A massive series of seizures of timber from rare tree species has thrown into question the effectiveness of Indonesia's existing mechanisms to tackle illegal logging. Officials have in recent months confiscated 422 containers packed with illegally harvested timber from the eastern regions of Papua and Maluku. The latest seizure, in February, comprised 38 containers filled with highly prized merbau, also known as Borneo teak and Moluccan ironwood, from the Aru Islands of Maluku province.

Prior to that, officials seized 384 containers loaded with timber from Papua worth an estimated 105 billion rupiah (\$7.2 million) in four separate sting operations since last December.

None of the shipments carried valid documentation, said Rasio Ridho Sani, the head of law enforcement at the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry, which coordinated the seizures.

"This brings the total number of containers we've seized to 422. This is a huge number," Rasio told reporters in Jakarta.

Illegal logging cost Indonesia 170 trillion rupiah (\$11.7 billion) between 2004 and 2010, according to a study by the NGO Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW). Historically the illegal timber trade has targeted the precious hardwoods of Borneo, Sumatra and Java, in particular teak. But as the forest cover on those islands fast diminishes, illegal loggers are increasingly turning to the less-developed eastern regions of Maluku and Papua.

Muhti Barri, a campaign manager with the NGO Forest Watch Indonesia (FWI), says the recent seizures signal an increasing trend of illegal logging in those regions.

"Illegal logging in Papua and Maluku isn't something new. In North Maluku, illegal timber has been sent out of the islands since 2014," he told Mongabay. "But in terms of quantity, there's indeed been an increase in the past few months."

Rasio confirmed a similar trend out of Papua. "We handled around 21 cases [of illegal logging] in Papua in the past three years, but they were small in terms of quantity, usually just three to four containers at a time," he said.

"The recent ones were big."

Working with prosecutors, the ministry has charged at least 21 individuals from various companies in connection with the illegally logged timber.

Certification shortcomings

These cases provide strong evidence that Indonesia's timber legality certification system, or SVLK, approved for timber exports to the European Union, isn't working, says Syahrul Fitra, a legal researcher with the environmental NGO Auriga Nusantara.

The SVLK system aims to track the chain of custody of timber products and ensure that timber is harvested in compliance with Indonesian law. Introduced a decade ago, it's been criticized for its apparent shortcomings since then. In 2013, Auriga and a coalition of forestry NGOs identified what they said were a host of loopholes in the certification system.

"We found some industrial plantation companies in Riau [province, in Sumatra] which were implicated in corruption to be certified [under the SVLK system]," Syahrul said. "There were also problematic companies in West Kalimantan and Central Kalimantan [in Indonesian Borneo] which got certification. That means their timber is perceived as legal."

Since then, the NGOs have been pushing for the government to improve the system to prevent illegal logging. When the EU approved of the SVLK in 2016 as the basis for importing timber into its market, after years of intense negotiation, the NGOs monitoring the implementation of the scheme expressed hope that there would be an improvement in the system.

"But to date, the system has never been revised," Syahrul said. "And the loopholes are huge. Illegal logging keeps

happening and there's no change at all. Maybe now the SVLK system is perceived to be more stringent because it has already been approved by the EU, but in reality there's no change."

One of the loopholes is the lack of what's known as chain of custody verification. This means that sawmills that are SVLK certified aren't required to source their timber exclusively from similarly certified logging concessions. This allows ostensibly certified companies to essentially launder products from uncertified operations through their certified concessions, making it likely that illegally logged wood is being shipped abroad as legal exports.

An official in the environment ministry's sustainable forest product department said separately that his office had found evidence of this loophole being exploited by at least three logging companies.

This article has been abridged. Full story at

<https://news.mongabay.com/2019/05/in-indonesia-a-flawed-certification-scheme-lets-illegal-loggers-raze-away/>

Mongabay Series: Indonesian Forests

Indonesian Election

." <https://www.ulmwp.org/boycott-of-2019-indonesian-election-successful-60-of-west-papuans-didnt-vote>

Indonesian President Jokowi is on track to be relected again although Presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto said he will reject the official election result arguing that a "structured, systematic and massive" vote-rigging had plagued both the presidential and legislative elections on April 17. The official result is set to be announced by the General Elections Commission, or KPU, on May 22.

Benny Wenda as chairman of the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP) declared a boycott of the presidential and general elections. As ULMWP Chairman, I urge all West Papuans and all those sympathetic with the West Papuan cause to boycott the April elections. We don't want a new Indonesian colonial ruler – we want our freedom. We have tried participating in the elections of the colonial master before – but we are still killed, tortured and discriminated against every day. Instead of playing the games of the imperialist, the ULMWP declares April 5, 2019 a global day of action for West Papua: the Rally for Referendum. These elections are not for the Papuan people – they are for Indonesia. I'm calling on all of my people, whether rich or poor, civil servant or worker, military or civilian, from village or city, to peacefully boycott the Indonesian elections on April 17. We know what we want – our freedom. I call on you all to prepare for an inevitable referendum on independence and intensify the struggle against the Indonesian occupation. We respect Indonesia's right to hold elections in its own territory, but we will oppose the elections of the coloniser when they are forced upon us.

In a statement on 18 April, the ULMWP estimates that 60% of voters had boycotted the 2019 Indonesian elections in West Papua. While voting did not take place in many polling stations on Wednesday 17 April as the ballots had not been delivered, it is the boycott by voters that has reduced participation to record lows. Benny Wenda,

Chair of the ULMWP said "This is the first time in our history that 60% have boycotted the Indonesian elections in West Papua. It's a great achievement, and the second time that the West Papuan people have not joined the Indonesian presidential elections." "The boycott is growing – more people boycotted this year's elections than the previous 2014 Indonesian elections. There is growing confidence in West Papua that we will be an independent state

Media banned

<https://asiapacificreport.nz/2019/04/11/indonesia-bans-foreign-media-from-covering-elections-in-west-papua/>

The Indonesian Immigration Office in West Papua has warned that it will take firm action against foreign journalists trying to cover the elections in the Melanesian region. This was emphasised by Manokwari Class II Non-TPI Immigration Office West Papua representative Bugie Kurniawan at a meeting on foreign surveillance at the Bintuni Bay regency last week.

"We will act firmly if there are foreign media [journalists] reporting on April 17. Report them to us if there are foreigners covering TPS [polling stations], we will secure and deport those concerned and enter their names on the banned list," he said.

However, in an Antara news report (12 April) it said foreign journalists and monitoring institutions could monitor the general elections in Indonesia, particularly Manokwari, West Papua province, if they secure permits and immigration documents.

"The permits can be obtained from the Foreign Ministry, Chief of the Manokwari Immigration Office Bugie Kurniawan said in a press briefing here on Friday.

The foreign monitoring institutions must be official institutions accredited by the Election Supervisory Board (Bawaslu)."Foreign monitoring institutions can monitor the elections through two ways. One of them is that they are invited by the elections' organizers such as KPU (General Elections Commission) and Bawaslu," he said.The second way is that they can file applications, while they must meet qualifications as monitoring institutions, he said.Foreign journalists wishing to cover the elections must secure a permit from the Foreigners' Visits Coordination Team (Tim Pora) at the Foreign Ministry. The team is made up of representatives from the State Intelligence Board (BIN), the National Police (Polri), immigration office and other related supervisory elements. <https://en.antaranews.com/news/123505/foreign-journalists-can-monitor-polls-in-papua-if-they-secure-permits>

Papuan students arrested at rally in Bali calling for election boycott

Kumparan – April 15, 2019



Arrested Papuan students being taken away in truck – April 15, 2019 (Kanal Bali)

Kanal Bali, Denpasar – Scores of Papuan Student Alliance (AMP) protesters from the AMP Bali City Committee (AMP KK Bali) were arrested by the Denpasar municipal police (Polresta) on Monday April 15 for holding an action during the cooling off period before the April 17 presidential and legislative elections. The students were holding an action calling on the public to *golput* – to abstain from voting – and rejecting the 2019 presidential election (Pilpres). The action had only proceeded for a short time before police moved in and took them away in a waiting police truck. “We also secured a banner with the message ‘Reject the Pilpres 2019’ and ‘Golput’. This is what they were conveying”, said Denpasar municipal police Chief Senior Commissioner Ruddy Setiawan at the Denpasar police headquarters on Monday April 15. Setiawan explained that right now it is the cooling off period before the elections and claimed that police had already told the action coordinator not to hold the action. But the protesters still took to the streets and held the demonstration. Setiawan also explained that police will conduct an investigation into what they were intending by holding the action.

“We know that the Balinese are a society that is full of tolerance, and want peace. By the holding of the action earlier, I saw that they did not want peace”, he explained. Setiawan also explained that the action did not have a police permit and the group had only provided a written notification of the protest. “They didn’t have a permit. Expressing a view in public must have a permit. But they only provided a letter (notification). We explained the situation to them but they still held it and pushed ahead [with the protest]”, said Setiawan. (kanalbali/KAD)

[Translated by James Balowski. The original title of the article was “Aksi Tolak Pilpres, Mahasiswa Papua Diamankan di Polresta Denpasar”.]

Source: <https://kumparan.com/kanalbali/aksi-tolak-pilpres-mahasiswa-papua-diamankan-di-polresta-denpasar-1qtM8tR3ppQ>

Indonesia's Papua Issue in Focus with High-Level Court Review

Lawyers are challenging Indonesia's incorporation of the volatile Papua region into its territory in 1969 with a judicial review at the country's highest court. A spokesman for a group of 15 Papuan lawyers, Agus Sumule, said Thursday the “Act of Free Choice” referendum violated Indonesia's Constitution because it was conducted in a way that grossly violated the human rights of Papuans. The 1969 referendum, supervised by the United Nations, was carried out in an atmosphere of heavy intimidation and only 1,026 hand-picked Papuans were allowed to vote on whether their region should be part of Indonesia. The vote was unanimous in favor. The referendum was also backed by the United States, which in the Cold War era was eager to maintain warmer ties with Indonesia following massacres of communists and leftists in 1965 that shifted the country into the Western-allied fold. Full Associated Press report in Diplomat at <https://thediplomat.com/2019/04/indonesia-s-papua-issue-in-focus-with-high-level-court-review/>



And a Jakarta Post report (15 April) “Lawyers, local leaders file for judicial review of Papuan referendum”. Dozens of lawyers, academics, local Papuan leaders, churches and women's organizations under the Coalition of Advocates for Truth and Justice in Papua filed an application for a judicial review of the 1969 Law No. 12 on the establishment of the West Irian autonomous province and autonomous regencies in West Irian province at the Constitutional Court on Friday. Representatives of the Coalition of Advocates for Truth and Justice for Papua file a petition for a judicial review of Law No. 12/1969 on the establishment of West Irian autonomous province and autonomous regencies in West Irian province at the Constitutional Court on Friday. (JP/Dhoni Setiawan)

Vale Father Neles Tebay

AWPA offers its condolences to the family and friends of Neles Tebay who died of cancer in Jakarta on 14 April.



An obituary: *In Memoriam Father Neles Kebadabi Tebay - 'a pioneer'" by Theo van den Broek*

<http://www.humanrightspapua.org/news/31-2019/431-in-memoriam-father-neles-kebadabi-tebay-a-pioneer>

Sogavare on West Papua

Solomon Star 25 April 2019 Author Editor

NEWLY elected Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare, once a staunch advocate for West Papua independence says he'll be taking friendlier approach to the issue. He was responding to a question on his government's foreign policy on West Papua during his first press conference on Wednesday. This was just after he received a call from the Indonesia's Embassy in Port Moresby congratulating him on his victory. Sogavare told reporters that his government will actively engage more with Indonesia on the issues surrounding human rights violation in West Papua. "The Indonesia's Embassy in Port Moresby just called me and said they are looking forward for a friendly dialogue and consultations on the issues of West Papua as friendly neighbours," Sogavare said. He clarified that at the early stage the stand that he took as the prime minister and also as the Chair of the Melanesia Spearhead Group (MSG) was because it was the position MSG took all along. "Well nothing stops individual Melanesian States to have their own foreign policy on West Papua issues but it will be really nice if we take it as a collective body to fighting against human rights violation," Sogavare said. But he added that it is a sad story when 600,000 Melanesians died, all because their rights were suppressed. He further added that as a coalition government he will certainly discuss this issue with their partners and come up with a friendly way to address the issues of our Melanesian brothers in West Papua. By ANDREW FANASIA

UK Government calls Act of Free Choice 'utterly flawed' during historic parliamentary debate

May 9, 2019



ULMWP Chairman, Benny Wenda, with Robert Courts MP, Alex Sobel MP & Helen Goodman MP following Wednesday's debate

The UK Parliament held a comprehensive hour-long debate into West Papuan human rights on Wednesday. Members of Parliament (MPs) from numerous political parties in the UK noted the historic violation of West Papua's right to self-determination, raised concern over systemic human rights abuses by Indonesian security services, and called for the UK government to review its position on West Papua.

Tabled by Robert Courts, Conservative MP, the UK Parliament heard how the 1969 Act of Free Choice 'was not a free consultation' and 'those who were selected for the vote were blackmailed into voting against independence by means of threats of violence'. The British Government's representative, Mark Field, Minister for Asia and the Pacific, admitted that the 1969 Act of Free Choice was 'utterly flawed'. Mr Courts noted that 'fundamental questions about the legitimacy of the so-called Act of Free Choice undermine the very legitimacy of Indonesian rule in West Papua'. The 1969 Act of Free Choice was the fraudulent process upon which Indonesia bases its right to occupy West Papua.

MPs from other parties raised similar concerns. Stephen Gethins of the Scottish National Party, for example, declared that 'self-determination goes to the heart of this issue'. The UK MPs also spoke of rampant human rights abuses in West Papua. Alex Sobel, Labour MP and Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on West Papua, noted that, 'in the 50 years of Indonesian control, there is significant evidence of genocide.' Several speakers discussed the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Ngada: John Howell, Conservative MP, raised the fact that 'as a result

of Indonesian activities in Nduga, 30,000 refugees have been created in just that area'. Helen Goodman MP, part of the Labour Party's Shadow Foreign Affairs team, told the House that 'white phosphorous was used inappropriately' in Nduga by the Indonesian military.

The event was the first-ever debate on West Papua held in the UK House of Commons, and came a day after the issue of human rights abuses against Papuan women was raised in a Parliamentary debate by Alex Sobel MP. Responding to the debate, the British government's representative, Mark Field, told the House that the British government is 'concerned by [...] reports of alleged human rights violations by the [Indonesian] security forces', and noted that 'there has been no real accountability for the serious abuses of the past'. The Minister also called 'for all political prisoners to be released immediately', drawing particular attention to the ongoing trial of KNPB members Yanto Awerkion, Sem Asso and Edo Dogopia, who were arrested after 'taking part in a peaceful prayer event'. More at <https://www.ulmwp.org/uk-government-calls-act-of-free-choice-utterly-flawed>

Papua Court Jails Polish Citizen for 5 Years on Treason Charge

Jakarta Globe BY : TELLY NATHALIA MAY 03, 2019



Jakub Fabian Skrzypski, 39, and his co-accused Simon Magal, seen during their treason trial in the Wamena District Court in Jayawijaya district, Papua. (Photo courtesy of antaranews.com)

Jakarta. The Wamena District Court in Papua jailed a Polish citizen for treason on Thursday in the first such case involving a foreigner in Indonesia.

The presiding judge, Yajid, assisted by Roberto Naibaho and Ottow Siagian, ruled that Jakub Fabian Skrzypski, 39, had been proven legally and convincingly guilty of having committed treason, sentencing him to five years in prison, according to state-run news agency Antara. The prosecution demanded 10 years.

Police arrested Skrzypski in Wamena, Jayawijaya district, in August last year.

The prosecution said Skrzypski first arrived in Papua as a tourist in 2007, but that he had violated the terms of his

visa by meeting with members of the Free Papua Movement (OPM) to convey the idea of Papuan independence to Europe through his writings.

"The defendant Jakub Fabian Skrzypski went to Wamena and met several people at the OPM headquarters in Puncak Jaya," one of the prosecutors, Ricarda Arsenius, said while reading out the indictment during the first session of the trial in January, as quoted by benarnews.org.

The prosecution said Skrzypski maintained regular contact through messaging applications with Simon Magal, an Indonesian from Papua, after returning to Europe, until his return in the middle of last year. Simon was his co-accused.

They were both charged with treason under Article 106 of the Criminal Code, which carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment. The Indonesian government considers the OPM a separatist group.

Simon was sentenced to four years in prison.

"On July 15, 2018, Simon Magal asked Jakub Fabian Skrzypski whether West Papuan fighters could cooperate with Poland regarding weaponry," Ricarda said.

A special taskforce of the Papua Police interrogated Skrzypski after his arrest.

Both Skrzypski and Simon's lawyers said they would appeal the sentences in the Jayapura High Court.

"A five-year sentence is too high for us; we will appeal. We're preparing the appeal file," Skrzypski's lawyer, Latifah Anum Siregar, was quoted as saying. She insists that her client is innocent.

Febiana Wilma Sorbu, another state prosecutor, said they will discuss further legal measures.

In a written statement distributed to journalists, Skrzypski said: "My case and trial are based on assumptions and lies... that my trip had anything to do with anti-state politics or military activism, supporting one side against other."

"I state that I am innocent of the accusation and I refuse any possible sentence as an unjust one," Skrzypski said in the statement, issued on May 1.

West Papuans given jail time for rebellion

Two West Papuans have been sentenced to more than a year in an Indonesian prison over a rebellion.



Yakonias Womsiwor and Erichzon Mandobar. Photo: Facebook/ Veronica Koman

The jail terms come as several cases are being levelled against West Papuan activists and rebels in the restive region.

Yakonias Womsiwor and Erichzon Mandobar were detained in September when authorities raided the office of a Papuan independence group.

According to their lawyer, on Tuesday a judge in the Timika district court sentenced Mr Womsiwor to one year and six months jail.

His co-defendant got one year and three months in prison. Both were sentenced under a criminal law for coercion and rebellion.

Lawyer Veronica Koman says she's considering an appeal of the judgement.

During their arrests in Timika, the defendants were shot several times and denied medical attention until rights groups brought attention to their case.

Mr Womsiwor was shot six times in total, while Mr Mandobar was shot once, according to Amnesty International and Ms Koman.

"They were shot without warning as the law required," Ms Koman said, adding that they were later allowed to be treated by their families.

Their arrests were part of a raid on the Timika secretariat of the West Papua National Committee (KNPB), which was later seized by police.

Earlier in the trial, police and prosecutors had claimed the men were found with ammunition and guns, which the defendants denied was theirs, according to Ms Koman. She said during the trial two police officers, including a deputy police chief, called as witnesses testified that military personnel had placed the ammunition and guns at the KNPB offices.

Ms Koman added that the sentencing on Monday did not give proper consideration to statements made by the defence.

The sentences come just days after a Polish tourist was jailed for five years for plotting to sell arms to West Papuan rebels.

Polish tourist jailed in Indonesia's West Papua files appeal

<https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/388841/polish-tourist-jailed-in-indonesia-s-west-papua-files-appeal>

A Polish tourist in Indonesia jailed for five years after meeting West Papuan rebels has filed an appeal of his sentence.

Jakub Skrzypski was sentenced last Thursday on treason charges for plotting to sell arms to the West Papua Liberation Army.

His lawyer, Latifah Anum Siregar, said she filed an appeal at the Wamena High Court on Wednesday.

She said the appeal also included Mr Skrzypski's co-defendant Simon Magal, who was given a four-year jail sentence.

Ms Siregar said the public prosecutor has filed a separate appeal, seeking to extend both men's sentences to 10 years. Rights groups have decried Mr Skrzypski's sentence as a blow to freedoms in restive Papua, where the Liberation Army is waging a bloody war with the Indonesian state.

Mr Skrzypski said last week there were issues with translations in the trial and the presenting of possessions that weren't his as evidence.

Tuesday, May 14, 2019

One killed during shootout in Nduga in Papua

News Desk The Jakarta Post
Jakarta / Tue, May 14, 2019 / 12:45 pm

At least one Indonesian Military (TNI) officer was killed in a clash with West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB) freedom fighters in Nduga regency, Papua, on Monday morning.

Papua Cendrawasih Military Command spokesman Col. Muhammad Aidi said around 20 TPNPB personnel attacked TNI soldiers who were patrolling Mugi district airfield at 11:15 a.m.

"We have identified that the attackers were a faction of the TPNPB led by Egianus Kogoya," Aidi said in the provincial capital of Jayapura on Monday as quoted by Antara. The victim, identified as First Pvt. Kasnum, was shot in the back, Aidi claimed.

"He died at 1 p.m. when being transported to Chiritas Timika Hospital by helicopter. His body will be flown to his hometown in South Aceh [on Tuesday]," Aidi said. He added TNI personnel stationed at Mugi post provided assistance to the patrol squad. The TPNPB personnel eventually retreated to the forest.

In pursuit of the TPNPB fighters, military personnel reported they found traces of blood, thus it was concluded that a number of freedom fighters were shot during the clash.

In Indonesia, no mountain is too high, no valley too low:

Papua and West Papua provinces rise to challenges of stopping polio
Report from Global Polio Eradication Initiative

Published on 14 May 2019 –
<https://reliefweb.int/report/indonesia/indonesia-no-mountain-too-high-no-valley-too-low-papua-and-west-papua-provinces>

The sun often beats down on the humid forest corridors of Papua and West Papua—the easternmost provinces of Indonesia where human and infrastructure development lag far behind the rest of the country, and a large number of the population lives well below the poverty line. Coupled with sketchy phone signals and the fact that electricity has yet to reach most parts of the two neighbouring provinces, a perfect storm was brewing, as poliovirus could sneakily circulate in ripe conditions.

On 8 February 2019, after extensive field investigations, stay past sun-down to vaccinate all Muslim students after Indonesia reported circulation of vaccine-derived po- they opened their fasts.

liovirus type 1 (cVDPV1) in Yahukimo District, Papua **Adrian, 7 years old**

Province. A polio outbreak was officially declared.

Driven by the guiding ethos of reaching every last child, local public health authorities supported by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative have developed outbreak zone service delivery strategies to reach as many children as possible including at schools, at outreach and local health

centres, door-to-door campaigns, or at churches and mosques.

Here are some inspiring testimonials and stories of the collective efforts to end the cVDPV in Indonesia:

Fasting? No problem

Mirnawati and Imelda are two ambitious immunization staff members at the Moswaren health centre in the South Sorong District of West Papua province. Once the mass immunization campaigns began in their district on 29 April, Mirnawati and Imelda headed to their local community school to vaccinate all children from ages 5-15 years. Upon contacting the school administration, they realized that the school session would be out for a week-long break, right up to the beginning of the month of Ramadan—a period of fasting for the Muslim population in the community.

Thinking quickly and willing to accommodate the Muslim students, both the immunization officers quickly coordinated with the school principal to offer vaccination on the National Education Day ceremony on 2 May. Mirnawati and Imelda also went above and beyond by offering to

“Hello, my name is Adrian Suu. I am 7 years old, and I am from Cenderawasih village in Yahukimo, Papua Province. I study in the first grade at the Lentera Harapan School, and I want to be a pilot when I grow up. I’m glad that I got vaccinated so I can be healthy and fly in a plane!”

The resurgence of poliovirus in Indonesia underscores the threat posed by low-level virus transmission and the need to maintain high routine immunization everywhere in the world to minimize the risk of circulation of the virus.

The first polio outbreak response rounds were conducted in March and April 2019, targeting around 1 million children each in Papua and West Papua provinces. While the immunization coverage has been high across West Papua and low-land districts of Papua, vaccine coverage has often been impeded in high-land districts, including the outbreak source—Yahukimo district – owing to mobile populations, dense forests and poor health infrastructure.

Www.awpaadelaide.com visit our website for more

information .

We can be contacted at info@awpaadelaide.com or phone 83454480 or 83401847.

AWPA SA inc is an incorporated Non government organisation that supports West Papuan Human Rights and their right to self determination . Our newsletter is published every 3 months. For those wanting more frequent news please email us to arrange monthly email updates .