



GENEVA FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
Global Training

GENEVE POUR LES DROITS DE L'HOMME
Formation Internationale



DOMINICANS
FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

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Item 3: Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on Right to Food

Oral Statement

2 March 2018

Thank you Mr. President,

Franciscans International, VIVAT International, International Coalition for Papua and West Papua Netzwerk and Dominicans for Justice and Peace would like to commend the report of the Special Rapporteur on Right to food regarding the right to food in the context of natural disasters.

We would like to draw the attention of the Council to the severe cases of malnutrition in West Papua. During the UN High Commissioner's visit to Indonesia in February 2018, this issue was mentioned.¹ We have documented several cases in recent years where hundreds of children under five have died due to a combination of malnutrition and other diseases. Between September 2017 and January 2018, at least 73 villagers in Asmat Regency died, mostly children under 5 years old, because of malnutrition and the outbreak of a measles epidemic.² Similarly, in Pegunungan Bintang Regency the deaths of 25 villagers were reported due to measles, diarrhea and malnutrition. In the two regencies, hundreds of villagers have been infected by the measles and face difficulties in accessing health care services. At least 175 patients had to be hospitalized.

In fact, in September 2017, the government officers were informed about the situation in the region, but no concrete action was taken. Currently, this issue has created a national debate on the failure of the national and local government in addressing the health and nutrition issues in Papua.³

Unfortunately, similar cases have happened in previous years. In 2009 in the Yakuimo Regency, about 139 villagers died due to starvation.⁴ Between November 2015 and January 2016, 51 children and 3 adults died due to a Pertussis outbreak in the Nduga Regency in West Papua. The cold weather and malnutrition that have been prevalent since October 2015 in this highland area of West Papua have exacerbated the outbreak.

The Government of Indonesia has taken steps to address the crisis in Asmat. However, in the future, rather than reacting to these cases and blaming each other, the Government should take long term, concrete and comprehensive measures to prevent similar cases from happening. Therefore, we recommend that the Special Rapporteur visit West Papua during her visit in April 2018. I thank you.

¹ See the Opening remarks of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights at the end of his visit to Indonesia at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22638&LangID=E>

² See the article of International Coalition for Papua <http://humanrightspapua.org/news/28-2018/291-devastating-health-conditions-in-the-papuan-regencies-asmata-and-pegunungan-bintang-epidemic-outbreaks-and-malnutrition-reveal-government-failures>

³ See also the national and international news coverage such as in the Jakarta Post <http://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2018/01/19/editorial-the-death-of-papuans.html>; Reuters <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-indonesia-papua/indonesia-sends-military-to-help-fight-health-crisis-in-papua-idUSKBN1F60LX>; the Australian <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/measles-outbreak-kills-100-children-in-west-papua/news-story/6280a70fee779719ca19c0a091ce0cd9>

⁴ See the article of reliefweb international: <https://reliefweb.int/report/india/asia-enjoyment-right-food-requires-shift-short-term-and-discriminatory-practice>