



Repression against 'free Victor Yeimo' protests August 2021

Between 15 to 30 August 2021, the authorities used excessive force against peaceful protestors in seven cities across Indonesia, resulting in one death, 104 arrests, and injuries to 40 people. The protests were organised to demand that the West Papuan political prisoner, Victor Yeimo be released and demanded an end to racism and for self-determination. Those arrested have all since been released. All of the victims below are West Papuans except the ten injured in Ambon. Some names are in initials due to security reasons.

Internet freedom watchdogs found that the Internet in Jayapura was shut down for three hours at around the time of Victor Yeimo's trial.¹

15 August 2021

Ambon, Maluku Province

The protest was brutally dispersed and seventeen people were injured, including one who was briefly arrested.

Arrested and injured:

1. WT, 22, was arrested because he was documenting the incident using his phone. Inside the police truck, police then subjected him to strangulation around the neck, slapped his face. At the police station, police verbally abused him and searched his bag and clothing and forced him to delete all photos and videos taken during the brutal dispersal.

Injured:

2. AH, 27, was beaten and kicked with army boots until his mouth and nose bled. His shirt was torn while being manhandled.

¹Tabloid Jubi, *Internet in Jayapura shut down around the time of Victor Yeimo's trial*, <https://en.jubi.co.id/internet-blackout-jayapura-around-victor-yeimos-trial/>, 27 August 2021.



3. HG, 23, was beaten, pulled, and kicked to the ground.
4. KM, 20, was beaten and pulled.
5. NW, 26, was beaten, pulled, and kicked until they fell and then dragged along the ground.
6. YA, 20, was sexually harassed when she was pulled until her jacket came off, and was beaten and kicked until she fell.
7. AK, 23, was beaten, pulled, and kicked to the ground.
8. PE, 20, was pulled, kicked, and beaten until his temple around the eye area bled.
9. AF, 22, was beaten repeatedly on the head until concussed and bruised, and kicked and pulled until his shirt was torn.
10. AA, 25, was hit on the head, kicked to the ground, and pulled until his shirt was torn and arm bruised.
11. ZJ, 23, was beaten until his mouth bled, pulled and kicked to the ground along with AA who was trying to help him.
12. R, 23, was hit on the neck, kicked, and pulled to the ground.
13. LR, 20, was hit and slapped on the face, kicked on the right side of her back and later fainted.
14. TR, 19, was beaten, kicked, and pulled until they fell.
15. AD, 19, was hit with sandals, kicked and dragged out of other protestors.
16. AS, 21, was hit, kicked, and pulled to the ground.
17. RR, 21, was pulled to the ground and hit with sandals.

16 August 2021

Dekai, Papua Province

Police shot one protestor resulting in his death and shot and injured six people, arresting 48 and dispersing thousands of protestors. Equipment used during their protests including speakers, microphones, mobile phones, pamphlets, bracelets with Morning Star symbols were illegally taken and have not been returned until today.

On that day, protests took place in several locations.² At one location, people started to gather at 6 am, while public speeches began at just before 7 am. Indonesian police, military and paramilitary police arrived at 7.50 am and immediately dispersed the protestors without explanation. At 8.10am, the security forces made dozens of arrests with arrestees taken to Yahukimo Police Station. Arrestees reported being beaten and verbally abused at the station.

In another protest location, protestor Ferianus Asso was shot, resulting in injury, between Pasar Baru Street and Sosial Street. This incident happened during mass arrests that occurred at around 10pm. Police were moving protestors to a police truck, when an unknown person suddenly threw a bottle at the truck.³ In response, police officers from the police truck came from the direction of the vehicle shooting directly at protestors without warning. As a result, one of the protestors, Ferianus Asso, was shot twice in the left hip area. Other protestors immediately took him to Yahukimo Hospital.

At that only hospital in the regency, it took doctors about an hour to remove two bullets and stitch the wounds which were bleeding profusely. Less than an hour later, family and friends decided to take Asso out of hospital for, as they reported, “for his own safety”.

Injured West Papuans from police or military shootings and torture are usually subjected to reprisals. Dozens of security forces have been known to surround health clinics to prevent people from documenting and reporting on the abuses. Past victims have reported that they became intimidated and restless due to a heavy security force presence, preferring to convalesce at home instead. Fear of being poisoned while being treated at hospitals is also very common among West Papuan activists. In some of the worst cases, injured patients have been dragged out of hospital to be arrested because police assume that those shot must be ‘troublemakers’. This happened in Deiyai and Wamena during the 2019 West Papua Uprising. Many injured protestors have avoided going to health clinics because of fears that police would come to arrest them. This pattern is chronic in West Papua and the case of Ferianus Asso is yet another example of it.

Asso was looked after by Indigenous nurses at home afterwards until 18 August. On 19 August, his stomach was swollen and he could no longer walk, so family again took him to the hospital. Family demanded that the police take responsibility for Asso’s injuries. Both police and the hospital transferred him to Jayapura for better treatment. Once they arrived in Jayapura, the family was prevented from accompanying or seeing Asso. Asso was taken directly to the police’s Bhayangkara Hospital. He was operated on there, but died the following day, on 22 August 2021.

² Protests in West Papua are regularly forcibly dispersed. West Papuans have developed a tactic to divert the attention of security forces by protesting in several locations despite being in the same town.

³ According to the protest organizers, they believe that the person was not part of the protestors and was a police intelligence officer.

Since Asso's death, Chiefs of Papua Provincial Police and Yahukimo Police have come to apologize to the family. They also offered money and food. Asso's family have rejected all offerings and apologies. To this day, no one has been held accountable.



Names of the 48 people arrested:

Rayono Kobak, Arius Sobolim, Kenis Balingga, Ipet Sobolim, Dani Urban, Eniel Sengket, Teppi Urban, Jekson Mirin, Kenias Suhun, Jen Massi, Sakori Massi, Werban, Her Odban, Demianus Esema, Elkius Esema, Tapilis Lokon, Welianus Heluka, Tius Wetapo, Sepius Keroman, Akius Kobak, Nila Busup, Ampinus Kobak, Meki Kandeng, Jefri Keroman, Derti Keroman, Maikel Siep, Er Heluka, Mius Sama, Calvin Sama, Assa Giban, Amanus Suhun, Jariel Keroman, Demison Keroman, Salos Balingga, Obet Magayang, Dey Kobak, Mario Ropmak, Matim Keroman, Rido Balingga, Lius Esema, Miel Esangoet, Yorina Pahabol, Elis Silak, Anton Hubusa, Lasarus Heluka, Afen Sambon, Feredy Heluka, and Siba Yahuli.

People known to have been injured from beatings by police:

Napi Bahabol, Bernard Lokon, Arius Sobolim, Anton Hubusa, Sipa Yahuli, and Kenis Balingga.

Jayapura, Papua Province

In Jayapura, security forces used excessive force to disperse protestors. Protestors gathered in several locations prior to joining the main protest. Police blocked and dispersed them in each location, including a silent protest attended by around ten people. Indonesian police made unprovoked attacks on protestors which can be seen in three recorded instances.⁴ Water cannon was used to not only disperse,⁵ but also to chase down protestors.⁶

Following the forced dispersal, some protestors gathered inside a student dormitory. Security forces then surrounded this dormitory for around four hours, trapping more than a hundred people inside.

People known to be injured:

Agus Kossay, who was hit on the head with a rifle until bleeding;

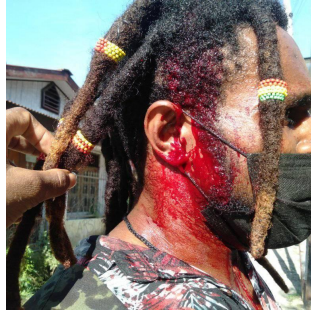


⁴ <https://twitter.com/VeronicaKoman/status/1427114155924885509?s=20> ; <https://twitter.com/VeronicaKoman/status/1427114881312976896?s=20> ; <https://twitter.com/VeronicaKoman/status/1427118899791761409?s=20>.

⁵ <https://twitter.com/VeronicaKoman/status/1427101662993256460?s=20>

⁶ <https://twitter.com/VeronicaKoman/status/1427174979741777920?s=20>

Alfa Hisage, who was hit on the head with a rifle until bleeding;



Jefri Somalia, who was dragged on the ground causing injury to his knee and right arm;
Manu Iyaba, who was bruised on the right side of his neck;
Zuzan Griapon, who was bruised on her right foot;
Yohanes Giyai, who was bruised and bleeding on his left leg and right arm;
Yuniel Pahabol, who was hit on the head;
Yusmin Faluk, who was bruised on his right leg;

That day, four church delegates including the most respected priest in West Papua, Reverend Benny Giay, were blocked by police when they were delivering a letter to the Parliament of Papua Province. The letter was about condemning racism and expressed concern at the further marginalisation of West Papuan people, as a result of the Special Autonomy Law being imposed by Jakarta.

Also on that day, a convoy of state-backed militias waving Indonesian flags paraded through the town.

Timika, Papua Province

Police blocked the protests before they could even start. Local media reported that 160 Indonesian police and military personnel were deployed to block protestors. A police spokesperson bragged to the media that the security forces had succeeded in blocking the planned protests that otherwise would have taken place in several locations.⁷

Semarang, Central Java Province

A protest was forcibly dispersed and four students were arrested, namely: Yance Yobee, Deta Agapa, Ney Sobolim, and Stef Iyai. They were released after other protestors came to the police station in solidarity to demand their release.

⁷ Harian Papua News, 'Aparat TNI-Polri Gagalkan Rencana Aksi Demo ke DPRD Mimika', <https://harianpapuanews.id/baca/13816-aparat-tni-polri-gagalkan-rencana-aksi-demo-ke-dprd-mimika.html> , 16 August 2021.

Surabaya, East Java Province

The protestors were blocked by police and harassed by state-backed militia.

24 August 2021

Jakarta

An excessive number of police blocked the protestors 'large banner', demanding Victor Yeimo's release, from public view. State-backed militia also attacked protestors, including by hurling racist 'monkey' slurs at the West Papuan students, while police were watching.

Names of the 37 people arrested:

AM, TW, ZS, NS, RA, EB, RK, YW, DW, PY, DW, WK, EJ, NY, VS, ET, MK, RK, OM, EK, MS, ED, TK, NS, WK, KM, RT, UK, CTI, HT, KM, NT, RT, RA, DE, BK, and PK.

30 August 2021

Jayapura

Hundreds of people who protested in front of the prosecutors' office to demand that Victor Yeimo be immediately hospitalised were forcibly dispersed. Police unlawfully confiscated protestors' phones and vehicles. Most protestors appeared spontaneously. This meant that protestors' injuries could not be well documented.

Nine people were beaten and arrested: Gad Halonue, Vara Yaba, Henggi Giban, Leti Soll, Egenius Tebay, Jefri Dogomo, Yabet Degei, Niko Edowai, and Nopen Asso.



Five other people were arrested: Soleng Soll, Orsa Esema, Wekapor Waker, and Julian Yeimo.