



Jesuit Refugee Service

Diocese of Daru-Kiunga

Newsletter

JRS brings you in this second issue a collection of new stories from the months of December and January. JRS would like to take this opportunity to stress that it does not endorse any particular viewpoint in the articles. JRS seeks to bring West Papuan refugees a broad range of points of view. It is up to the individuals to make up their own mind.

Papuan Women Demand Dialog

Thursday, 27 November, 2008 | 20:21 WIB

TEMPO Interactive, Jakarta: The Papuan Women's Group Work is demanding to meet with the central government as an effort to solve fundamental problems in Papua, including human rights violations, corruption, and special autonomy implementation.

"If they were will to dialogue with Aceh, why not with Papuans?" asked Frederika Korayn from the Jayapura Justice and Peace secretariat, Papua, at a national seminar titled "Building Constituency and National Support to Fulfill Human Rights for Women in Papua" in Jakarta yesterday.

According to Frederika, Papua has been integrated with Indonesia for 42 years, yet its quality of life is declining. She cited 80 percent of Papuan women fall in the category of absolute poverty, while the education and health quality index is way below other provinces.

Moreover, the population growth in Papua has been declining since 1971, which stands at only 1.5 percent or around 1 million people. She compared it with Papua New Guinea, whose population growth increased by 10 percent or 7 million people within the same period of time.

Frederika also said that the Special Autonomy Law needs to be reviewed because it did not benefit Papuans, particularly since its implementing regulations never appeared. "We have urged them, but they would not listen," Frederika said. "To us, the special autonomy is the same as normal autonomy."

Another Papuan Women Group Work member, Hanna S. Hikoyabi, said there may be a more strategic way other than the Special Autonomy Law. She supported meeting with the central government to find the best solution. "We don't want to lose our trust in Indonesia. Therefore, we are asking for a dialog," said the Papuans Council deputy at the seminar.

Yenny Rosa Damayanti from the Indonesian Legal Aid & Human Rights Association (PBHI) in Jakarta said the unsuccessful attempt in solving human rights and political issues in Papua is caused by people's opinion on Papuans. "Because they have different skin color and hair, we feel like they are 'the others', not family," she said at the seminar. She then asked each Indonesian to redefine Indonesian people. "Are they just the Malays? Or are they Muslims?"

Another reason, Yenny said, is that people apply a double standard on the military. Every-

one rejects the military in civilian areas. Yet, they are not serious about ending militarism in Papua.

MARIA HASUGIAN

Government Criticized Over Deterioration in Papua

Jakarta Globe

November 28, 2008

Febriamy Hutapea

A lawmaker called on the government on Thursday to pay greater attention to the implementation of special autonomy for Papua Province, claiming it had not been effectively applied since being promised in 2001.

"The problems which have occurred in Papua are no longer about separatism or religious discrimination, but about the fact that Papua has been given no additional assistance since the country's independence," said Ali Mochtar Ngabalin, a member of the House of Representatives' defense and foreign affairs commission. He was speaking after a meeting in Jakarta with the former leader of the Papua Separatist Movement, Nicholas Meset.

The special autonomy law issued in 2001 mandates at least seven government regulations that deal with issues important to reconciliation in Papua, including the resolution of human rights abuses, natural resources exploration and protection of local cultures.

Many social issues had been marked with conflict because the government used soldiers, leading to human rights abuse as a way of solving the problems, Ali said.

The government should change its security approach, which had been one of dominance and intimidation and resulted in a feeling of insecurity among the people in the region, he said.

"There are many issues, like budget allocation, special autonomy and welfare which should be addressed by the government," Ali said.

Papuans, he said, have the same rights as other Indonesian citizens to enjoy equity in education, health and welfare.

Many Papuans live in poverty and are largely uneducated, despite the mining and forestry boom in the region which has included the US-based PT Freeport Indonesia.

Special autonomy fails to help native Papuans: Seminar

November 27, 2008

Erwida Maulia, The Jakarta Post, Jakarta
The special autonomy law has been in force for seven years in resource-rich Papua, but has made little difference to the socio-economic and political conditions of its indigenous people, a seminar concluded here Wednesday. The forum cited the influx of migrants from outside the country's most eastern province as a factor which keeps the indigenous people marginalized. Quoting a 2007 study by an Australian researcher, Lea Kanisia Mekiuw, of the Merauke Archbishop's Justice and Peace Secretariat, said the growth of the native Papuan population has fallen compared to that of the newcomers, sparking concerns that the indigenous people could lose their homeland to the latter.

In 1971, the indigenous Papuans constituted 96 percent of the province's total population of 923,000 people. But in 2005, the proportion changed significantly to 59 percent of 2.65 million people.

Frederika Korain of Jayapura Bishopric's Justice and Peace Secretariat, speaking at the same event, said the special autonomy law, enacted in 2001, also had failed to improve the social and cultural lives of indigenous Papuans. Eighty percent of native Papuans are living below the poverty line, with most local jobs granted to migrants instead of the typically poorly educated indigenous people, Frederika said. "Freeport (the U.S.-based copper and gold mine company operating in Papua) has been the country's biggest taxpayer since 1967, but 80 percent of native Papuans still live in absolute poverty. Poverty pockets are evenly spread throughout almost all Papua regencies," she said. Lea warned that millions of

hectares of forests have been and more would soon be destroyed due to the operations of large mining, forestry and plantation firms.

She also said that the 2007 split of the region into Papua and West Papua provinces had brought more negative impacts than benefits to the native Papuans, with many locals being forced to compete with one another to find food to eat instead of sharing an area. Other speakers in the seminar, all who came from Papua, also spoke of the poor education and health services in the province, as well as the conditions of the local women. Many cases of physical and sexual abuses were reported against native Papuan women, they added. They urged both the central and local governments to be serious in implementing the 2001 special autonomy law on Papua, including giving the indigenous people the right to earn a better living

Arrest For Bearers of Banned 'Morning Star' Flag

Jakarta Globe

November 27, 2008

Nivell Rayda

Police in Papua Province on Thursday threatened to arrest anyone who dared to raise the outlawed "Morning Star" separatist flag on the anniversary of the pro-independence Free Papua Organization, or OPM, next week.

"Just like for the rest of the year, the police will not tolerate the raising of the flag," Papuan police chief Bagus Eko Danto said. He warned that the raising of the separatist flag was considered an act of treason and carried a jail term of up to 20 years.

Bagus said several people had recently written to the police seeking permission to raise the Morning Star flag on Dec. 1 — the 43rd anniversary of the founding of the OPM. The requests were declined.

Bagus said that police were heavily reliant on the public to report people who raised or planned to raise the flag.

"Papua is a vast and mountainous, mostly uninhabited land of dense tropical forest," he said. "We don't have the resources to monitor every corner of the province."

Despite the existence of a regulation prohibiting the raising of the flag and the stiff penalties handed out to those who do it, the "Morning Star" has often been raised at rallies this year.

The latest incident saw the flag raised in the mountainous district of Puncak Jaya last week.

In July, three men were caught raising the flag in Fakfak district. The men were convicted in the same month and sentenced to 15 years in prison for treason.

At least eight other flag raising incidents in the districts of Sentani, Waena and Manokwari have been recorded in the province this year.

Bagus said that although the independence movement was very small it was difficult to suppress.

"They are very unpredictable, and flag raising is their most common tactic," the police officer said.

The OPM was founded in 1965 to fight for West Papuan independence, initially from the Dutch, and later against the Indonesian government, which took control of the resource-rich province in 1969 following a self-determination ballot held under the auspices of the United Nations, which many called a sham.

On July 1, 1971, the movement proclaimed independence but was quickly suppressed by the Suharto government.

Pro-independence sentiments in the poor province have been on the rise in recent years, fueled by discontent that Papua's riches are being siphoned off by the central government, leaving little for Papuans.

FINALLY BUCHTAR WAS ARRESTED

Cenderawasih Post,

04 Desember 2008

JAYAPURA- The Indonesian Papua police's intention to arrest Buchtar Tabuni was finally fulfilled. Buchtar Tabuni, chairman of the committee of the launch of International parliamentarians for West Papua in West Papua was arrested and taken from his house in BTN Purwodadi Sentani Timur, Jayapura Regency. Buchtar, the man with a beard was arrested by the police on Wednesday (3/12) at 11.45.

Iptu YP Senandi led the police to arrest of Buchtar Tabuni. The arrest was quick and short. It took about 5 minutes to arrest Buchtar and put him into a black police vehicle. Buchtar was crying when he was taken by the police vehicle to the police headquarter. A source said that Buchtar was not beaten

Buchtar arrived in the Indonesian Papua police headquarter in and was met by Drs Paulus Waterpauw, director of Papua police criminal unit. After that, a medical team checked Buchtar's health.

Drs Paulus Waterpauw confirmed to the journalists that there were 3 teams that went to arrest Buchtar.

Paulus Waterpauwe stated that there has been some communications with Buchtar but Buchtar insisted that he should a letter of arrest from the Police before he is taken to the police. However, the police already had enough evidence and had decided Buchtar as the accused so the arrest was immediately taken.

Mr Waterpauw regretted Buchtar attitude. According to Waterpauw, Buchtar should come alone to the police headquarter to clarify everything that he has been accused of. However,

Buchtar seemed to ignore so the police came and arrest him from his house.

Buchtar did not oppose the police when he was arrested in his home. Mr Waterpauw praised the police team who arrested Buchtar saying 'I thank the criminal operation unit who has been working very-very hard until Buchtar was finally arrested'. According to Mr Waterpauw, Buchtar status was changed from a witness into the accused because his actions had clearly against the government and lower the credibility and dignity of the Indonesian government.

There are enough evidence to arrest Buchtar as the accused in the subversive actions against the state. The order to arrest Buchtar was issued on the night of the 1st of December 2008. 'We wanted to arrest him on the 1st of December but there were some people who said he will come alone to the police headquarter, we did not arrest him'. Waterpauw said.

"We will intensively investigate him and if there are evidence, we will imprison him", Waterpauw said. Mr Waterpauw emphasized that if Buchtar is found guilty, he will be jail minimum 7 years and maximum a life sentence.

Are there any other people who will follow Buchtar? Paulus Waterpauw said that there is a possibility of other people being involved, however, the focus now is on Buchtar and this will take a long process.

Meanwhile Buchtar's lawyers, Iwan Niode SH, Latifah Anum Siregar SH and Rizal SH from Papua Democratic Alliance (ALDP) regretted

the police's way of arresting Buchtar. 'I regretted that there wasn't a letter shown to Buchtar about his arrest', One of his lawyers said.

Buchtar rejected subversive accusations against him and said that all accusations are wrong. 'It's all wrong', Buchtar said. Buchtar said he feels so hurt with what he's just experienced. He said that he has been intimidated by the police during his arrest.

Activists Demand Human Rights Review

The Jakarta Post
Thursday, December 11, 2008

Andi Hajramurni and Yuli Tri Suwarni, The Jakarta Post,

Rights activists across the country celebrated International Human Rights Day on Wednesday by staging rallies and other events expressing their views and voicing their demands about the current state of human rights in Indonesia.

In Sentani city in Papua's Jayapura regency, International Human Rights Day was commemorated by the civic group International Parliament for West Papua (IPWP) which held a photography exhibition on human-rights abuses in Papua alongside the screening of a documentary at the Theys Hiyo Eluay memorial.

"The photo exhibition presents repressive practices by security personnel in Papua in the past until now," IPWP home secretary-general Victor Yeimo said.

The exhibit includes a photo taken during the arrest of IPWP

head Buchtar Tabuni.

"The current model of oppression is a bit different. In the past whenever there was trouble, Papuans would immediately be killed, but now the practice is legal repression. People have been arrested and brought up on charges just for holding differing opinions. Buchtar Tabuni, for example, was arrested for expressing his opinion in public," Yeimo said.

In Jayapura, Papua, students from the Anti-Violence Student Alliance marked International Human Rights Day by addressing the crowd in front of the Abepura post office.

They arrived carrying posters and two coffins and spoke to the implementation of protective legislation in Papua.

"Although Indonesia has adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Law 12/2005, its implementation is still weak, especially in Papua, where the threat from militarism still directly impinges on human rights in this region," rally coordinator Zakarias Horota said.

Angela Flassy contributed to this story from Jayapura

INDONESIA: Killing of an activist

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) has obtained information that Yosias Syet was found dead in his house on 17 October 2008. The autopsy confirmed that he had been murdered and it is alleged that the murder was designed to threaten the Head of the Papuan Customary Council, Fokorus Yaboisembut, since Yosias Syet was in charge of his security.

At approximately 6:45am on October 17, Petrus Samonsabra arrived at the home of Yosias Syet and called out his name. Seeing as he did not receive any reply from Yosias, he became apprehensive, and decided to call his friend Tinus. His friend arrived at the scene, and they managed to open the window curtain from outside so that they could see through the window. Inside they saw Yosias Syet lying in bed on his right side, seemingly asleep, but since he did not react to their calls, they decided to inform the local police (POLSEK West Sentani). *(//Photo: human rights activist Yosias Syet/*
<http://www.urgentappeals.net/images/AHRC-UAC-261-2008-01.jpg>*), months earlier) /*

Ultimately Yosias Syet was found to be dead. Witnesses reported that blood had been seeping out of his mouth and nose, and there were distinct blue bruises on the right flank of the upper part of his body. Further, a wound at the joints of the victim's right hand that seemed to have been inflicted by a sharp object was detailed by the witnesses. The victim had swollen lips and his stomach was also swollen. The victim's family members moreover told of a scar around his neck, suggesting that he had been strangled with a rope. The scene of the murder was left very neat; no indications of violence or fighting, such as blood stains, were found inside the room. It was only at the door of the room that the bloody marks of a hand were found.

Yosias Syet's corpse was brought to the Hospital of Jayapura at Dok II for autopsy. Attending the autopsy was the Commander of the District Military Command (Dandim), Letkol. Kav. AH Napoleon, who gave strict looks to the doctor doing the autopsy, as reported by two witnesses. The autopsy revealed that the victim had been badly beaten, and as a result his lips were gravely wounded and some front teeth had fallen out. Additionally, the victim had wounds on his right elbow and on the right side of the upper body, as well as two internal wounds at the back of his head. Two small holes, resembling injection holes, were situated over the victim's ears, and the pathologist confirmed that blood had come out of these.

Yosias Syet's murder appears highly professional since there were few signs of violence inside the room, and the dead body was found neatly tucked in a sleeping position in bed. *(//Photo: corpse of Yosias Syet/*
<http://www.urgentappeals.net/images/AHRC-UAC-261-2008-02.jpg>*).* Photo taken on October 17, 2008)

A police investigation has taken place, however concerns have been voiced by witnesses as well as by local NGO's regarding the quality and thoroughness of the investigation at the place where the body of the victim was found. There is reason to believe that this case will neither receive the full attention of the police investigators, nor is it likely that a processing of the crime would be free of any unlawful interference.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION*:

Three days before the murder of Yosias Syet, on October 14, he was distributing leaflets appealing for a demonstration organized by the National Committee supporting the International Parliament for Papua in the villages of Dosay, Waibron and Maribu. The International Parliament for Papua was set for holding a meeting in London on 15 October 2008 and the National Committee, headed by Buchtar Tabuni, supports the organization from within Papua.

At 9pm on the following day, Yosias Syet headed to discuss further preparations for the demonstration on October 16 at the home of Daniel Done. Subsequently, Yosias Syet proceeded to the house of Petrus Samonsabra to further plan the demonstration. Finally heading home, at approximately 12:30am, Yosias Syet met Jhon Ofide on the main road in front of the Protestant elementary school SD YPK. They spoke for a little while, after which Yosias Syet went alone to his relatively isolated house in the forest.

On October 16, locals were leaving from Dosai to join the demonstration in Jayapura. Due to security forces blocking the street in Sentani however, the demonstrators could not reach Jayapura, so they decided to go back to their

villages. On the way home people began noticing that they had not seen Yosias Syet all day. On the following day, his dead body was found. (Photo: Funeral of Yosias Syet <<http://www.urgentappeals.net/images/AHRC-UAC-261-2008-03.jpg>>)

Source: Tapol

Health and human security in West Papua

The Medical Journal of Australia • Volume 189
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Susan J Rees, Remco van de Pas, Derrick Silove and Moses Kareth

The Guardian newspaper 1) and a recent commentary in the Lancet 2) have drawn attention to the health and human rights situation in West Papua. Assertions made in these articles are consistent with those in other recently published reports of the marginalisation and impoverishment of indigenous West Papuans.^{3,4)}

In considering the health of West Papuans, we apply the United Nations definition of "human security", which includes but goes beyond issues of personal and communal safety to encompass economic, environmental, educational, health and political conditions.⁵⁾ Each of these elements gives cause for concern in West Papua. Of relevance too is the World Health Organization's renewed commitment to the Alma-Ata Declaration, emphasising the importance of social and economic conditions in shaping a community's capacity to achieve optimal health and wellbeing.⁶⁾

Remarkably, the situation in West Papua has until now not received attention in the Australian medical literature. For this overview of the health situation in West Papua, we draw on existing documentation, including data collected by a non-government organisation in West Papua, Médecins du Monde. This organisation is working in primary health care and in building human resource capacity in the Puncak Jaya district in the central highlands,

with a special focus on HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. We also incorporate preliminary observations from an ongoing mental health project with West Papuan refugees in Australia.²⁾ The Australian project is applying both qualitative and clinical measures to document the histories of West Papuan refugees, explore their resettlement trajectories and acculturation experiences, and assess their psychological responses to past trauma and ongoing stresses.

From the available evidence, we draw attention to three key areas relevant to health, rights and human security in West Papua; namely, reports of organised violence perpetrated against Papuan society, the social and health status of West Papuans (with a particular focus on HIV/AIDS), and the effects of mineral extraction on the culture and cohesion of the society.

Historical context

West Papua forms the western half of the island of New Guinea. In the 1960s, the colonial power, the Netherlands, took steps to prepare West Papua for independence at the same time as Indonesia laid claim to it as part of the former Netherlands Indies. Leading Western powers granted Indonesia stewardship of West Papua in 1962, pending a referendum on independence. In 1969, after a UN-brokered referendum, West Papua was incorporated formally into the Republic of Indonesia, a process supported by Australia. However, less than 1% of the population of 700 000 actually voted in the referendum, with the overseeing chief UN officer declaring that the "Act of Free Choice" was anything but democratic.³⁾ Pro-independence

groups have continued to resist Indonesian dominion, but demands for a fully representative referendum on independence have not been heeded. With the transition from the Soeharto era,

Indonesia granted the province "Special Autonomy" in 2001.²⁾ The Special Autonomy Law No. 21 2001 involved the establishment of a West Papuan representative Council (Papuan People's Council), with the aim of giving indigenous Papuans more power over their own

affairs, protecting their basic rights, and improving their standards of

health, economy and education. In effect, it appears to have had no impact on these issues.

Allegations of repression and violence

Since the 1960s, concerns have been raised that Indonesian authorities have been responsible for a campaign of repression and violence, resulting in the deaths of a large number of West Papuans.⁴) Instances of murder and abuse have been documented³ but, because of obstacles to outside agencies' access to the province, there is no accurate documentation of the number of West Papuans killed. Indonesian authorities have not formally investigated these allegations.⁷) Nevertheless, recent reports have detailed politically motivated abuses in the province,²⁻⁴) and these reports are supported by accounts given by West Papuan refugees involved in our Australian based project. The UN Committee against Torture stated that it was

... deeply concerned about the numerous ongoing credible and consistent allegations, corroborated by the report of the Special Rapporteur on Torture and other sources, concerning routine and widespread use of torture and ill-treatment of suspects in police custody ... especially in Papua, Aceh and in other provinces where there had been armed conflicts.⁸)

Social and health status

Health care standards are lower in West Papua than in other regions of Indonesia.⁹ District health data from the Puncak Jaya district indicate that infant mortality is about 85–150 per 1000 live births, with the figure for those under 5 years of age being 30–50 per 1000 (unpublished data, Médecins du Monde). Treatable diseases, particularly pneumonia and diarrhoea, are common causes of mortal-

ity in children. Data from across West Papua suggest that malaria, upper respiratory tract infections and dysentery are the major causes of childhood morbidity.¹⁰)

Maternal mortality is three times higher than for the remainder of Indonesia,¹⁰ standing at 500–1000 per 100 000 births, with postpartum haemorrhage being a major cause.^{9,11} Medical facilities are understaffed and under-resourced. The ratio of doctors to population varies according to the area, ranging from 1 : 2000 to 1 : 23 000, with doctors being concentrated in urban areas.⁷) A Puncak Jaya legislative board report held by Médecins du Monde (Puncak Jaya District Health Office, 2008) indicated that only 8% of the district budget is allocated to health services. Clinics face a shortage of essential medications. Underfunding and lack of support have resulted in key personnel abandoning their posts, further undermining the already fragile district-level health services.

According to AusAID, the rate of HIV/AIDS in West Papua is 1.03%, compared with 0.17% in the remainder of Indonesia.^{11,12} AusAID estimates that by 2025, the adult prevalence of HIV/AIDS in West Papua could rise to 7%, compared with a projected 1.08% for the remainder of Indonesia.¹²) Data from Médecins du Monde indicate a growing HIV epidemic in the highlands, with an estimated population prevalence of 2.9%.¹³) Rapid social change associated with population movements increases the risk of spread of HIV to many areas in West Papua, including the highlands. In the financial year 2007–08, the Australian government provided a total of \$14.5 million to Indonesia to commit to West Papua for HIV prevention.¹²) In addition, the Australian government has recently invested \$100 million in a 5-year program aimed at preventing the spread of HIV in neighbouring Papua New Guinea (PNG).¹⁴) With an eye on the potential spread of HIV to Australia through the porous border with the Torres Strait, a coordinated program focusing on West Papua and PNG is imperative. Unless the approach addresses the social, political and economic disruptions in West Papua and their potential impact on the entire New Guinea landmass, a focus on

distributing condoms and initiating health promotion campaigns is unlikely to be adequate. HIV/AIDS therefore needs to be considered as a complex regional issue, with conflict and social disruption in West Papua being a major factor leading to its spread.

Effects of mining on traditional lives and well-being

The Guardian article asserts that mining operations are not complying with adequate health and safety standards, resulting in the release of toxic waste into rivers, destruction of natural vegetation, deforestation and flooding.¹⁾ As a consequence, local communities are facing the loss of their traditional livelihoods and mass displacement from their lands. In addition, the influx of large numbers of migrants from other parts of Indonesia to work in the mines and plantations is leading to fundamental changes in the demography and culture of affected regions. Unchecked migration continues to displace the poorest people from jobs and land, invariably the indigenous Papuans. The risk is that Papuans will become a minority group in their own homeland. Whereas indigenous Papuans comprised 96% of the population in 1971, they accounted for only 59% in 2005.¹⁵⁾

What we can do

Although data are limited, the evidence suggests that West Papuans are experiencing a major challenge to their human security, and that the community's capacity to improve its own health is greatly restricted when considered according to the principles of the Alma-Ata Declaration. Australia's limited focus on the health and human rights of West Papuans is notable, given that New Guinea is our closest regional neighbour and Australia's aid program to PNG is the largest in our region. A fragile political relationship with Indonesia, together with geopolitical and economic considerations, undoubtedly influence Australia's present stance. Australian medical professionals have a proud record of contributing to the health

care

of conflict- and disaster-affected societies in our region, and this tradition should extend to West Papua. We can advocate for more aid funding for health, as long as there are safeguards to ensure that projects are implemented with integrity. Greater support could be given to local and international medical organisations, both those working in the province and among refugees on the PNG side of the border, to improve primary health care, to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, and to ameliorate the psychosocial effects of trauma and displacement. Australian professionals could also forge stronger links with academic and medical institutions in West Papua, offering training and exchange programs that would assist in overcoming the isolation of health personnel in the territory.

There is a need to advocate for greater access to West Papua by the media, human rights organisations and researchers. This would allow more accurate monitoring of key indicators, providing data to clarify the impact of human rights conditions, ecological damage, and social and cultural disruptions on communal health and wellbeing.¹⁵⁾ There is ample evidence from other settings to demonstrate the adverse impact of political conflict and the neglect of human rights on the general and mental health of indigenous peoples. We can draw on experiences elsewhere to show how political instability, the disintegration of communities, and population displacement can hasten the spread of HIV and other communicable diseases.

This commentary aims to encourage Australian health professionals to play a more active role in addressing the ongoing neglect of health and wellbeing in West Papua. We have a special regional responsibility to ensure that the right to health for all applies equally to indigenous West Papuans.

Competing interests

None identified.

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Tensions Rise As Traditions Die In Highlands Of Indonesian Papua

Agence France-Presse

December 15, 2008

By Aubrey Belford

The "car wash" in the remote Baliem Valley of Indonesia's Papua region is not as innocent as it seems at first glance, and just decades ago anything like it would have been inconceivable.

A fertile basin gouged out of jagged mountains, the valley has been in contact with the outside world only since the end of World War II. Everything from clothing to metal, money and medicine is new here.

At the "car wash" on a quiet intersection in Wamena town, homeless men and boys from the villages squat by the roadside in the midday sun, drinking and waiting for cars and motorcycles to roll up.

Washing the cars brings in some money, but the real money comes from sex with the drivers. Seeing a camera, the workers point and laugh at friends lying drunk and unconscious on the ground.

In few places do modernity and tradition col-

lide as dramatically as in the Baliem Valley. Many older men go naked except for the koteka, a long gourd covering the penis, and a feather or bark fibre headdress.

Christian missionaries have made headway, but gourds are still accepted attire in churches surrounded by domed grass huts and intricate gardens for growing yams.

But change is rapid and ubiquitous, and largely directed from Indonesia, which gained sovereignty over Papua in a 1969 UN-backed vote by tribal elders which has been criticised as a sham.

The rough terrain means there is no feasible way in except by air. Everything, including construction materials and fuel, is flown in by propeller planes.

The planes also bring in settlers from other parts of Indonesia, who own most of the shops and businesses here despite being overwhelmingly outnumbered by indigenous Papuans.

"We can see that our traditions are disappearing bit by bit because of development," said Paulus Asipalek, 40, a local human rights activist who recalls a childhood when tribal wars over stolen wives or pigs were a regular danger.

"The old people remember how to make the gardens, bark fibre bags and houses," he said. "When they die it means our kids in school are going to lose this."

As traditions die, tensions brew between indigenous Papuans, Indonesian police and troops and settlers.

Human rights abuses by police and the roughly 15,000 troops sent to fight a low-level separatist insurgency are a complaint throughout Papua, where many still yearn for independence and see the Indonesians as occupiers.

Indonesian government sensitivity over separatism means Papua is usually closed to foreign journalists. AFP was allowed to enter accompanied by an agent from state intelligence, which vetted what the agency could report.

In this highlands region there is palpable rage over the shooting death of 45-year-old tribesman Opinus Tabuni allegedly at the hands of police or military -- it remains unclear -- at a ceremony for the United Nations International Day of the World's Indigenous People in August.

Tabuni was killed after police fired "warning shots" as a crowd of hundreds wearing traditional clothes raised the banned "Morning Star" separatist flag, witnesses said.

Displaying such "separatist symbols" is a crime punishable by up to life in prison in Indonesia. Some 40 Papuans are currently in prison in Indonesia for allegedly waving the outlawed flag.

"People are looking for the right moment to have their revenge" for Tabuni's death, said one witness who declined to be named.

There is little accountability from Indonesian police and troops, who largely come from outside the region and see the ethnic Melanesian Papuans as primitive, human rights activist

Theo Hese gem said.

"There's definitely racism, there's discrimination. The police will defend themselves, they'll defend migrants but Papuans cannot get justice," he said.

These days sporadic cases of torture and abuse are more common than the shootings and military crackdowns during the time of former dictator Suharto, Hese gem said, but memories of bloodshed linger.

In Kurulu village outside Wamena, where most live in grass huts and children run with bellies distended by malnutrition, 45-year-old Judas Dabi recalled the years he spent hiding in the jungle during bloody fighting between separatists and the Indonesian military in the late 1970s.

"We're still scared, scared of being shot, scared of dying," he said.

Then he glanced at AFP's intelligence services escort and added: "We're still scared. But it's safe here."

Human rights forecast poor for 2009

Adianto P. Simamora , The Jakarta Post , Jakarta | Tue, 12/23/2008

The protection of human rights across Indonesia is expected to remain bleak next year because most political parties contesting the upcoming elections lack clear vision on human rights issues, a study shows.

The study, jointly conducted by the Setara Institute and the Indonesia Legal and Human Rights Association (PBHI), found both new

and old parties showed poor commitment to promoting human rights.

"None of the political parties have prioritized protecting human rights," said a report from the study released Monday.

The report said the Democratic Party, founded by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and Vice President Jusuf Kalla's Golkar Party were among those with the worst stance on protecting human rights.

The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) and the National Awakening Party (PKB) won praise for supporting human rights.

"Most parties will only voice an opinion on human rights if it does not create a negative image for them," the report said.

The study assessed the political parties' missions and visions, their response to rights cases and their stance during the deliberations of laws related to human rights issues.

There are currently 38 parties taking part in the 2009 legislative elections, with 24 of them -- mostly senior ones -- including human rights issues in their policy package.

The study said 14 parties, including the Indonesian Entrepreneurs and Workers Party, the National People's Concern Party, the National Front Party, the Indonesian Justice and Unity Party, the Development Functional Party, the Patriotic Party and the Republican Party, failed to outline a human rights agenda in their political platforms.

"From the assessment, most parties do not recognize the concept of human rights protection," it said.

The study also assessed responses from the parties to human rights cases reported to the House of Representatives, such as capital punishment, the shooting incidents in the Tri-

sakti and Semanggi cases, the murder of noted human rights activist Munir, the abduction of democracy activists and violence against minority religious groups.

It also evaluated the opinions raised by parties during the deliberation of human rights bills in the House, including those on pornography, investment and mining.

The study found all parties supported the death penalty for serious crimes, which technically violates international principles of human rights.

"The parties have no initiative to eliminate capital punishment from the Indonesian legal system," it said.

The National Commission on Human Rights recorded an increase in the number of death-row convicts executed this year.

From January to July, six people faced firing squads, the last being the three Bali bombers -- Amrozi bin Nurhasyim, his elder brother Mukhlas and Imam Samudra.

The study said parties also offered mixed reactions to the House's plan to revive investigations into military-linked abduction of activists.

"Many parties, including Golkar and the Democratic Party, strongly rejected the re-opening of these cases."

Human rights in 2009: Year of forced choice

Usman Hamid , Jakarta | Tue, 12/23/2008 | Opinion

2009 will be the year of politics -- electoral politics to be precise. Thus, when one attempts to speculate on the human rights situation next year, the result will probably take a

very political slant. Human rights will be positioned against the backdrop of a turbulent political struggle for legislative and executive power, the result of which will determine the future direction of the protection of human rights.

Furthermore, 2009 has been marked down as the year of global economic recession. Thus, as well as being dependent on the transition of domestic power, the human rights situation will also be heavily determined by the global financial crisis and the food, clean water and energy shortages, all of which have the potential to trigger drawn out conflicts.

What can be done in this kind of environment? Not many options will be available; indeed, it will be difficult for us to determine our own hopes and choices and most probably we will have to choose among options that are not appealing to begin with -- a forced choice.

During this first decade of reform, there has been a shift in the approach to human rights, from the politics of redistributive justice to recognition politics. The first prioritizes the public interest and political substance as the basic struggle. The objective of the second is to promote identity antagonism, which erodes justice in political and economic distribution, such as in the relationship between laborers and their employers in terms of workers' rights, or farmers and landowners in terms of agricultural reform, or the issue of the poor in terms of development and gross human rights violations during the Soeharto era. These were the issues that triggered the 1998 reform, but more recently they have come to be neglected.

2008 saw a slight opening of the window of opportunity. Victims of gross human rights violations met with the President, the coordinating minister for political, legal and security affairs, the justice and human rights minister, the Cabinet secretary, the foreign minister and

even the defense minister. The President has also opened the Witness and Victim Protection Institution.

Unfortunately, the measures that President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and the current special committee of the House of Representatives (Pansus Orang Hilang) dealing with the case of enforced disappearances in 1997-1998 have taken in resolving gross human rights violations have been seen as efforts to create a good political image in the lead-up to the 2009 elections or to weaken political rivals who were involved in gross human rights violations.

These accusations could have been dismissed as groundless if law enforcement agencies and relevant ministers took a firm stance. Instead, some ministers have been too busy advertising themselves politically. They have been promoting the performances of their respective ministries, while inserting their own profiles for their own political interests, as if they fear being left behind by other candidates or parties. These promotional activities are clearly for political interests, because indeed the success of a ministry cannot be demonstrated through advertisements colored by pomp and makeup.

A simple example of the paradigm shift in human rights during the past year is the enactment of legislation based on religious-moral grounds such as the anti-pornography law or the declaration of individuals or groups as heretical -- which triggered violence -- and even the promotion of family values in political campaigns.

When the pornography bill was in the deliberation stage, the central issue in the debate was not about how serious the government was in tackling the problem or how effective the law would be in dismantling the pornography industry. Rather, it was about how virtuous people were. In other words, if one was to be con-

sidered devout and moral, then one would support the bill's enactment.

This is a dangerous shift. In various political contests, it is as if religious symbols have become the yardstick for measuring someone's suitability to be elected into a leadership position. In anticipation of the 2009 elections, public relations consultancies have helped the development of the mass media industry escalate to extreme proportions.

Political figures and alleged criminals have been turned into idols. Parties with no clear political track record suddenly emerge out of nowhere as icons of the Great Indonesian Dream. One party, formerly known for its self-proclaimed status as clean, caring and anti-corruption, suddenly put out an advertisement naming the world's most corrupt leader as one of the nation's heroes.

In another corner one can see individuals who have been named as opponents of human rights emerge as civilized intellectuals, competing in the political race by donning a new mask, such as fighter for humanity or defender of the poor.

Officially the general election has not started, but apparently in reality it is well under way, if prematurely. All the players in the next general election have started the race for gaining the most sympathy and votes. They do so by applying heavy proverbial makeup and proclaiming lip-service pledges. Their financial resources to do so seem to be boundless.

The advertising and campaign consultants know what to do and how to do it well. All the political advertisements have been scripted and produced in cinematographic quality, specifically designed to portray a certain image. Is it true that such and such a person has this particular national economic program? The advertisements offer no clarification. Advertisements in the business world often serve

more as a feel-good lie rather than a means of educating consumers. This is also the case with political advertisements. At the end of the day they diminish further the substance of democracy.

The serious repercussions of this approach to politics is that the whole process fails to yield a political leader who is genuinely struggling for politics as a virtue. This is the shape of things to come in 2009 from the perspective of domestic politics.

As 2009 is going to be the year of global recession, the increase in the number of workers subject to mass layoffs across the world will be a specific and serious issue for human rights protection in Indonesia. The drop in the average income will cost many people their basic rights, such as the right to an adequate livelihood and even the right to work.

Furthermore, the struggle for the increasingly limited resources of food, clean water and energy -- all forecast to be in crisis next year -- can trigger conflict and violence. It is the global hope that this serious problem will not meet a dead end and that the election of Barack Obama as the next U.S. president can bring about economic recovery in the United States, in turn bringing about the recovery of the global financial system.

The world's political environment next year will likely be dominated by the tensions resulting from identity politics. Aside from territorial invasions over energy sources, the Mumbai attacks have driven a deeper wedge between Islam and the West.

The present antagonism seems to ignore other possible motives. It is as if the complexity of Indian domestic politics can be simply explained away by the terrorist inclinations of al-Qaeda. In truth, however, a genuine solution to this problem will require international and inter-faith dialogues.

Against this backdrop, what is the best approach for the protection of human rights? Where does human rights protection fit in the 2009 political matrix? There will be more than 30 political parties competing in the general election, but how many of those will include human rights protection on the national agenda and in their plans for future reform?

2009 will be a year of dilemmas. We will have to choose from unacceptable choices. This is the logical consequence of impunity. Legal procedures and mechanisms have been sabotaged to ensure failure in bringing to justice those responsible for the gross human rights violations in East Timor and the various other crimes in Indonesia's history. The appearance of the alleged perpetrators on the stage for the upcoming general elections seems to throw more whitewash over actions that have been proclaimed as criminal under international human rights law.

The political stage has become an arena for the idols. It is no wonder the prospective number of nonvoters has increased. This is the political phenomenon of voters protesting by silence, because the voice of the voters will remain unheard by the candidates. Yet if this continues unchecked, the result is political death. Politics will no longer be discussed within a substantive framework.

It is hard not to be skeptical in the face of these trends. Should human rights activists raise funds so they can produce advertisements to compete with those of the political candidates? If that is the arena where the contest is to be played out, the human rights community is guaranteed to lose. Perhaps we need to cast a nostalgic eye to the past, looking at what we did before the reform, in the era when the discourse of human rights was developed as part of discussions geared toward redistributive justice rather than identity politics.

Although the situation is political, hope prevails. For example, promoting various human rights platforms to all political parties could lead to breakthroughs. Another measure that could be taken is to promote the establishment of a Pro Human Rights Parliament Caucus.

The idea for this caucus took root after a number of prominent candidates joined the election. It is not easy for them to determine the stance their parties will take. Yet it is not impossible to establish a multiparty human rights caucus to ensure the parliament will be more sensitive to human rights protection.

This can also be directed toward the struggle at the parliament level to ensure a government Cabinet that is pro-human rights. Whoever the next president and vice president turn out to be, whether or not their Cabinet is pro-human rights will be reflected in the composition of the ministers appointed, especially for the positions closely related to law enforcement and human rights, namely the justice and human rights minister, the attorney general and the National Police chief.

The writer is director of Kontras (Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence).

Euro-MP joins calls for West Papuan self-determination

FIJI Daily Post 29-Dec-2008

BRITISH Green Euro-MP Caroline Lucas sent a message of solidarity to West Papua today, as campaigners from the Indonesian-occupied province delivered a petition to Downing Street and launched a Declaration for self-determination.

Exiled West Papuan independence leader Benny Wenda was joined by UK Parliamentarians and Free West Papua supporters from all over UK for the signing of the West Papua Declaration in Westminster.

In a letter to UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband earlier this year, Dr Caroline Lucas MEP urged the UK to raise the serious abuses of West Papuan human rights during talks with Indonesian President Yudhoyono, and to demand the “withdrawal of Indonesia’s violent military presence.”

Dr Lucas, South East Green MEP, said: “Yet again, we find ourselves standing in solidarity with West Papua to remember the injustices experienced by its people, and yet again, so little has changed.

“The Papuans were promised a referendum on independence when the Dutch former colonial rulers withdrew from the country four decades ago they are still waiting,” she said.

“Meanwhile the indigenous population continues to suffer terrible repression, violence and abuse at the hands of an Indonesian government more interested in securing lucrative business deals than honouring historical agreements or obeying international law.”

Dr Lucas urged the international community to demand that Indonesia ended “its curbs on the freedom of journalists and human rights observers, withdraws its military presence, and engages in dialogue with the West Papuan leaders.”

“The Indonesian authorities must show that they take their responsibilities on international human rights seriously and grant freedom to the people of West Papua, so that they might choose their future themselves,” she said.

Former top spy cleared of Indonesian activist's poison murder

JAKARTA, Dec. 31 (AFP) - An Indonesian court on Wednesday cleared the former deputy head of the country's spy agency of masterminding the 2004 poisoning murder of human rights activist

Munir Said Thalib.

Prosecutors had been seeking a 15-year jail term for the former State Intelligence Agency (BIN) Deputy Chief Muchdi Purwopranjono for plotting the murder of the activist, who was an outspoken critic of the country's military.

The investigation into the killing is seen as a litmus test in Indonesia of how far the country has come in loosening the grip of the once-dominant military since the 1998 fall of dictator Suharto.

Munir, who died aged 38, was poisoned with arsenic as he flew from Jakarta to Amsterdam via Singapore on national airline Garuda Indonesia in September 2004.

"Muchdi Purwopranjono cannot be proved legally and convincingly to have ordered the murder of Munir," a judge named Suharto told a court in Jakarta.

"He should be removed from detention immediately," he said.

Purwopranjono was the first military official to face trial over the murder, which activists have long alleged was the work of senior intelligence officers.

Former Garuda airline boss Indra Setiawan and pilot Pollycarpus Priyanto were slapped with jail terms previously for their roles in the murder.

Munir was a prominent critic of human rights abuses by the military and provided legal counsel to victims of state violence during former dictator Suharto's 32-year rule.

Prosecutors had alleged the killing was an act of revenge after Munir had uncovered the kidnapping of 13 activists allegedly by special forces under Purwopranjono's command in the late 1990s.

The scandal led to the former general's sacking as special forces chief, according to the indictment.

But Munir's widow Suciwati said that she was disappointed by the court's decision.

"It's painful. It shows that the bad guys have won... we'll fight on," Suciwati said.

"Today we move one step back. But we'll move 10 steps forward. We have to stand united to fight for justice," she added.

About 600 Munir supporters, donning red T-shirts with the slogan "Justice for Munir, justice for all", broke into chants of "Killer, killer, killer" outside the courtroom after the verdict was announced.

But when Purwopranjono's supporters walked past they mockingly chanted: "Who killed Munir? Muchdi killed Munir."

Around 200 of the former spy's backers sang the Indonesian national anthem on hearing the verdict.

"It's an extraordinary feeling. The truth has prevailed. Purwopranjono was freed because he had done nothing wrong," said supporter Herujohan Shah.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, an ex-general who became Indonesia's first directly elected leader in 2004, has promised

to leave no stone unturned in the search for the "mastermind" of Munir's killing.

"Not only Munir's wife Suciwati, but all Indonesians who seek justice, are the victims of this. Justice has not been done," human rights activist Rafendi Djamin said.

The National Commission on Human Rights urged the authorities to do more to bring Munir's killers to justice.

"The Munir case is far from over. The police need to find more evidence and the prosecutors have to bring this case back to the court," commission head Ildhal Kasim told AFP.

"Many witnesses, especially from BIN, withdrew from being witnesses," he said.

Earthquakes Lay Waste To Manokwari, Kill Four

The Jakarta Post, Manokwari
Monday, January 05, 2009

A series of powerful earthquakes rocked Manokwari, the capital of West Papua, on Sunday, killing four people, injuring dozens and destroying hundreds of buildings.

One 7.3-magnitude tremor was felt as far away as Australia and sent small tsunamis into Japan's southeastern coast, the Associated Press reported.

The first quake, magnitude 7.6, struck at 4:43 a.m. local time about 135 kilometers from Manokwari at a depth of 35 kilometers, the U.S. Geological Survey said. Dozens of aftershocks followed.

At least four people died in Papua, where the runway of the airport nearest the epicenter was split by the force, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono told reporters.

"I've instructed emergency steps be taken to help our brothers and to restore power and other vital utilities," Yudhoyono said.

Among the dead was a 10-year-old girl, identified as Yolanda Mandofi, whose head was crushed, said local hospital director Hengky Tewu.

"Our ambulances are picking up two more," he said.

Another 19 patients at the hospital were treated for broken bones, cuts, crush wounds and other injuries.

Papua police chief Maj. Gen. Bagus Ekodanto said he had received reports that a hotel and a rice warehouse had been "destroyed", but he did not know if anyone had been killed in the incidences. A search for victims was under way.

Several stories of the Mutiara Hotel in the main city Manokwari collapsed, said Ina, a nurse at a navy hospital, adding that she had already treated 20 quake victims. The quakes also reportedly damaged the Kalidingin hotel.

Electricity was cut off to the coastal city of population 167,000, where people fled their homes in the dark fearing a tsunami, said Hasim Rumatiga, a local health official.

The quakes forced thousands of people to take refuge, including in military fields in the city, said Manokwari Military

Commander Col. Inf. Irham Waroiham.

About 1,000 residents had taken shelter in a military field, 500 in a navy field, 500 in the yard of the Manokwari regent office and 7,000 others in Masni district, which lies just outside of Manokwari city.

The Meteorology and Geophysics Agency had issued a tsunami alert, but it was revoked within an hour after it was determined the epicenter of the main quake had been within the mainland.

Quakes centered well within the mainland do not pose the threat of a tsunami to Indonesia, but can still spread large waves to neighboring countries, such as Japan.

Japan's Meteorological Agency said tsunamis 10 to 40 centimeters in height swept into towns along the coast.

The quakes were also felt in Sorong regency. The regency police spokesman Snr. Comr. Agus Rianto told The Jakarta Post the quakes had damaged 18 houses, injuring 11 residents.

The latest quakes in Manokwari occurred on Oct. 10, 2002, the largest recorded at magnitude 7.6, killing three people. Another strong quake hit in 1996, triggering enormous waves that hammered into the north coastal area of Papua, as well as Sorong, Biak and Manokwari.

Nethy Dharma Somba and Angel Flashy contributed to this article from Jayapura, Papua

Indonesia To Fly West Papuan Refugees Home From PNG

Australian Associated Press
January 9, 2009

By Ilya Gridneff, Papua New Guinea Correspondent

PORT MORESBY - More than 700 West Papuans living in Papua New Guinea are choosing to return home to the Indonesian side of the border despite claims they face human rights abuses.

The Indonesian Embassy in PNG's capital Port Moresby next month will begin flying the West Papuans to Vanimo in Sandaun Province on PNG's north-east coast, before driving them across the border to their former homes.

Hakim Abdul from the embassy said the voluntary repatriations were happening because conditions in West Papua had steadily improved since 2001.

"The Indonesian government has made West Papua a special province, there is more autonomy than ever before. It's very different now," he told AAP.

"The West Papuans living in PNG have realised conditions are better there.

"It's good news as they now want to go home after learning about life in West Papua from friends and family, even reading the internet."

The Indonesian government would pay for the repatriation and was working with the PNG government on the issue, he said.

But Felix Meraudje from the West Papua National Congress based in Port Moresby said it was a publicity stunt.

"It's publicity to show Indonesia is good," Mr Meraudje said.

"They promise them a lot and give a little pocket money.

"These people who have chosen to go back are frustrated with the lack of results from the United Nations to place us outside of PNG.

"The reality for most West Papuans is not good, most are scared and can't be West Papuan."

Meraudje said 10,000 to 20,000 West Papuans who fled their homes on the Indonesian side because of persecution by authorities lived throughout PNG.

Hundreds had settled in a refugee camp near the border in PNG's Southern Highlands region while a majority lived and worked in the country's major centres.

West Papuans fled their province following alleged human rights abuses by Indonesian authorities and security forces.

Indonesia's hardline security measures, including arrests of activists who try to fly the outlawed Morning Star flag, have helped quell the West Papua separatist movement.

Indonesia jails 11 Papuans over flag Australian Associated Press January 9, 2009

A court in Indonesia's remote Papua region has jailed 11 activists for subversion after they raised the

region's banned independence flag.

Prominent activist Jack Wanggai was sentenced to three-and-a-half years in prison and 10 others were given three years over peaceful protests in March 2007, said lawyer Yan Christian Warinussy.

The sentences were increased by the High Court in the Papua provincial capital Jayapura on Thursday after prosecutors in Manokwari city, where the protests took place, appealed against the decision of a lower court to jail the activists for eight months each, Warinussy said.

"The activists were carrying out peaceful demonstrations ... and they brought the Morning Star flag," he said.

"The court said that if it didn't deal with this case harshly then it will set a bad precedent for all of Papua."

He said the defendants planned to appeal to Indonesia's Supreme Court.

Separatist sentiment runs deep in Papua, which lies on the western end of New Guinea island and was incorporated into Indonesia after a 1969 UN-sponsored vote of select tribal elders widely dismissed as a sham.

Displaying banned separatist symbols such as flags in Indonesia can lead to sentences up to life in prison.

Separatists ambush police post in Papua

The Jakarta Post , Fri, 01/09/2009

Separatist fighters attacked a police post and made off with four firearms in a remote area in Puncak Jaya regency, Papua, on Thursday night, state news agency Antara has reported.

Free Papua Movement (OPM) fighters attacked a police post in Tinggi Nambut village. A 21-year-old police officer's wife was stabbed in the chest.

Papua Police chief Insp. Gen. Bagus Eko Danto said he has yet to confirm the attack.

Separately, Puncak Jaya Regent Lukas Enembe said he had held a meeting to coordinate security. Enembe said two OPM groups were active in the area, one led by Goliat Tabuni and the other by Anton Tabuni.

"We don't know which group carried out this raid," he said.

In 2004 Goliat led a 100-strong group which ambushed the same village. Gunmen controlled Tinggi Nambut for four days before leaving when soldiers and police officers stormed the village. The OPM rebels have been fighting for the independence of Papua since the early 1960s. (dre)

Puncak Jaya police chief warns OPM to return weapons

Cenderawasih Pos, 12 January 2009

The chief of police in Puncak Jaya has warned an OPM (Organisasi Papua Merdeka, Free Papua Organisation) unit that if it fails to return four weapons seized during a raid last week within three weeks, special action will be taken.

During a visit to Tinggina21m but where the OPM action occurred, police chief Waterpauw said that besides seizing four weapons, the wife of a police officer had been wounded during the raid.

Speaking to local religious leaders, leaders of traditional groups, youths and heads of kam-pungs, he said that police needed their help to

help return the stolen weapons. He also said the police would be assisted by the army (TNI) in its efforts to get the weapons back. Asked whether additional personnel would be needed for the operation, Waterpauw said Brimob and TNI forces were already present in the area. The stolen weapons were certain to be still in the area and there was no need to bring in additional personnel.

He also said that the police post in the area would be replaced by a polsek (police section command) to improve security. Elements present in the area could try to make use of facilities at the police post such as television and radio for their own purposes. He said that any thought of this group trying to secede from the Republic of Indonesia was wishful thinking.

The local district chief, Lucas Enembe said that conflict had been present in the area for generations, and bible groups and after the government had come, the conflict had continued.

He said it was customary among the local people that every child born was raised for war and not for tending the gardens. Most schools in the area had been burnt down because the local people did not want schools in their midst. The government was keen for all children to go to school. He stressed that the weapons should be handed back as soon as possible.