

42nd Session of the UN Human Rights Council
General Debate Item 4: Human Rights Situation in West Papua
17 September 2019
Delivered by Ms Irene Valotti

Mr. President,

Franciscans International on behalf of seven NGOs would like to draw the Council's attention to the human rights situation Indonesia, a candidate to be a member of Human Rights Council, in particular on the cases racial discrimination against the indigenous West Papuan; excessive use of force and the criminalisation of human rights defenders.

The current situation is alarming. Since August 19, 2019, violent protests have been ranging across the provinces of Papua and West Papua, sparked by a video footage of Indonesian security officials calling indigenous Papuan students in Surabaya 'monkeys', 'pigs', 'dogs'.

Instead of engaging in dialogue with people of Papua, Indonesian authorities have responded to the protests by deploying over 6000 troops to the region,¹ thus exacerbating existing tension and leading to further violence. Of great concern is the human rights impact of the ongoing military and police operations in response to the protests.

We received information that allegedly three indigenous Papuans were killed in separate incidents in Jayapura, involving pro-Indonesian government militia. In Waghete Town of Deiyai Regency, the police crackdown resulted in the death of at least 8 protesters. Fifty other protesters sustained injuries as joint security force members fired with live ammunition into the crowd. In addition, Indonesian authorities implemented an internet shutdown in the region, a restrictive measure which not only contravenes freedom of expression but also makes difficult to verify facts and ensure people's safety in an area where access to journalists is already restricted.

We also express our deep concern on the use of cybercrime law by Indonesian authorities as a tactic to criminalize human right defenders and lawyers such as the case of Veronica Koman, who raised the issue a police raid on indigenous Papuan students in Surabaya. We support the joint statement of several Special Rapporteur on Ms Koman's case.²

We urge the Indonesian government to stop the on-going human rights violations in West Papua. Indonesian government must respect its international human rights obligations, especially the right of freedom of expression and association; address allegations of human rights violations; stop criminalising human rights defenders and restore access to information. Indonesia should also refrain from any excessive use of force and ensure compliance with the provisions of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Finally, we urge the Indonesian government to engage in engage in a political dialogue with the conflict party in West Papua to allow for a non-violent and sustainable solution to the long-lasting conflict and systemic human rights violations there. I thank you.

Co-signed by World Council of Churches | Westpapua-Netzwerk | International Coalition for Papua | VIVAT International | Geneva for Human Rights – Global Training | TAPOL |

¹ See <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-09-04/west-papua-latest-protest-over-referendum-for-independence/11471016>. Another sourced mentioned 8000, <https://reportasepapua.com/jangan-khawatir-sudah-ada-8000-pasukan-saat-ini-menjaga-tanah-papua/>

² See <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24990&LangID=E>