



GENEVA FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
Global Training

GENEVE POUR LES DROITS DE L'HOMME
Formation Internationale

URGENT ACTION: Indonesian Security Forces use treason laws to restrict rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in West Papua

TAPOL, Franciscans International, International Coalition for Papua, Watch Indonesia!, West Papua Netzwerk and Geneva for Human Rights Global Training would like to draw your attention to the cases of the violation of the rights to freedom of opinion and expression as well as the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association of the members of West Papua National Committee (*Komite Nasional Papua Barat - KNPB*)¹ in Mimika Regency, Papua Province, Indonesia. We received first hand and credible information from KNPB.

The Indonesian Police and Military prevented the members of KNPB from organising a prayer celebration to commemorate the fifth anniversary of their organisation on 31 December 2018. Nine members of KNPB were arrested and beaten by the Indonesian security forces. Three of them are currently charged with treason.

Information about the victims:

1. Mr. Yanto Awerkion, male, 28 y.o; occupation self-employed
2. Mr. Tony Dogopia, male, 24 y.o; occupation self-employed
3. Ms. Johanna Songgonau, female, 32 y.o; occupation self-employed
4. Mr. Elius Wenda, male, 20 y.o; occupation self-employed
5. Mr. Edo Dogopia, male, 22 y.o; occupation self-employed
6. Mr. Vincent Gobai, male, 21 y.o; occupation self-employed
7. Mr. Sem Ukago, male, 28 y.o; occupation self-employed
8. Mr. Sem Asso, male, 51 y.o; occupation farmer
9. Mr. Ruben Kogoya, male, 29 y.o; occupation self-employed

We have received the consent of the victims to submit their case and to reveal their names.

Information on the events

The use of police and military force to clampdown on the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in West Papua has exacted a new toll. Nine members of KNPB were summoned by police to be investigated for their role in organising a prayer celebration, of which three were arrested and formally charged with treason. This prosecution has been ongoing since 31 December 2018.

On 29 December 2018, the KNPB in Timika delivered a letter of notification to the police regarding their plan to hold a prayer event on 31 December 2018 to commemorate the fifth anniversary of

¹ Established in 2008, KNPB is a non-violent Papuan peoples' organisation campaigning for a referendum for the Papuan people of West Papua.

the KNPB secretariat. The prayer and traditional cooking pit feast known as 'bakar batu' event was planned to be held at 09:00 on 31 December 2018. However, at 08:00 more than one hundred Indonesian Police and Military personnel stormed in and destroyed the office of KNPB Mimika, West Papua². The Indonesian Police arrested 6 members of KNPB. However, they failed to present either arrest warrants or search warrants.

The KNPB members Mr. Yanto Awerkion, Mr. Ruben Kogoya, Ms. Johanna Songgonau, Mr. Elius Wenda, Mr. Edo Dogopia, dan Mr. Vincent Gobay were arbitrarily detained for more than 24 hours as required by the law. Mr. Yanto Awerkion, Mr. Ruben Kogoya, and Ms. Johanna Songgonau were beaten during the arrest. Ms. Songgonau's shirt was severely torn such that it exposed her breasts. Prior to release, all six were forced to sign a letter stating that they were "Forever Indonesia"³ and that they would no longer take part in any KNPB activities.

On 5 January 2019, the six KNPB activists along with two others (Mr. Sem Ukago, Mr. Sem Asso) were re-summoned by police to be investigated for treason. Due to procedural errors as raised by their lawyers, the investigation was postponed until 7 January 2019.

On 7 January 2019, three KNPB activists Mr. Yanto Awerkion, Mr. Sem Asso, and Mr. Edo Dogopia were called for further questioning. Three of them were then arrested and transferred to the city of Jayapura on 8 January 2019, where they were charged with treason and remain in detention awaiting trial.

The use of treason charge (article 106 and 110 of the Indonesian Penal Code) to arrest KNPB members due for planning to hold a prayer gathering on New Year's Eve is a violation of their rights. These two articles of the Indonesian Penal Code are among several articles that have been criticised as problematic and discriminatory. In March 2017, a group human rights defenders in West Papua and Jakarta had filed a judicial review to the Indonesian Constitutional Court covering 5 articles of the Indonesian Penal Code related to treason charges. However, in January 2018 the call for review was rejected by the Constitutional Court. The case documented by this appeal underscores the serious civil society concerns regarding the excessive use of treason laws.

We are also concerned with the reports that on 31 December 2018, the KNPB Secretariat in Timika has been vandalized and seized, allegedly by the Indonesian security forces. Elsewhere in West Papua, the KNPB secretariat in Asmat was burnt down on 1 December 2018. The KNPB main secretariat in Jayapura was destructed and vandalized both on 19 November and 1 December 2018. They were committed allegedly by the Indonesian security forces.

TAPOL, Franciscans International, International Coalition for Papua, Watch Indonesia!, West Papua Netzwerk and Geneva for Human Rights Global Training are monitoring closely the information that has been reported from the ground on this matter and condemn this latest development of the Indonesian security forces activities in West Papua. In particular, the crackdown on the freedom of expressions and the freedom of assembly upon indigenous West Papuans.

² See also [CNN Indonesia](#) and [BBC Indonesia](#) and [The Guardian](#) reports.

³ The expression in Bahasa Indonesia is *NKRI Harga Mati*, which literally means the "Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia is a final price." This is frequently used as a nationalistic expression against any attempt of separatism.

We call the Government of Indonesia to:

- 1. Immediately release the three members of KNPB: Mr. Yanto Awerkion, Mr. Sem Asso and Mr. Edo Dogopia, who are currently detained by the Indonesian Police in Jayapura and to guarantee their safety;**
- 2. End the campaign of terror, intimidation and violence against human rights defenders and political activists, particularly members of KNPB;**
- 3. End illegal treatment and persecution against peaceful organizations such as KNPB;**
- 4. Review the use of treason charges to criminalise rights to freedom of expression and assembly;**
- 5. End the use of the security approach in West Papua;**
- 6. Protect and guarantee the rights to freedom of opinion and expression as well as the freedom to peaceful assembly for all without any discrimination.**

We urge the UN Human Rights Council, especially the UN Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of Expression and Opinion and the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly to call on the Government of Indonesia to address this case without delay.

TAPOL

info@tapol.org
www.tapol.org

Franciscans International

b.tjahjono@fiop.org
<https://franciscansinternational.org/>

International Coalition for Papua West Papua Netzwerk

wpn@westpauanetz.de
<https://franciscansinternational.org/>

Watch Indonesia!

flor@watchindonesia.org
<http://www.watchindonesia.org>

Geneva for Human Rights – Global Training

acz.hr@bluewin.ch
<https://gdh-ghr.org>