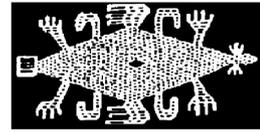




Promoting Human Rights, Peace  
and Democracy in Indonesia

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## **TAPOL and ETAN**

### **Letter to UK and US Ambassadors to UN on Anniversary of 30 September Movement**

HE Dame Barbara Woodward,  
Permanent Representative  
United Kingdom Mission to the UN  
New York, NY

and

HE Kelly Craft  
Permanent Representative  
United States Mission to the UN  
New York, NY

30 September 2020

Dear Ambassadors,

We write to you on the fifty-fifth anniversary of the so-called September 30th movement (G30S) in Indonesia. The movement, which led to the mass killing of hundreds of thousands of people accused of being communists by the military and its proxies, marked the beginning of the New Order military dictatorship in Indonesia. The governments of the United States and the United Kingdom both played crucial roles in these events.

Despite a period of political reform after 1998 following the fall of the dictatorship, there has not been an accounting for the deaths of those killed during 1965 and in the years that followed, nor proper acknowledgement by the authorities of the many human rights violations committed during 32 years of rule under military dictatorship. Without acknowledgement and a process of truth-seeking, there can be no reconciliation and closure, no justice for the many victims and their loved ones, and no genuine commitment to upholding democracy in Indonesia.

The Indonesian military may have formally withdrawn from the frontline of politics, but it still enjoys considerable power and influence, which has been enhanced under the presidency of Joko Widodo. The former military officers he has appointed to cabinet have influenced a policy of allowing the security forces to enforce social distancing and mask wearing during the Covid-19 pandemic. The executive and legislature have failed to compel the military to divest from its businesses as required by a 2004 law, and the legislature is even debating whether to appoint serving military officers to the civilian bureaucracy, a proposal of President Widodo. The military has been involved in the conflict in West Papua, which has been ongoing since 1965, during which it has been responsible for

numerous documented and undocumented human rights violations. Tens of thousands have died and the territory's population continues to suffer from joint military and police operations. Most recently, it was reported that Pastor Yeremia Zanambani killed by the Indonesian military near his church.

During President Widodo's address to the UN's General Assembly of 22 September, he claimed that Indonesia shared a responsibility to strengthen the United Nations and multilateralism. On 15 September, Indonesia's UN representative Dian Triansyah Djani, [speaking in the Security Council](#), highlighted Indonesia's role in peacekeeping training and promoted the greater participation of women soldiers in UN Peacekeeping Operations, citing his own country as an example. However, there is a danger that the serious problems associated with the military, particularly the stalled process of security sector reform, longstanding impunity, and enduring military power and influence over domestic politics, will be overlooked.

We therefore draw your attention to the clear contradiction between promoting the values of the United Nations in respect of human rights, democracy, and multilateralism and the deployment of peacekeeping personnel from a nation with an unreformed military where the president is relying on a cabal of former military officers to govern and continues to shut out proper scrutiny of past and ongoing atrocities in West Papua and elsewhere.

**In your capacity as representatives of permanent members of the Security Council, we call on you and your governments to investigate and raise with the Indonesian government these problems. The United States and the United Kingdom have a duty to address the impunity and influence that the military continues to enjoy.**

Both your countries have a responsibility to correct the damaging history of aiding military abuses when your countries regarded the dictatorship as a close ally and provided it with substantial security assistance and diplomatic support. In 1975, for example, when Indonesia was also on the UN Security Council, your governments supported Indonesia as it invaded East Timor. Both of your countries sold arms to Indonesia and trained its military personnel even though it was clear that they were committing atrocities in East Timor, Aceh and West Papua, and in Indonesia more generally.

Yours sincerely,

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