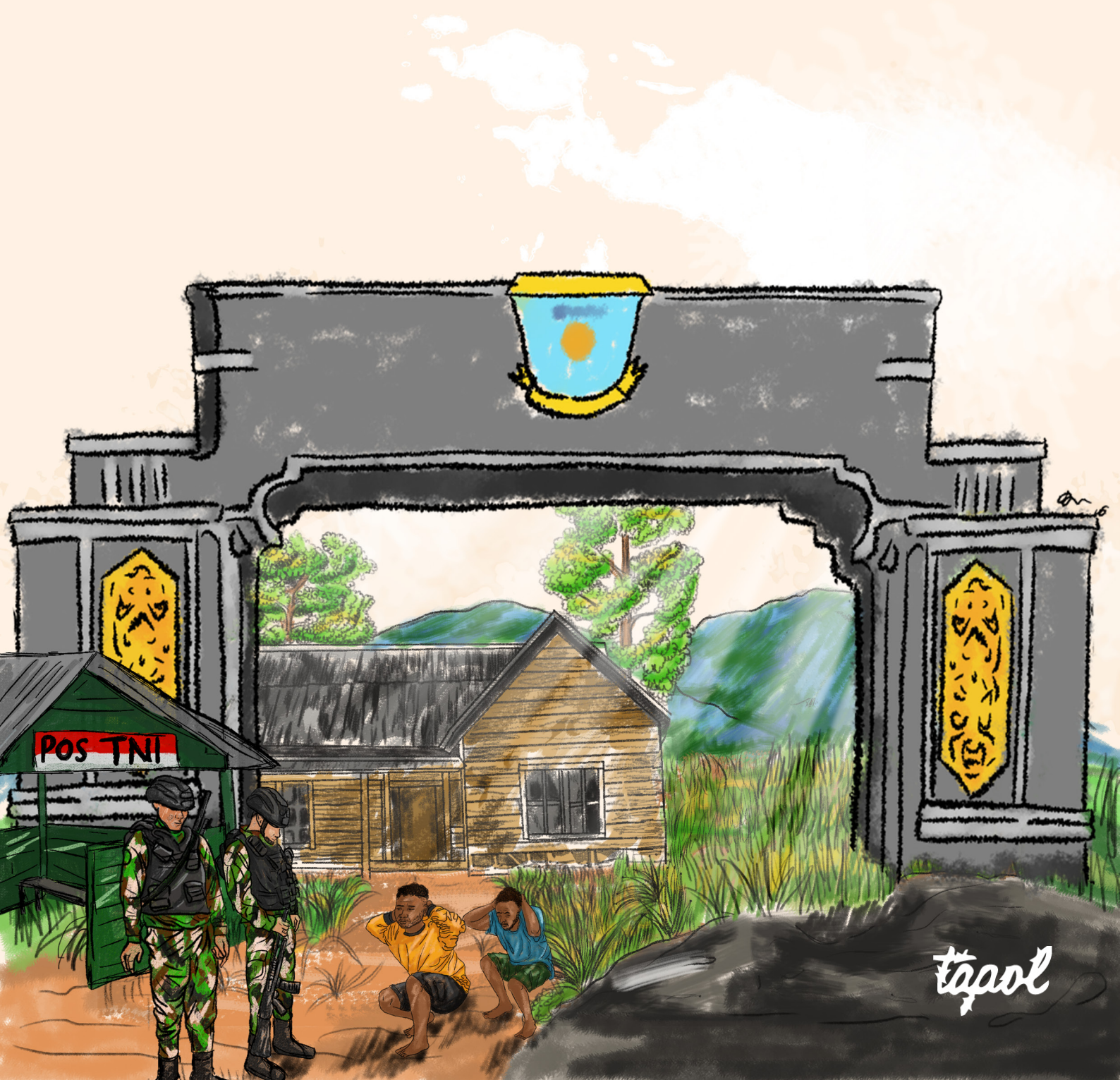


Displaced and disempowered

Military expansionism at the cost of civilian lives



tāqol

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Displaced and disempowered:
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TAPOL

Contents

Introduction	1
1. Conflict expands to the Border and Bird's Head	2
The land border: Conflict, displacement and failed return in Pegunungan Bintang	3
The Bird's Head Peninsula - Maybrat	5
2. As conflict intensifies, attention focuses on a longstanding problem	9
Nduga	11
Intan Jaya	11
Events since February 2023	12
3. Drivers of militarisation	15
Terrorism designation	15
Bases, Posts and Security Force Businesses	17
Very weak accountability mechanism for military abuses	18
Can the spread of conflict be stopped?	19
Conclusion	20
Recommendations	21

Displaced and disempowered:
Military expansionism at the cost of civilian lives

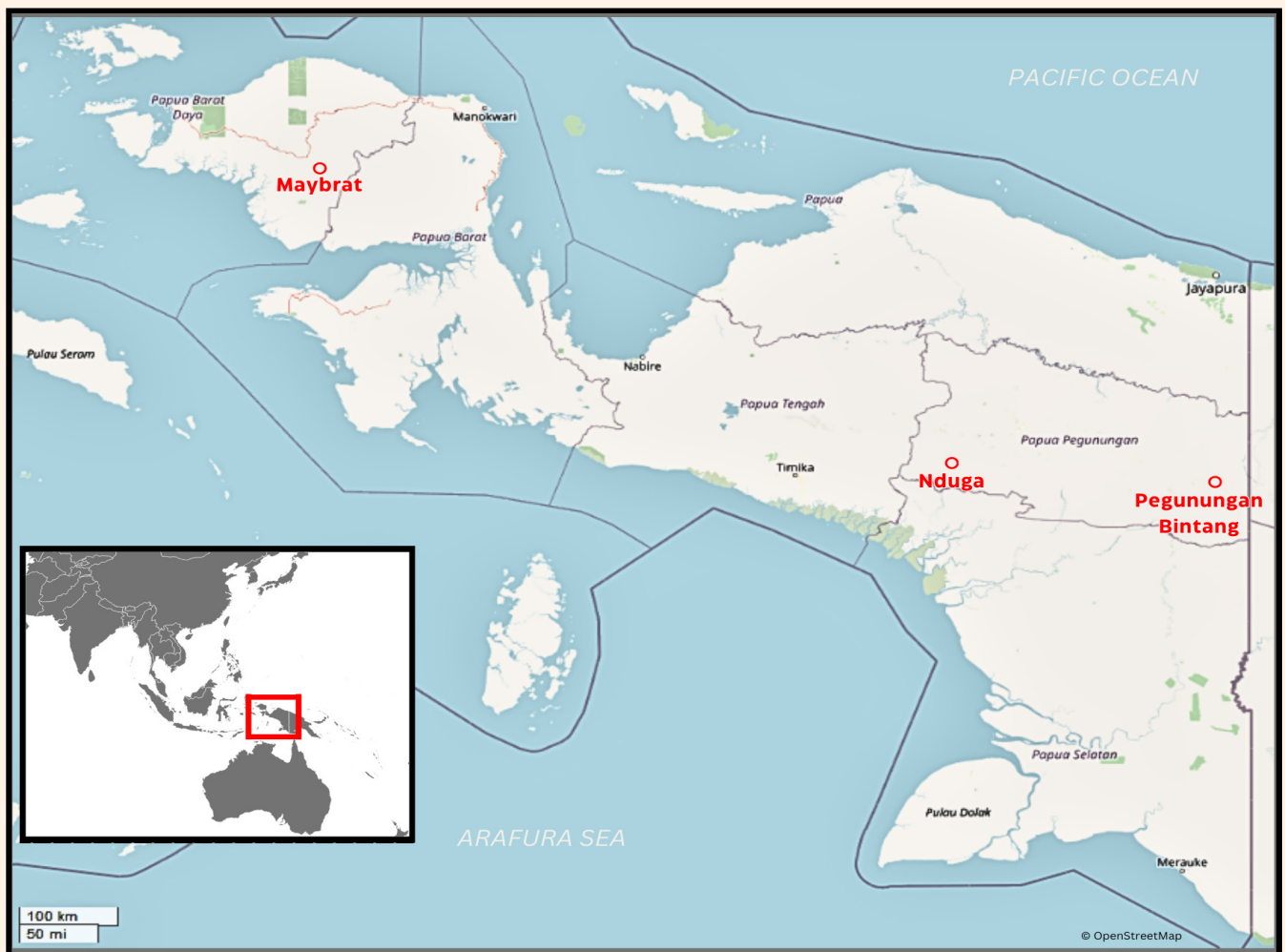


Introduction

Since late-2018, conflict has increased in intensity in West Papua. It is also spreading northwards and eastwards, beyond the usual conflict theatre in the Central Highlands. Attempts by actors associated with the Indonesian government and pro-independence groups to broker a 'humanitarian pause', have failed. Meanwhile the security forces are planning to establish four new regional commands in Papua's newly created provinces. Indeed, the military is seeking to strengthen its role in counter-terrorism operations which relates mainly to West Papua.

This report asks several questions about the spread of conflict: what is driving ongoing conflict and displacement? Why have displaced people not returned to their homes? What prospects are there for stopping conflict from spreading further? Addressing these questions the report shows how conflict has spread at the border and Bird's Head regencies of Pegunungan Bintang and Maybrat, and looks at conflict in Nduga and Intan Jaya. The report identifies the drivers of militarisation including increasing numbers of security force posts and bases allowing access to business opportunities, a deepening military role in 'counter-terror' operations, and looks at recent initiatives to stop conflict.

Image 1. Map of West Papua



1. Conflict expands to the Border and Bird's Head

Conflict has significantly increased in the regency (*kabupaten*)¹ of Pegunungan Bintang (at the land border with Papua New Guinea), since September 2021, displacing thousands of people. During 2022, the security forces established a strong presence throughout Pegunungan Bintang. This, and the lack of any adequate formal programme for reintegrating internally displaced people has meant that the vast majority are reluctant to return to their homes. A parallel situation of displacement has unfolded in Maybrat with civilians in the line of fire.

1. Indonesia's administrative areas consist of provinces, with '*kabupaten*' within provinces (in English, *kabupaten* are often called districts). Below *kabupaten* are '*kecamatan*' which are called sub-districts. However, in West Papua, with its 'special autonomy' status, *kecamatan* are known as '*districts*'. This report uses the term district to describe *kecamatan* in West Papua, and *kabupaten* for areas below provinces.

Displaced and disempowered:
Military expansionism at the cost of civilian lives

The land border: Conflict, displacement and failed return in Pegunungan Bintang

Military operations began in 'retaliation' for attacks in Kiwirok district on a government health clinic in September 2021, in which two clinic personnel were killed. The security forces blamed TPNPB for the attacks (Tentara Pembebasan Nasional Papua Barat, The West Papua National Liberation Army), while some local sources have attributed them to local political feuds.²

Shortly after security force operations began, people in Kiwirok fled south towards Oksibil (capital of Pegunungan Bintang regency) and west towards Okhika district. Some also made a journey over mountainous terrain to Tabubil, a border settlement in Papua New Guinea. Oksibil is a three to five day walk, which older people were able to do only with great difficulty. Three people are reported to have died on the journey, including two women in their forties and a teenager, with their deaths remaining uninvestigated. Residents fled to neighbouring districts such as Okhika, Oksop and Oksibil. In Oksibil, villagers from Kiwirok have sought refuge with local families in Banumdol, Kutdol, Okmakot and Kabiding villages. In Okhika, villagers have built shelters made of sago leaves and wood, assisted by the local GIDI (Gereja Injili di Indonesia) Church.

The cause of their displacement is disputed. The military say that the displacement in Kiwirok happened because of people's fears of activities by armed 'separatists', pointing to the attack on the clinic.³ We have spoken to people on the ground who say instead that Kiwirok's people fled in response to military operations.

The authorities have failed to persuade displaced people to return to their home villages. Security forces claimed in November 2022 that 47 villagers from Oksibil had returned to Kiwirok, with villagers promised

basic provisions for six months if they did so. Sources that we have spoken to say that the situation in Kiwirok has not returned to normal but that the security forces and authorities want to promote the idea that it has. The only instances of return that we have been able to identify involve internally displaced people (IDPs) returning temporarily to Kiwirok to spend time with family, before returning to the place they had been displaced to. However, there are concerns about even this happening, as Kiwirok has become militarised since 2021.

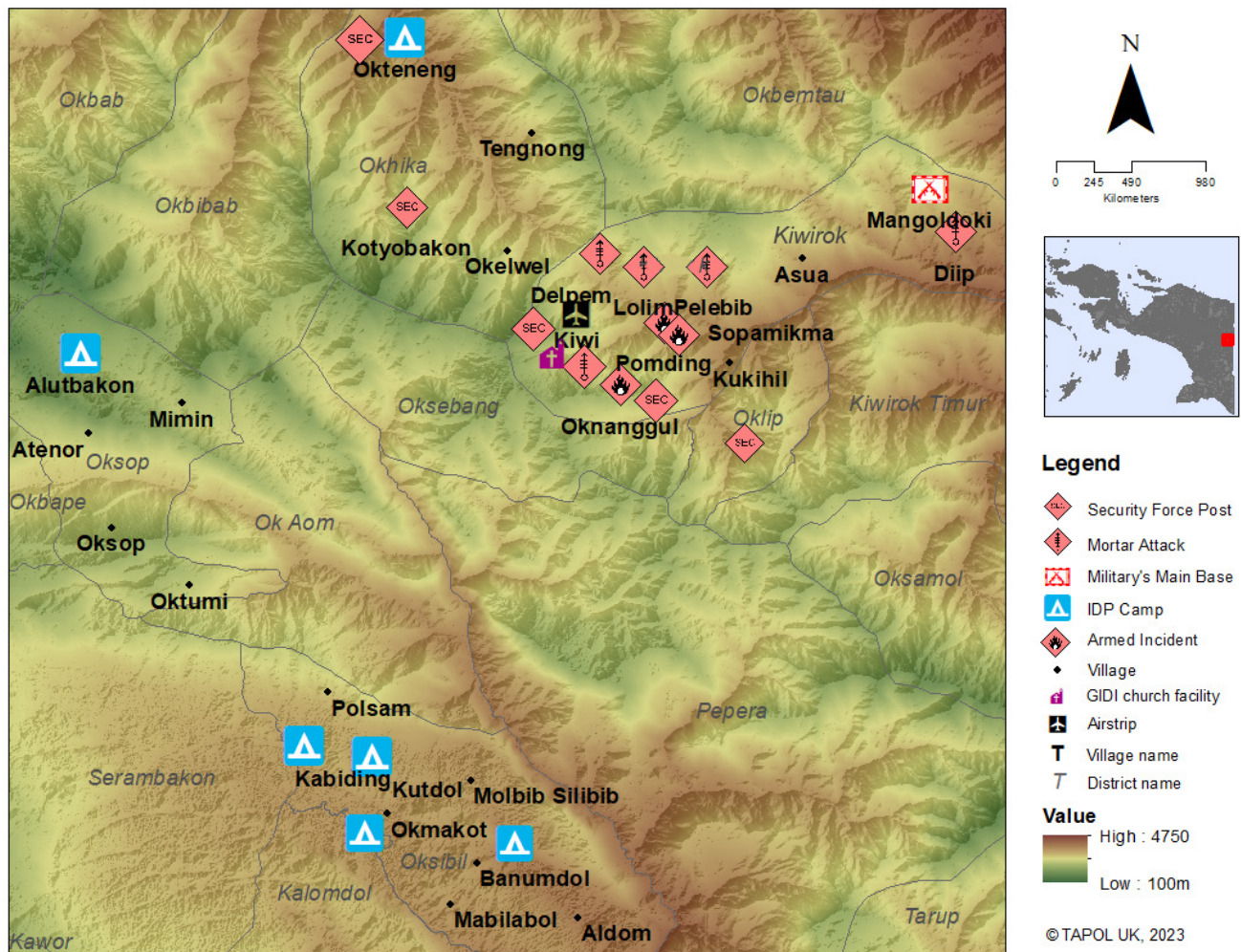
2. R. Rikang, 'The Indonesian Military's Attack on the Papua's District of Kiwirok', *Tempo Magazine*, 15 November 2021, <https://magz.tempo.co/read/cover-story/38591/the-indonesian-militarys-attack-on-the-papuas-district-of-kiwirok>.

3. Tim Detik Sulsel, 'Lari Tunggang-langgang 2 KKB di Kiwirok Papua Usai 1 Rekannya Ditembak Aparat', *Detik Sulsel*, 29 October 2022, <https://www.detik.com/sulsel/hukum-dan-kriminal/d-6375759/lari-tunggang-langgang-2-kkb-di-kiwirok-papua-usai-1-rekannya-ditembak-aparat>.

Displaced and disempowered:

Military expansionism at the cost of civilian lives

Image 2. Map of armed conflict in Pegunungan Bintang Regency



Throughout 2022 the security forces established a presence in Kiwirok and other areas in Pegunungan Bintang. The military's main base is in the village of Mangoldoki. The village, the district capital, occupies a high strategic position to monitor neighbouring villages. Due to shooting and bombing and activities during military operations, Mangoldoki, Pomding, Oknanggul, Kiwi and Amikma villages are reported to have been turned into 'mudbaths'. The military has used public facilities, including a local school to establish its base in Mangoldoki, and has commandeered materials from villagers' houses. Cattle and crops left by fleeing villagers are now the military's main food source.

There are two further military and Brimob ('mobile brigade', paramilitary police) posts, in Polobakon village, in Oknanggul. Apart from the use of the school at Mangoldoki, the military is currently occupying several other abandoned

schools in Katob Bakon, Kotaib, Polobakon, Bakonaip and Okteneng. Since the beginning of the outbreak of conflict in September 2021, two state-run health centres, in Kiwirok and Okhika, no longer function. Temporary health facilities have been established in Okhika district and Asua and Autpahik villages.

Displaced villagers do not venture far beyond these camps because the security forces regularly conduct drone and helicopter surveillance. This monitoring has led to complaints by the villagers that they cannot go to the forests to collect food, as the military is looking out for TPNPB activity. Villagers also fear sniper attacks by the security forces. Following the displacement in late 2021, drones and helicopters have carried out surveillance in Okhika and Oksibil, tending to carry out attacks in pairs, with one helicopter circling overhead while another flew low discharging gunfire. In the case of drones, one drone reportedly

Displaced and disempowered:

Military expansionism at the cost of civilian lives

identified targets, while the other, purpose-built for the task, dropped mortar bombs. There were no fatalities from the mortar bomb attacks, but villagers' temporary housing and gardens were destroyed. Unexploded mortar bombs, purchased from Serbia, have been found in the area and reported by various media sources.⁴

The Bird's Head Peninsula - Maybrat

In September 2021, the same month that thousands became displaced in Pegunungan Bintang, military operations and displacement began in Maybrat. In December 2020, the military moved into Kisor village, South Aifat district, occupying a government building. Following the establishment of a new district command (Kodim) in March 2021, new posts were built in South Aifat (Aifat Selatan) district, and also in East Aifat (Aifat Timur) district.⁵ By August 2021, its personnel had converted a building previously used by bridge construction workers into a semi-permanent military post. The following month, the TPNPB attacked the post, killing four soldiers. In response, the military swept through villages, ransacking the houses of villagers and destroying or stealing their possessions. They arrested six adults and one minor, charging them with the attack, moving them to detention in Makassar, before their conviction in a trial beset by irregularities. In October 2022, the security forces arrested

Yanwaris Sewa, the eleventh person to be arrested in connection with the Kisor attack. There are reports that his machete, used for farming, had been tampered with: a photograph used by prosecutors showed the machete smeared with blood. Despite this irregularity, which should have made such evidence inadmissible, Sewa was sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment in June 2023.

Such was the extent of fear among villagers in Maybrat that it was only in February 2022, five months after the attack, that some who were displaced felt able to return to Kisor to worship at a local Church. In their village, they discovered that a house opposite the military post had been used by the military as a shooting range. The home of someone accused of involvement in the attack on the post had been vandalised, its door daubed with an Indonesian flag. The interior of the abandoned post where the attack took place had graffiti daubed on the walls promising "revenge".

4. R. Rikang, 'The Indonesian Military's Attack'.

5. TAPOL, 'Militarisation, Conflict and Injustice in Maybrat Regency, West Papua', TAPOL, 17 February 2022, <https://www.tapol.org/publications/militarisation-conflict-and-injustice-maybrat-regency-west-papua>.

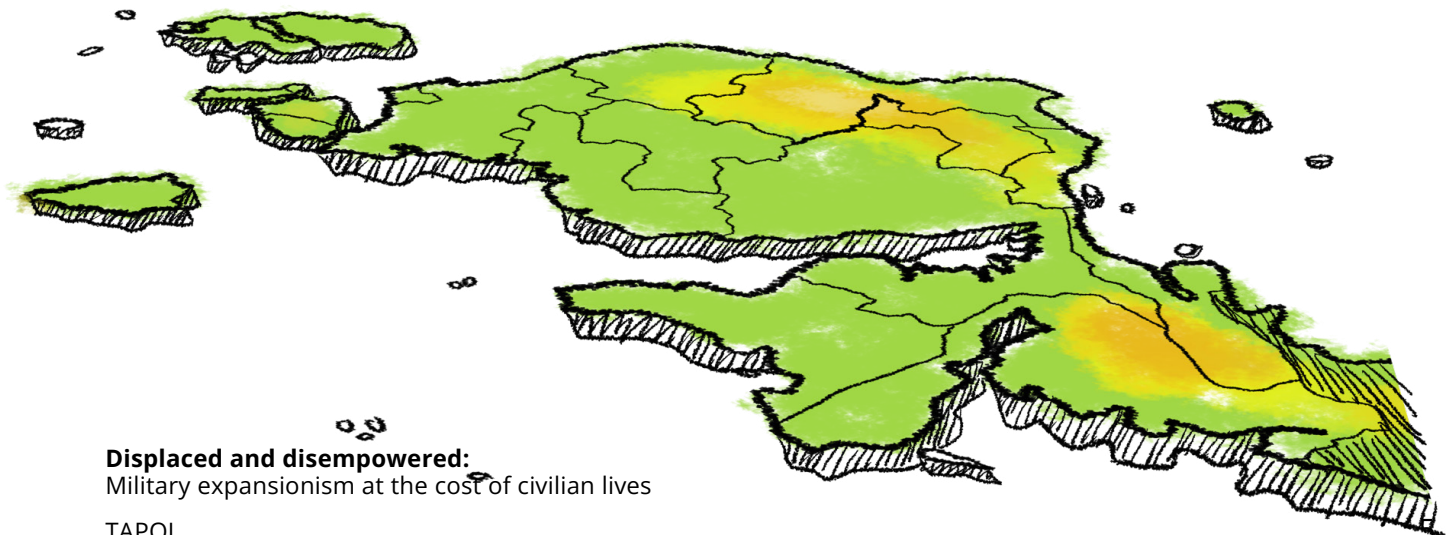


Image 3. Wall graffiti containing message of revenge



Graffiti on the wall of the former Kisor military post reads "*Prajurit sejati tidak takut dengan kematian* (True warriors do not fear death)" signed by Private Dhirham. Another piece of graffiti reads "*kami akan balas dendam* (we will take revenge)". Photograph: TAPOL.

Image 4. Wall graffiti containing message of revenge



"*Darah balas darah* (blood for blood)" is written on the wall near the door of the Kisor military post. Photograph: TAPOL.

Displaced and disempowered:
Military expansionism at the cost of civilian lives

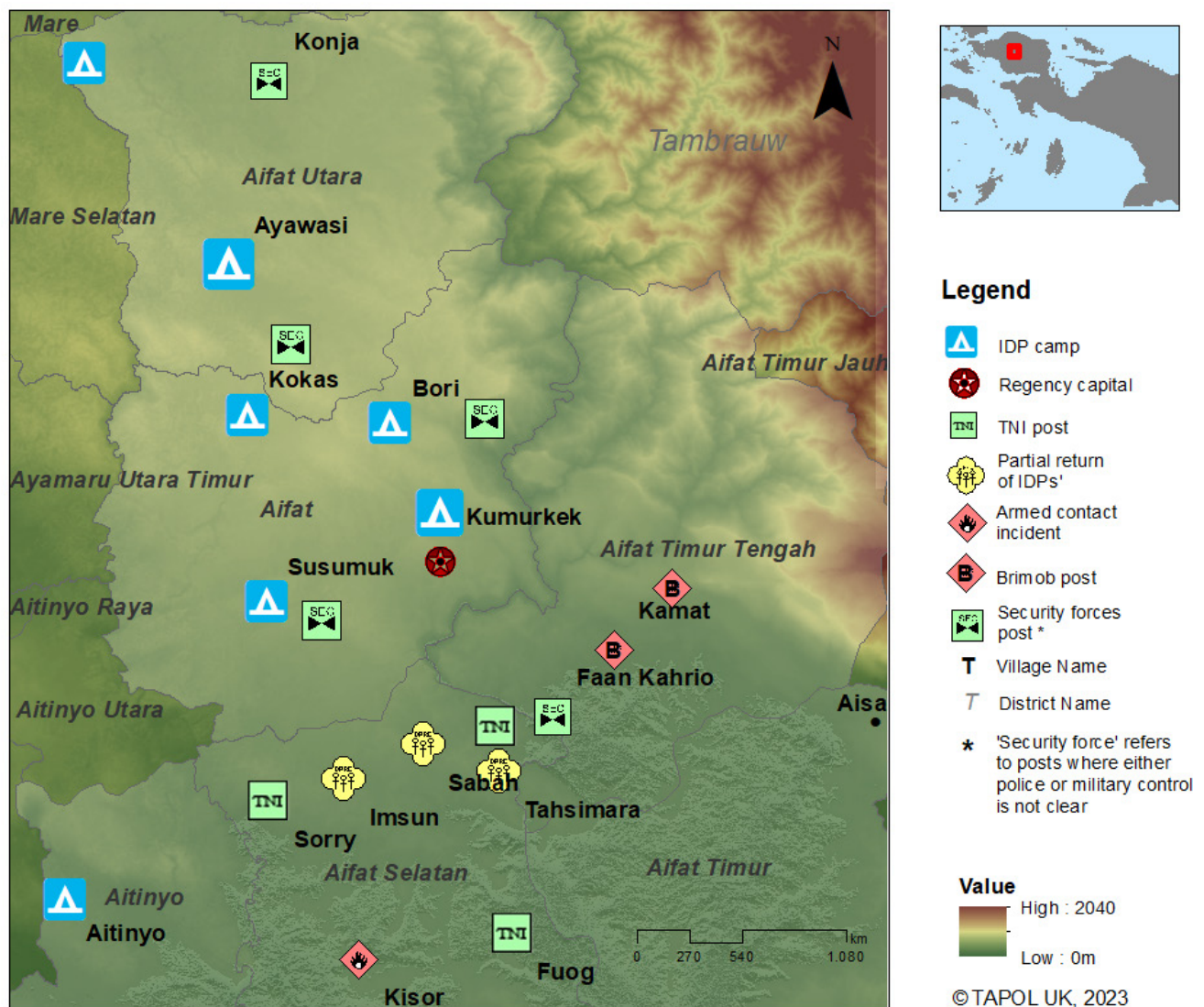
The situation was similar for other displaced people who attempted to return to their villages in Aifat Timur Tengah, Aifat Timur and Aitinyo. They returned to find a large military presence and their houses damaged or looted.⁶ In common with Pegunungan Bintang, the authorities have tried and failed to encourage the return of IDPs in Maybrat. In August 2022, the Acting Head of Maybrat regency (Bupati Kabupaten Maybrat), where Maybrat is located, was asked by the Acting Governor of Papua Barat Province, to return IDPs from Kisor to their homes.⁷ However, only 25 households returned, due to the presence of a large

number of security force personnel. The few villagers that have returned are also kept under surveillance by the security forces. They are stopped at military posts before going to work in the fields. Any sharp objects – machetes or other cutting implements essential for their work – must be surrendered along with their identity cards.

6. R. Rikang, 'Hilang Gizi Bayi Pengungsi', *Majalah Tempo*, 1 January 2023, <https://majalah.tempo.co/read/laporan-utama/167868/nasib-anak-pengungsi-papua-yang-tewas-akibat-gizi-buruk>.

7. BalleoNEWS, 'Pj Gubernur Perintahkan Pj Bupati Maybrat Kembalikan Pengungsi Kisor', *BalleoNews*, 24 August 2022, <https://kumparan.com/balleonews/pj-gubernur-papua-barat-perintahkan-pj-bupati-maybrat-kembalikan-pengungsi-kisor-1yiqENn5Amq/full>.

Image 5. Map of armed conflict in Maybrat Regency



Displaced and disempowered:
Military expansionism at the cost of civilian lives

By January 2023, few people had returned to Kisor. According to local sources, teenage children have been reluctant to return there, in light of the arrest and trial of the minor, LK. Many from the neighbouring district of Aifat Timur, where some accused of involvement in the attack originate from, are still displaced in Kumurkek, Susumuk, Ayawasi, Bori and Sorong. After the Kisor attacks and military reprisals, the military established a base in Susumuk village. Like Mangoldoki in Pegunungan Bintang, the military now dominates the village. While the military officially withdrew from Kisor, it still conducts night patrols consisting of about 50 troops.

By April, the military was deploying extra troops in several districts of West Papua, not only in Nduga, the site of the Philip Mark Mehrstens hostage situation (see section 2). This included Maybrat where about 250 troops were posted in Aifat, Aifat Utara and Aifat Timur districts. On Sunday 16th April, a number of fully-armed troops surrounded a Church in Aifat district, where a West Papuan priest, Pater Yan Peter Kosay was delivering a sermon. The troops' presence was intimidating, as they monitored all church-goers by standing at the building's entrances, including its toilets, and later questioned Kosay after the sermon finished.

Civilian lives on hold as militarisation prevents return

Since September 2021, conflict has spread well beyond the Central Highlands region. New security force facilities have mirrored new civilian districts, regencies and provinces. New bases and facilities have been followed by the plunder of local resources, inflaming tensions. Attacks on the security forces often follow, as happened in Maybrat regency, while the identity of perpetrators of the attacks in Pegunungan Bintang is disputed. The security forces typically then begin operations, pursuing insurgents before constructing facilities in areas abandoned by civilians. A heavy security force presence has prevented the return of IDPs in both Maybrat and Pegunungan Bintang.



Displaced and disempowered:
Military expansionism at the cost of civilian lives

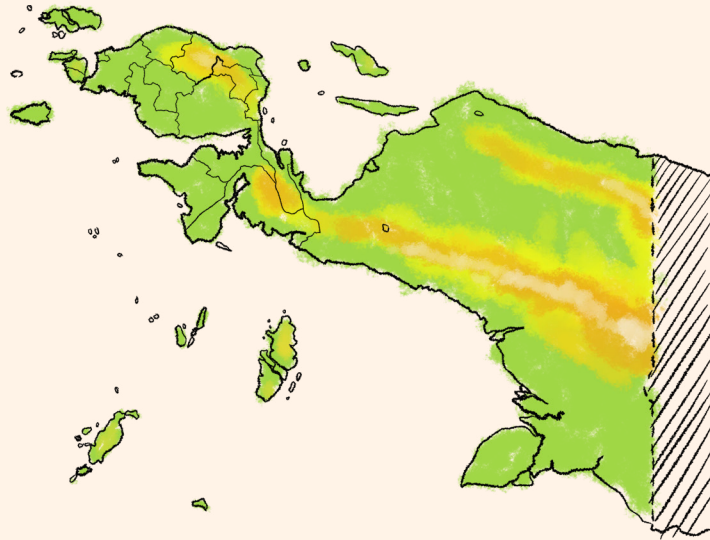
Image 6. Residents' houses daubed with Indonesian flags



2. As conflict intensifies, attention focuses on a longstanding problem

As explained in the previous section, conflict has spilled over to West Papua province and the border area, but has also intensified in the Central Highlands region, the main area of conflict since the 1960s. This has resulted in unprecedented levels of targeting of civilians in security force operations and their displacement. The most recent hostage situation in Nduga has echoes of a similar situation in the 1990s involving Indonesian and foreign hostages. What is not widely understood is that for four years, Nduga has seen intensifying conflict with civilians bearing the brunt of the violence and often seeking refuge in locations far from Nduga.

Displaced and disempowered:
Military expansionism at the cost of civilian lives



Displaced and disempowered:
Military expansionism at the cost of civilian lives

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Nduga

Nduga regency was created in January 2008 along with five other regencies, all of which were located in the Central Highlands region.⁸ In 1996, the Free Papua Movement (OPM, Organisasi Papua Merdeka) took western and Indonesian hostages in Jayawijaya, in what is now Nduga regency. That hostage crisis was mediated by the International Committee for the Red Cross, and ended when Kopassus (Indonesian special army forces) stormed the hostage-takers' hideout. Western hostages survived while two Indonesian hostages died.⁹

After a visit to Nduga in December 2015, President Joko Widodo claimed that the lack of transport had persuaded him to extend the Trans-Papua highway to Nduga.¹⁰ In December 2018, the TPNPB killed at least 18 road workers constructing the Trans-Papua Highway. The security forces then hunted the attackers, targeting civilians in the process. By February 2019, 243 displaced civilians from Nduga had died from sickness, hunger, exposure and the use of lethal force. A child, Mispo Gwijangge, was arrested, charged, and sentenced to death for his alleged involvement in the attacks. Numerous irregularities existed in Gwijangge's case: he was aged 14 when arrested; he said he was in an IDP camp in Wamena when the attacks took place; he was unable to speak Indonesian; and was repeatedly tortured while in detention. Before being acquitted of all charges against him at trial in mid-2019, he had been held in pre-trial detention for 333 days. After his release, Gwijangge died of sickness in January 2021.¹¹

There were at least 19 incidents of armed conflict in Nduga in the year following the security force operations of 2018 and 2019, creating and worsening an IDP problem that

8. *Undang-undang (UU) Nomor 6 Tahun 2008 tentang Pembentukan Kabupaten Nduga Di Provinsi Papua.*

9. TAPOL, 'Hostage Drama Ends in Tragedy', *TAPOL Bulletin*, no. 135, June 1996, p.13.

10. R. Chauvel, 'Governance and the Cycle of Violence in Papua: The Nduga Crisis', *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, vol. 17, no. 4, 15 January 2019.

11. Asia Pacific Report, 'A Sad Papuan Human Rights tale - the Torture and Death of Mispo Gwijangge', *Asia Pacific Report*, 9 January 2021, <https://asiapacificreport.nz/2021/01/09/a-sad-papuan-human-rights-tale-the-torture-and-death-of-mispo-gwijangge/>.

has since expanded as conflict has spread across the Central Highlands region and West Papua province. In December 2020, small sacks of rice which IDPs from Nduga had irregularly received from the state were ordered to be stopped.¹² In the same month, two years after the initial security force operations had begun, it was estimated that "at least 400 people" from Nduga had died as a result of the operations.¹³

Intan Jaya

As the situation of IDPs from Nduga continued to fester through late-2020, the situation in another Central Highlands regency, Intan Jaya, which borders Timika, site of the PT Freeport gold and copper mine, had also rapidly deteriorated. Intan Jaya's conflict partially dates back to 2017 when local elections (Pilkada) gave the security forces an opportunity to expand a presence in the area, on the pretext of stopping election-related violence.¹⁴ Conflict deepened after October 2019 when TPNPB killed three motorbike couriers, whom they alleged were spying for the security forces. It was then that the security forces established numerous local posts. Intan Jaya has substantial gold reserves which are understood to be subject to concessions forming the Wabu Block. But local communities have not been consulted about whether mining of an area of 69,000ha, equivalent to the size of Jakarta, should go ahead. And the substantial militarisation of the area casts serious doubt on any prospect for doing so based on communities' free prior and informed consent.¹⁵

Between April 2020 and early 2021, the security forces are alleged to have been responsible for the killings of seven civilians.

12. R. Rikang, 'Hilang Gizi Bayi Pengungsi'.

13. A. Pademme, 'Dua tahun terakhir, sedikitnya 400 pengungsi Nduga meninggal', *Jubi.co.id*, 2 December 2020, <https://jubi.co.id/dua-tahun-terakhir-sedikitnya-400-pengungsi-nduga-meninggal/>.

14. V. Mambor, 'Konflik Intan Jaya (1): Resiko Kekerasan yang lebih meluas di masa mendatang', *Jubi.co.id*, 26 December 2020, <https://arsip.jubi.id/konflik-intan-jaya-i-resiko-kekerasan-yang-lebih-meluas-di-masa-mendatang/>.

15. Amnesty International, 'Gold Rush. Indonesia's Mining Plans Risk Fueling Abuses in Papua', March 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ASA2152572022ENGLISH.pdf>. See also EMRIP (the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples), Study of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), Free, prior and informed consent: a human rights-based approach, 10 August 2018, UN Doc. A/HRC/39/62, paragraph 17-19.

Displaced and disempowered:

Military expansionism at the cost of civilian lives

This number includes the siblings Luther and Apinus Zanambani, who were shot dead in a Kostrad base in Hitadipa district before their remains were incinerated and dumped in a local river.¹⁶ In September 2020, Reverend Yeremia Zanambani, who shares a family name with Luther and Apinus Zanambani, was murdered, having been accused by the military of collaborating with TPNPB. Church leaders tried to calm local people who feared further attacks but could not do so because after Reverend Zanambani's killing, Church personnel were assumed not to be safe from attack. This contributed to significant further displacement in Intan Jaya.¹⁷

In February 2021, three civilians were tortured to death in a clinic by the military, which later accused the deceased in a press release of being TPNPB members. Some Indonesian media outlets reported the military's version of events without seeking clarification or alternative views from local communities.¹⁸ On 28 February 2021, a mute and deaf man, Donatus Mirip, who also suffered from a mental illness, was shot dead by the Indonesian military in Hitadipa District. Again, the military version of events, that Mirip was a member of an "armed criminal group" killed during a shootout, was reported as if it were fact in some media outlets.¹⁹ Only the Zanambani siblings and Reverend Zanambani's murders were subject to an investigation which was instigated only as a result of a public outcry.

The impact of these events on civilians has been to spread fear and further distrust of the security forces. Between April to November

2021 throughout West Papua, UN Special Rapporteurs estimated that the security forces forcibly displaced at least 5,000 West Papuans.²⁰ Displacement caused as a result of operations but not necessarily direct targeting by the security forces was estimated to be much greater. The same UN sources described total numbers of displaced people by the end of 2021: "...at least 60,000 people have been displaced, while other sources indicate that the number may be up to 100,000 people."²¹

Events since February 2023

A background of conflict and displacement driven by an increasing presence of the security forces was therefore a feature of life for civilians in Nduga, Intan Jaya, Yahukimo and other areas of the Central Highlands well before the events of February 2023.

On 7th February 2023 Philip Mark Mehrstens was taken hostage by the TPNPB (Tentara Pembebasan Nasional Papua Barat, West Papua National Liberation Army) in Paro sub-district of Nduga. TAPOL urged the Indonesian authorities and TPNPB to negotiate to ensure Mehrstens' safe release and called for him to be subject to humane treatment while in captivity.

On 23rd March, Indonesian security forces launched operations to free Mehrstens, which TPNPB responded to with a "retaliatory attack". Attack and counter-attack caused "casualties on both sides".²² A week later, the security forces began 'sweepings' of villages in other regencies surrounding Nduga including Lanny Jaya, shooting civilians in Kuyuwage district and arresting six, one of whom died.²³ Within two

16. B.U. Putri, 'Puspomad: Prajurit TNI Bakar Jenazah 2 Warga Intan Jaya untuk hilangkan Jejak', *Tempo.co*, 23 December 2020, <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1417158/puspomad-prajurit-tni-bakar-jenazah-2-warga-intan-jaya-untuk-hilangkan-jejak>.

17. A. Briantika, '14 Anggota TNI Akan Diperiksa Terkait Pembunuhan Pendeta Yeremia', *Tirto.id*, 23 December 2020, <https://tirto.id/14-anggota-tni-akan-diperiksa-terkait-pembunuhan-pendeta-yeremia-f8tq>; A. Briantika, 'Kematian Pendeta Yeremia: Cari Pembunuh Tentara, Warga Ditembak', *Tirto.id*, 22 September 2020, <https://tirto.id/kematian-pendeta-yeremia-cari-pembunuh-tentara-warga-ditembak-f4YE>.

18. For example, D. Suwandi, 'Kronologi 3 Anggota KKB yang Menantang Perang TNI-Polri Tewas Saat Menyerang Aparat', *Kompas.com*, 16 February 2021, <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2021/02/16/18524381/kronologi-3-anggota-kkb-yang-menantang-perang-tni-polri-tewas-saat-menyerang>.

19. CNN Indonesia, 'TNI Baku Tembak dengan KKB di Intan Jaya, Satu Orang Tewas', *CNNIndonesia.com*, 28 February 2021, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20210228131132-20-611877/tni-baku-tebak-dengan-kkb-di-intan-jaya-satu-orang-tewas>.

20. AL IDN 11/2021, 'Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons; Letter to the Indonesian Permanent Mission to the United Nations, December 27, 2021.

21. AL IDN 11/2021, 'Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples'.

22. F. Fonua, 'Indonesian security forces launch attack on West Papuan militant group holding NZ pilot', *RNZ*, 28 March 2023, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/486901/indonesian-security-forces-launch-attack-on-west-papuan-militant-group-holding-nz-pilot>.

23. Detikpapua.com, '1 Meninggal Dunia, 5 Ditahan, TNI Diminta Segera Kembalikan ke Keluarga, Ini Pernyataan Sikap Tim', *Detik Papua*, 7 April 2023, <https://www.detikpapua.com/2023/04/16/1-meninggal-5-ditahan-tni-diminta-segera-kembalikan-ke-keluarga-ini-pernyataan-sikap-tim/>.

Displaced and disempowered:

Military expansionism at the cost of civilian lives

weeks, on 7th April, the military announced that Kostrad special forces units based in Yal, to the east of Paro, where Mehrtens was abducted, were anticipating further attacks, following the killing of a soldier at the post by TPNPB.²⁴ Shortly after this announcement, the TPNPB's Kodap III Ndugama Derakma unit claimed to have shot three soldiers, of whom one died, in Yal on 9th April.²⁵

The security forces then began to expand the search for Mehrtens to four areas including two outside Nduga and Lanny Jaya regencies, as reported on 10th April. The search included Yahukimo, also in Papua Pegunungan Province, and Puncak Regency in Papua Tengah Province.²⁶ For example, we received reports that on 19th April, a Hercules military aircraft landed at Dekai, the capital of Yahukimo district, carrying troops and combat and logistics equipment.

On April 15th, several military units conducted operations to rescue Mehrtens from captivity. In the course of the operations, five soldiers were reportedly killed.²⁷ The military have since claimed that no extra troops are being deployed

to West Papua, and that there were no new arrivals into the province, only troops replacing other troops.²⁸ However, other sources had reported a cumulative deployment of almost 1000 troops to the border area, thought to be on April 1st: Yonif 527 'Baladibya Yudha' and Yonif 407 'Padma Kusama' from Lumajang in East Java and Tegal in Central Java, respectively.²⁹ Early on in the crisis, the security forces indicated that they had brought Paro District and, more broadly, Nduga Regency under control by deploying their forces throughout the area.³⁰ Hawkish politicians in Jakarta have also publicly called for further troop escalation.³¹

24. Seputarpapua.com, 'Pos TNI di Distrik Yal Nduga Siaga Antisipasi Serangan Susulan Kelompok Egianus', *Seputarpapua.com*, 3 April 2023, <https://seputarpapua.com/view/pos-tni-di-distrik-yal-nduga-siaga-antisipasi-serangan-susulan-kelompok-egianus.html>.

25. R. Brabar, 'Kontak Tembak di Intan Jaya dan Nduga, Satu Anggota TNI Tewas', *Suarapapua.com*, 10 April 2023, <https://suarapapua.com/2023/04/10/kontak-tembak-di-intan-jaya-dan-nduga-satu-anggota-tni-tewas/>.

26. H. Yaputra, 'Mencari Philip di Empat Wilayah', *Koran.tempo.co*, 10 April 2023, <https://koran.tempo.co/read/nasional/481415/pencarian-philip-di-empat-wilayah>.

27. BBC Indonesia, 'Korban gugur TNI dalam misi penyelamatan pilot Susi Air di Papua bertambah jadi lima orang, operasi siaga tempur diberlakukan', *BBC News Indonesia*, 16 April 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/articles/cxe795l08x7o>.

28. Antara, 'Kapuspen TNI: Rotasi pasukan di Papua masih dipersiapkan', *Antaranews.com*, 26 April 2023, <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/3506316/kapuspen-tni-rotasi-pasukan-di-papua-masih-dipersiapkan>.

29. Navy News, 'Kapal Perang TNI AL Angkut Dua Batalyon Infantri TNI AD ke Papua', 4 April 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehsXbfSOLKY>.

30. Seputarpapua.com, 'Pasukan TNI-Polri Kuasai Wilayah Nduga, Kapolres Rio: Sekarang Terserah Egianus', *Seputarpapua.com*, 23 February 2023. <https://seputarpapua.com/view/pasukan-tni-polri-kuasai-wilayah-nduga-kapolres-rio-sekarang-terserah-egianus.html>; Seputarpapua.com, 'TNI-Polri Berhasil Kuasai Distrik Paro Nduga', *Seputarpapua.com*, 13 February 2023, <https://seputarpapua.com/view/tni-polri-berhasil-kuasai-distrik-paro-nduga.html>.

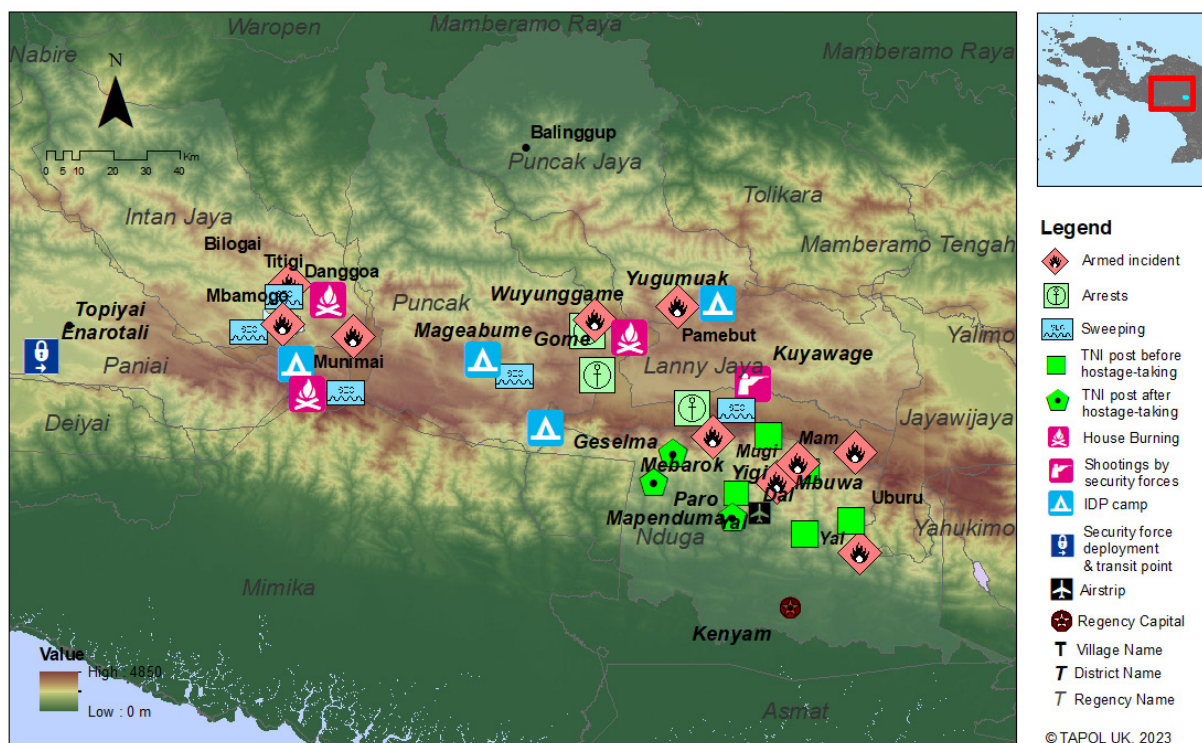
31. A. Laraspati, 'Bamsoet Dukung Pemerintah Tindak Tegas Kelompok Separatis di Papua', *detiknews*, 29 April 2023, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-6695527/bamsoet-dukung-pemerintah-tindak-tegas-kelompok-separatis-di-papua>.



Displaced and disempowered:

Military expansionism at the cost of civilian lives

Image 7. Maps of armed conflict in Nduga and surrounding areas (February-June 2023)



Civilians in Intan Jaya regency, to the west of Nduga and Yahukimo, urged the Government of Indonesia to guarantee their safety after reporting that the military was conducting sweeping operations of Agisiga, Sugapa and Hitadipa districts. This followed fighting with the TPNPB, reported after the attempted rescue operations, with 29 houses also burnt in these incidents. In their aftermath, the body of a villager was found, displaying signs of torture.³²

By mid-May, the military was still conducting operations in villages in Nduga to search for information regarding the hostage. This included arresting, interrogating and allegedly beating a village head in Nduga³³; formal police investigations against him are continuing.³⁴ The police claimed that he had been arrested on suspicion of providing funds to TPNPB.

The impacts of a build up of security force personnel across the Central Highlands in pursuit of the TPNPB can also be seen in the deteriorating situation of IDPs. Another wave of IDPs from Nduga have fled to Wamena, a walk of four days and four nights.³⁵ This has added to a community of IDPs from Nduga that became established in Wamena after the 2018 and 2019 security force operations.³⁶ In Intan Jaya, the department of social services of the regency government (Dinsos Pemerintah Intan Jaya) has distributed food to IDPs, although it is neither clear how much food is being distributed nor how many IDPs have received food.³⁷

32. Suarapapua.com, '29 Rumah Dibakar, Pemerintah Wajib Selamatkan Masyarakat Sipil di Intan Jaya', *Suarapapua.com*, 16 April 2023, <https://suarapapua.com/2023/04/16/29-rumah-dibakar-pemerintah-wajib-selamatkan-masyarakat-sipil-intan-jaya/>.

33. Suarapapua.com, 'Warga Nduga Mengaku Aparat Tangkap Kepala Distrik Kenyam dan Kades Yenai', *Suarapapua.com*, 9 May 2023, <https://suarapapua.com/2023/05/09/warga-nduga-mengaku-aparat-tangkap-kepala-distrik-kenyam-dan-kades-yenai/>.

34. J. Ristiyantri, 'Kepala Distrik di Kelompok Egianus', *Koran.tempo.co*, 6 May 2023, <https://koran.tempo.co/read/nasional/481888/kepala-distrik-diduga-sokong-tpnpb-opm>.

35. R. Chauvel, 'Governance and the Cycle of Violence in Papua', p. 3.

36. H. Yaputra, 'Korban sipil di tengah konflik Papua', *Koran.tempo.co*, 17 April 2023, <https://koran.tempo.co/read/nasional/481595/korban-sipil-di-tengah-konflik-papua>.

37. A. You, 'Dinsos Intan Jaya bagikan sembako kepada warga terdampak konflik bersenjata di Sugapa', *Jubi.id*, 2 May 2023, <https://jubi.id/meepago/2023/dinsos-intan-jaya-bagikan-sembako-kepada-warga-terdampak-konflik-bersenjata-di-sugapa/>.

Displaced and disempowered:

Military expansionism at the cost of civilian lives



3. Drivers of militarisation

Terrorism designation

The hostage situation has succeeded in raising West Papua's generally low profile internationally. However, the wider picture is more complex than this situation indicates. As shown in this report, conflict has been spreading in several districts of West Papua after many years of deepening involvement by the security force, with the establishment of new bases and increased exploitation of West Papua's natural resources. The security forces have been given a license to establish new bases and expand business opportunities by Indonesia's government and law and order establishment, which in late-2022 for example gave impunity to military officers who were acquitted of the 2014 Paniai massacre.³⁸

The military also continues to seek legal cover in West Papua and Indonesia by describing operations in ways that would avoid censure. The commander-in-chief

38. Koalisi Pemantau Paniai, 'The Paniai Trial- A Parody of Justice set up to fail?', TAPOL [website], 9 December 2022, <https://tapol.org/news/paniai-trial-parody-justice-set-fail-0>.

of the armed forces, Admiral Yudo Margono, has recently said that, in its operations since late-April, the military has been adopting a 'defensive' posture. He has said that the military is on 'combat alert', which is alleged not to involve offensive operations.³⁹ At around the same time as the military's announcement, in late-April, the police also said that its "pattern of operations" would be changing to "law enforcement operations" based on the hostage situation.⁴⁰

These claims by the security forces are disingenuous since they do not reflect the fact that it has been two years since the Government designated the TPNPB as "terrorists".⁴¹ With no sign that the TPNPB had been weakened following this designation or that conflict had abated, Margono's predecessor, General Andhika Perkasa also claimed to have changed the military approach in late-2021 with the military allegedly returning to 'normal' activities rather than an 'anti-terror' mode. This was supposed to mean that the military would no longer lead operations; it has also been doing 'social communications' in communities where "insecurity is not high".⁴²

However the terror designation has provided a pretext for the military to expand its power in West Papua. Alongside the recent pronouncements that the military will be operating 'defensively' have come reports that the military's senior lawyer, Laksda Kresno Buntoro, wants to change the law governing the military.⁴³ These proposals are yet to be put before Indonesia's upper house, the DPR,

by the Minister of Defence Prabowo Subianto. Proposed changes include allowing the military to "cooperate" with the Ministry of Defence in controlling budget allocations (currently the Ministry of Defence distributes the budget). Another proposal is to insert further numbers of officers into more government ministries, which seems to indicate a creep towards deeper involvement in civilian government resulting from previous incomplete and lacklustre military reform since the fall of Suharto.⁴⁴

Most importantly, the military wants to add to Article 7 of the military law⁴⁵ so that it will have a role in "overcoming terrorism". This follows a long-established pattern of certain legal restraints on the military being removed in times of perceived crisis. In 2018 the military's role in counter-terror operations was strengthened following the Surabaya terror attacks. In December 2018, hawkish civilian politicians then called for legal changes to facilitate deeper military involvement in the wake of the TPNPB's killing of 18 road workers. That incident reportedly saw more than 400 civilians die by the end of 2019 because of security force operations, from displacement, sickness and direct targeting.⁴⁶ The 2021 TPNPB 'terrorist' designation built on these 2018 political and legal changes.⁴⁷

It is also possible that by declaring itself involved in defensive operations only, against 'terrorists', the military and government is avoiding observance of the laws of war.⁴⁸ So, despite declaring that it is operating 'defensively', the military is also preparing legal changes that will pave the way for deeper involvement in 'counter-terror' operations. This must mainly be driven by the military's role in West Papua because there is currently no reported credible terror threat in Indonesia.

39. A. Ramadan, 'Panglima TNI: Jangan Diplestetkan, Siaga Tempur Bukan Operasi Militer', *Kompas.com*, 27 April 2023, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2023/04/27/08423651/panglima-tni-jangan-dipelelesterkan-siaga-tempur-bukan-operasi-militer>.

40. A. Leon, 'Polda Papua ubah pola operasi penanganan TPNPB', *Jubi.id*, 28 April 2023, <https://jubi.id/tanah-papua/2023/polda-papua-ubah-pola-operasi-penanganan-tpnpb/>.

41. TAPOL, 'The Free Papua Organisation is Not a Terrorist Group', *TAPOL*, 31 March 2021, <https://www.tapol.org/news/free-papua-organisation-not-terrorist-group>.

42. TAPOL, 'Illegal arms sales, internal displacement and a 'new approach' in West Papua', *TAPOL*, 27 May 2022, <https://www.tapol.org/publications/illegal-arms-sales-internal-displacement-and-new-approach-west-papua>.

43. N.M. Achmad and D. Meiliana, 'Isi Revisi UU TNI: Ikut Atasi Aksi Terorisme, Anggaran Langsung ke Kemenkeu hingga Perluasan Duduki Jabatan Sipil', *Kompas.com*, 10 May 2023, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2023/05/10/12381161/isi-revisi-uu-tni-ikut-atasi-aksi-terorisme-anggaran-langsung-ke-kemenkeu>.

44. TAPOL, 'Officers in Office: The proposed insertion of serving military officers into civilian government posts', *TAPOL*, 1 March 2020, <https://www.tapol.org/news/indonesia-officers-office>.

45. *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 34 Tahun 2004 Tentang Tentara Nasional Indonesia*.

46. A. Pademme, 'Dua tahun terakhir, sedikitnya 400 pengungsi Nduga meninggal', *Jubi.co.id*, 2 December 2020. <https://jubi.co.id/dua-tahun-terakhir-sedikitnya-400-pengungsi-nduga-meninggal/>.

47. TAPOL, 'The Indonesian military and counter-terrorism: new business, same old ways', *TAPOL*, 5 October 2021, <https://www.tapol.org/news/indonesian-military-and-counter-terrorism-new-business-same-old-ways>.

48. TAPOL, 'The Indonesian military and counter-terrorism'.

Displaced and disempowered:

Military expansionism at the cost of civilian lives

Bases, Posts and Security Force Businesses

Another way that the security forces have deepened involvement in West Papua is through establishing bases and posts, which allow management of security force businesses. In a process known as *pemekaran* (regional “expansion”), four extra new provinces have been established in West Papua since 2021 (a second province was created in 2003, widely regarded as a tactic to divide and rule Papuan nationalists). One of the newly created provinces is Papua Pegunungan Province, covering Pegunungan Bintang where conflict broke out in September 2021.

While the official reason for the creation of new provinces is that it will increase ‘development’ and ‘welfare’, civil society organisations in Papua say that the government paradoxically continues to use a ‘security approach’. A strategy of more *Pemekaran* was based on intelligence, not an assessment of the needs of the Papuan people⁴⁹ and was undertaken in response to the anti-racism protests during the West Papua Uprising in 2019.⁵⁰ By the admission of senior government figures such as the current Minister of Home Affairs and former Chief of Police in Papua Province, Tito Karnavian, *pemekaran* is an attempt to stop calls for reform, to divide Papuan unity and to put a positive spin on the situation in West Papua for an international audience.⁵¹

While new bases follow from *pemekaran*, local posts, staffed by fewer personnel, allow the security force to benefit from business opportunities. These posts are set up in remote areas in which Indigenous Papuan communities may lose land, forest and their culture.⁵² Maybrat has seen extensive licensing of palm oil plantations since at least 2016.⁵³

49. Aliansi Demokrasi untuk Papua (AIDP), ‘Pemekaran untuk Siapa?’, AIDP, 27 February 2022, <https://www.aldp-papua.com/2022/02/27/pemekaran-papua-untuk-siapa/>.

50. Aliansi Demokrasi untuk Papua (AIDP), ‘Laporan Situasi Umum Hak Asasi Manusia Tahun 2022 di Papua’, 5 February 2022.

51. Aliansi Demokrasi untuk Papua (AIDP), ‘Pemekaran untuk Siapa?’.

52. TAPOL and AwasMIFEE, ‘The Military’s Role in Food Estate Plans’, TAPOL [website], 2 November 2022, <https://www.tapol.org/publications/militarys-role-food-estate-plans>.

53. TAPOL, ‘Militarisation, Conflict and Injustice in Maybrat’.

The security forces have intimate knowledge of Maybrat as its engineering corps have overseen the building of the Trans Papua Highway which connects the area to Sorong and Manokwari. Long stretches of the highway between Sorong and Maybrat appear to cut through densely forested areas but behind the trees lining the road are often huge palm oil plantations. One theory as to why the security forces established a post in Kisor in December 2020 is because of the area’s potential logging opportunities. Where the security forces do not have a direct stake in licenses, they could still stand to benefit. There is currently only one official coal mining license in the area, although in 2012 about 95,000 hectares of land were awarded for coal mining, according to Maybrat’s government.⁵⁴

Pegunungan Bintang became a target for development by Jakarta in 2021, when politicians earmarked the district as one of 62 “priority *kabupaten*” (regencies) throughout Indonesia. One of its districts, Batom, was planned to have a special economic zone bordering Papua New Guinea.⁵⁵ Three other border towns – Skouw in Jayapura, Sota in Merauke and Yetetkun in Boven Digoel in the south – will have border posts and ‘special arrangements’ for border trade with Papua New Guinea.⁵⁶ The government also declared that Pegunungan Bintang had “potential” for development of its natural resources including mining,⁵⁷ despite this being a cause of recent violence when TPNPB shot and killed a gold miner on November 5th 2022.⁵⁸

54. T. Suseno, ‘Kontribusi Investasi Pertambangan Batubara Terhadap Produk Domestik Regional Bruto Propinsi Papua Barat’, *Jurnal Teknologi Mineral dan Batubara*, vol. 9, no. 3, September 2013: 118-134, p.124.

55. Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Perekonomian Republik Indonesia, ‘Pembangunan Kawasan 3T dan Perbatasan di Kabupaten Pegunungan Bintang’, *Ekon.go.id*, 28 June 2021, <https://www.ekon.go.id/publikasi/detail/3120/pembangunan-kawasan-3t-dan-perbatasan-di-kabupaten-pegunungan-bintang>.

56. *Instruksi Presiden (INPRES) Nomor 9 Tahun 2020 tentang Percepatan Pembangunan Kesejahteraan di Provinsi Papua dan Provinsi Papua Barat*, D4,5,1.

57. Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Perekonomian Republik Indonesia, ‘Pembangunan Kawasan 3T dan Perbatasan’. Part of the original assessment reads: “Pegunungan Bintang Regency has potential riches in mining, farming, plantations and animal husbandry, tourism potential and local culture”.

58. TPNPB issued a statement after the killing stating that it regarded people mining West Papua’s resources and those working on the Trans Papua highway as legitimate targets. TPNPB keluaran peringatan keras untuk pendulang emas di seluruh Papua, 7 November 2022.

Displaced and disempowered:

Military expansionism at the cost of civilian lives

Another issue along the border is continuing transmigration, which often follows in towns with a large security force presence. Government institutions that sponsor development projects are also responsible for promoting transmigration (for example, Kementerian Desa dan Pembangunan Daerah Tertinggal dan Transmigrasi (PDDT)). Where the security forces have established a presence on West Papuan land, transmigrants often follow. In other border regencies, such as Keerom, transmigrants live in the north and have well-resourced health and education facilities where many transmigrants work. Keerom is seen as a region of 'investment opportunity'. Indigenous Papuans live mainly in the south of Keerom in conditions of poverty. They have few state services, with school provision previously reported as ending at the age of 12, and teachers absent or not appointed. Military abuses against Indigenous Papuans have been reported but no action has been taken.⁵⁹

Very weak accountability mechanism for military abuses

Failures to end military impunity for human rights violations in West Papua can also be attributed to weak legal mechanisms to secure accountability. Most cases of human rights violations committed by military personnel in Indonesia are dealt with by their own internal military accountability mechanisms, based on Indonesia's Criminal Procedure Code (KUHP) with a significant number of cases not having been investigated at all.⁶⁰ In very few cases have the military acted on reports received from organisations representing victims of human rights violations. In most of those cases, military

personnel accused of committing abuses in West Papua have only received disciplinary sanctions.⁶¹ The few cases brought before military courts have happened only after public outcries. For instance, on a very rare occasion at Jayapura's military court in February 2023, four soldiers were convicted of involvement in the unlawful killing and mutilation of four Papuans in Timika, with two of them sentenced to life in prison. The cases had been raised by the UN Human Rights Council in its fifty-first regular session in September 2022.⁶²

Under Indonesia's criminal justice system, military personnel can only be tried in military courts, including for serious human rights violations such as extra-judicial killings or torture. All parties in the military criminal justice system, from judges, prosecutors to legal defence, are military officials. External independent oversight institutions such as the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) can carry out investigations on any allegation of human rights violations committed by the security forces but their final findings and reports only serve as recommendations and may not directly be used for prosecutions. The military court mechanism can only be exempted for special crimes: gross violations of human rights, including genocide or crimes against humanity, under the Human Rights Court Law (No. 26/2000). The 2014 Paniai Massacre was one of very few cases of gross violations of human rights brought to a Human Rights Court with the only officer brought before it acquitted.⁶³

59. Dale, J.P. Cypri and J. Djonga, *Paradoks Papua: Pola-pola Ketidakadilan Sosial, Pelanggaran Hak Atas, Pembangunan dan Kegagalan Kebijakan Afirmatif, dengan Fokus di Kabupaten Keerom*, Foker LSM Papua, 2011, p.27-58.

60. For example see report of Amnesty International, "Don't Bother, Just Let Him Die": Killing with Impunity in Papua, July 2018 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa21/8198/2018/en/>; Human Rights Watch's Report, 'Out of Sight; Endemic Abuse and Impunity in Papua's Central Highlands', July 2007, can be accessed at <https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/papua0707webwcover.pdf>. See also ICP (International Coalition for Papua), 'Human Rights Quarterly Update West Papua – April 2021', can be accessed at https://humanrightspapua.org/images/docs/Human_Rights_Update_West_Papua_April_2021.pdf; 'Human Rights Quarterly Update West Papua – October 2020', can be accessed at https://humanrightspapua.org/images/docs/Human_Rights_Update_West_Papua_October_2020.pdf

61. Sanctions may range from 'warnings', to imprisonment for a maximum 21 days, and/or being relegated in rank or discharged from the military.

62. Opening remark by the Acting High Commissioner for Human Rights at the 51st Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council, 12 September 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/09/human-rights-council-opens-fifty-first-session-hears-oral-update-acting-high>.

63. The other cases tried under the Human Rights Court were the 1999 East Timor Atrocities, unlawful killings in Tanjung Priok, Jakarta in 1984 and the unlawful killings in Abepura, Papua in 2000. All the end result produced zero conviction. More than a dozen cases are still pending for prosecution under the Human Rights Court.

Displaced and disempowered:

Military expansionism at the cost of civilian lives

Can the spread of conflict be stopped?

In November 2022, on the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM)'s initiative, several parties from Papua, including the ULMWP (United Liberation Movement for West Papua) and the Majelis Rakyat Papua (Papuan People's Assembly, MRP), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Geneva agreeing to a 'humanitarian pause' in fighting between December 2022 and February 2023. Maybrat and Pegunungan Bintang were proposed as two of six locations for a 'humanitarian corridor', where fighting would stop to allow the safe delivery of food, shelter and medical supplies to IDPs, part of the MoU's protocol on IDPs.⁶⁴

As well as a humanitarian corridor, ULMWP representatives said that the MoU also made provisions to "stop conflict in Papua" and for the "basic rights of prisoners in Papua".⁶⁵ Most of ULMWP's leadership agreed with the principles of the 'humanitarian pause'. But some said it should also require a neutral "third party" and could be tied to a long-delayed visit by the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights.⁶⁶ But Indonesia's foreign minister told the Government's Papua Steering Committee, that any foreign involvement in a humanitarian pause would be unacceptable.⁶⁷ The TPNPB

released a statement as the MoU was signed, saying that it did not include any parties to the conflict, meaning itself or the security forces. The statement also said ambiguously that anyone "acting on behalf of Papua" would face targeting in large-scale operations.⁶⁸

Apart from potentially inflaming tensions between parties to the conflict who had been excluded from it, the humanitarian pause remained to be agreed, even among its signatories. In February 2023, Komnas HAM's new commissioners unilaterally declared it null and void.⁶⁹ Their letter claimed that Komnas HAM was not a 'party to the conflict' and that its previous commissioners signed it after the swearing in ceremony of new commissioners had already taken place. Other parties to the agreement expressed disappointment, with the ULMWP former Executive Director pointing out that the MoU had effectively been killed off before any of its positive provisions could be put in place. For example, since November 2022, Komnas HAM had not carried out any of the preconditions for a cessation of military operations in Maybrat. Also, no political prisoners were able to participate in the humanitarian pause team.⁷⁰

64. R. Rikang, 'Hilang Gizi Bayi Pengungsi'.

65. R. Rikang, 'Lobi Menggolkkan Jeda Kemanusiaan di Jenewa', *Majalah Tempo*, 18 December 2022, <https://majalah.tempo.co/read/nasional/167697/lobi-menggolkkan-jeda-kemanusiaan-papua-di-jenewa>.

66. R. Rikang, 'Lobi Menggolkkan Jeda Kemanusiaan di Jenewa'. This was the position of Benny Wenda, Interim President of West Papua.

67. The Steering Group is also chaired by the Vice President of Indonesia, Ma'aruf Amin, who advocated security force operations in January 2023, a common position taken by senior politicians in response to attacks on security forces. B. Laksana, 'Ma'aruf Amin Minta Aparat Tangkap KKB di Pegunungan Bintang', *detiknews*, 13

January 2023, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-6512619/wapres-maruf-perintahkan-tangkap-kkb-papua-di-pegunungan-bintang>.

68. BBC.com, 'Nota Kesepahaman Jeda Kemanusiaan Bersama Papua: Tak Dilibatkan TPNPB ancaman lakukan operasi besar-besaran', *BBC News Indonesia*, 21 November 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/articles/crgzv71nn4go>.

69. A.N. Sugiro, 'Pandangan Komnas HAM Republik Indonesia atas MoU Jeda Kemanusiaan' 11 November 2022', 7 February 2023.

70. M. Haluk [ULMWP], 'Berakhirnya Jeda Kemanusiaan di Kabupaten Maybrat Tanpa Pelaksanaan Komitmen Bersama Para Pihak', Jayapura, 7 February 2023.



Conclusion

Government division and security force impunity risks perpetuating conflict

The spread of conflict has been driven by a greater security force presence with new police and military bases springing up where new civilian government provinces, regencies and districts have been created. The policy of creating new tiers of civilian government, embodied in *pemekaran*, has been designed to stop West Papuan unity through a strategy of divide and rule. Local posts are an important element of this larger picture which allow the security forces to profit from West Papua's natural resources. The tensions that this creates have led to deadly conflict, followed by declarations by the security forces that these areas are 'insecure'. Transmigrants from outside West Papua, who benefit disproportionately from relatively good health and education services, tend also to move to where the security force presence is greatest. Of course, certain areas are looked on by the security forces as strongholds of political support for TPNPB, such as Nduga. But tensions also increased in that area after construction of the Trans-Papua highway. And to the east of Nduga, Intan Jaya, which has seen a build up of security forces in recent years, has been the subject of great corporate interest for its gold deposits in the Wabu Block concession.

In areas where conflict has spread to since 2021, at the border and in Southwest Papua province, only a small number of Indigenous West Papuans displaced by conflict have returned to their former homes, too frightened to return by a large security force presence. Lacking adequate state assistance and with no international agencies permitted to provide aid, displacement is becoming a permanent state of existence for many in the four regencies

this report focuses on, as well as in other parts of Papua. But conflict is also intensifying with many of the same features and drivers as in areas where it is spreading to. The 2023 Nduga hostage situation, which TAPOL hopes will end with the immediate and safe release of Philip Mark Mehrtens, has taken place after several years of conflict, security force build up and displacement across a seemingly ever-expanding area.

If these complex issues and the security forces' role in them were publicly acknowledged and more rigorously and freely debated by elected politicians in Jakarta and the Indonesian media, and more vigorously raised by the international community to the Indonesian Government, then there may be some prospect of stopping armed conflict in West Papua. Instead, the military is lobbying for a deeper role in counter-terrorism, relating to West Papua. The security forces are also being allowed a back door into intervening in and profiting from local communities through *pemekaran*, an initiative based on intelligence gathering, not the needs of the West Papuan people. Dividing Papua may succeed in undermining democracy, but it will also allow the security forces a freer hand in building local posts, and setting up businesses to feed off Papua's forests, minerals and people. Indeed, this may be the principal contributing factor for the security forces' disproportionately large presence in West Papua to begin with. Those bearing the brunt of this situation are civilians. Many of these civilians are displaced from their homes and livelihoods and, without a change of policy from the Government, have few immediate prospects of returning to safety and to normal lives.

Displaced and disempowered:

Military expansionism at the cost of civilian lives

Recommendations

1. The principle of requiring representatives of indigenous West Papuans to express their consent is guaranteed by an international human rights instrument (the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) that has been accepted by Indonesia. The central government should urgently attempt to mitigate the impact of military operations by respecting the right of local communities to say 'no' to security force activities including building bases, posts and conducting operations on their territory.
2. To avoid displacement becoming a permanent situation, the security forces must end the occupation of towns and villages in the newly created Pegunungan Papua Province, Papua Barat Province and throughout the central highlands region. TAPOL understands that there are considerable obstacles to realising this goal since business interests and political influence are highly influential in security force calculations.
3. The government must facilitate the safe and appropriate return of IDPs to their respective villages and involve them in planning for their return. They must also be given reparations for the harm they have suffered. Pending the return of IDPs, the government should open up access to international and national agencies that are able to provide humanitarian assistance to areas where people have become displaced.
4. The security forces should observe the principle of distinction, a key aspect of international humanitarian law, distinguishing between any civilians who are not involved in direct hostilities and those who carry out armed attacks. International humanitarian law also stipulates that military personnel should not occupy civilian institutions such as schools, hospitals, places of worship or houses and that any military activities should take necessary measures to avoid civilian casualties. The government and its agencies should regularly review the extent of security force compliance with relevant international humanitarian and human rights norms.
5. The creation of four new provinces has been carried out cynically – its real aim is to hinder West Papuan unity, to counter calls for political reform and to open up business opportunities for the security forces. It must be reversed and instead West Papuan people included in a genuine consultation on the territory's future.
6. The unimplemented 'humanitarian pause' was a well-meaning initiative but failed without either the Government of Indonesia's backing, the involvement of the main parties to the conflict or wide civil society involvement. Moreover, longer-term peacebuilding initiatives would not be credible without a phased withdrawal of the security forces from West Papua. Any peace process must also build on, and not be expected to replace or work in parallel with existing civil society peacebuilding initiatives. This is essential to ensure that any peace is sustainable by being observed and upheld locally.
7. A visit to Papua by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights must take place as a matter of urgency. Negotiations must be undertaken by the UN and others to provide humanitarian relief to the thousands of displaced West Papuan people.

Displaced and disempowered:

Military expansionism at the cost of civilian lives



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