

Human Rights Update West Papua – January 2021

covering October - December 2020



Summary

Statistical data on extra-judicial killings and torture do not show significant changes throughout the fourth quarter of 2020. Both figures remain high. The majority of extra-judicial killings in West Papua are related to security force raids in the central highlands. The armed conflict entails a new pattern of violations, namely enforced disappearances, which exclusively occur with military incursions. Human rights defenders have estimated that the armed conflicts in the regencies of Mimika, Intan Jaya and Nduga have resulted in the internal displacement

Number of victims	Q1 '20	Q2 '20	Q3 '20	Q4 '20
Extra-judicial executions or killings (+ Enforced disappearances/allegations)	4+1	4+2	9+1	6+2
Torture / Ill-treatment	7	13	31	21
Assaults against / obstruction of journalists	-	-	2	-
Violations of right to health (victims)	-	-	-	-
Violations against / obstruction of HRDs	-	12	7	2
Environmental crimes	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
Violations of Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC)	-	1	1	1
Non-political arbitrary arrests	1	4	17	-
Political arrests	1	18	210	155
Treason & conspiracy charges (articles 106 & 110 KUHP) no. of accused	-	-	4	20
Violations of the right to fair and impartial trial & independence of judges	36	22	-	3
Internally displaced persons (Conflict)	> 1,500	N/A	N/A	60,000

of at least 60,000 persons. The vast majority of them are indigenous Papuans. The local and central government continue to neglect the humanitarian crisis in Papua's central highlands. Hence most IDPs do not have access to food, healthcare, education and other humanitarian services. At the same time, the ongoing security force operations prevent them from returning home.

The number of reported political arrests were slightly lower than in the previous quarter, but is still considerably high with 155 arrests. A growing opposition against special autonomy funding and the commemoration of the "Papuan Independence Day" on 1st December resulted in peaceful demonstrations throughout Indonesia. The police carried out mass arrests – often under the pretext of allegedly violating COVID-19 health protocols.

Law enforcement institutions continue to use treason charges to criminalise activists that organise political activities for West Papua. The transfer of court trials against indigenous Papuans under the excuse of security concerns remains a common strategy among Papuan courts and public prosecutors. Such transfers directly affect trials, as judges outside of West Papua do not comprehend the cultural context and background. The transfers also create barriers for relatives to follow the process. Moreover, they increase the court costs, violating fundamental principles of law enforcement in Indonesia which prescribe court sessions to be held cost-effectively.

The military has initiated internal investigations into multiple cases of human rights violations in Intan Jaya. Human rights defenders and the victim's relatives fear that the initiative is part of the military's strategy to pave the way for impunity among army members. They demand a settlement of the cases through the national human rights mechanisms.

Read what [UN mechanisms observe and recommend](#) regarding human rights in West Papua.

The information in this report is collected by local human rights defenders. As human rights defenders face hostile working conditions and legal aid services lack remote areas, this compilation of cases cannot be regarded as complete.

Stop transfer and processing of defendants outside of Papua with the argument Papua is not safe

The 'Association of Human Rights Lawyers for Papua' (PAHAM Papua) has urged Indonesian law enforcement agencies to stop transferring court trials of Papuan defendants to other parts of Indonesia under the pretext of security concerns. Such transfers have resulted in violations of fair trial principles. The most recent transfer request was for the trial of Indius Sambom and two other defendants. The police accuse them of being involved in a series of shootings in Tembagapura, Mimika Regency. The Indonesian Supreme Court approved the transfer from the district court in Timika to the North Jakarta District Court.



[Read more details](#)



Burning Government building during unrest in Keerom, Papua

Three Papuans shot down during crowd control operation in Keerom

On 2 October 2020, local police in the Papuan town of Arso forcefully dispersed a protest against the civil servant recruitment process in the Keerom Regency. About 250 protesters complained that the minimum percentage of indigenous Papuans in the recruitment process was below 80% as promoted by the Papuan Governor, Lukas Enembe. Police forces dispersed the crowd with tear gas and firearms as the protest turned violent. One government office was set on fire, and three protesters sustained bullet injuries. According to local informants, police members allegedly beat three other protesters during the crowd control

operation.

[Read more details](#)

Police fail to respect freedom of peaceful assembly in West Papua – 13 protesters arrested, one injured by bullet during demonstration against Otsus II

On 27 October 2020, hundreds of protesters gathered in Jayapura to peacefully voice their opposition to the government's plan to prolong the special autonomy funding for the provinces of Papua and Papua Barat. Joint security forces dispersed the peaceful assembly with teargas and firearms. One protester named Matias Soo sustained a bullet injury in the upper right arm. Another, Yakobus Guam, was beaten with sticks by police officers. He sustained bleeding wounds and bruises on his forehead, both eyes, mouth and cheeks. According to the Papuan Legal Aid Institute (LBH Papua), police officers arrested 13 protesters.



Protesters carry Matias Soo to the Dian Harapan Hospital, Jayapura

[Read more details](#)

Verdict in treason trial against 23 Papuan political detainees in Fakfak

On 1 December 2019, joint security force members arrested 54 indigenous Papuans in multiple villages of the Fakfak Regency. The Fakfak police pressed treason charges against 23 of them. On 22 and 23 October 2020, judges of the Fakfak District court found the 23 defendants guilty in the sense of the indictment. The sentences varied between eleven and 24 months.

[Read more details](#)

Allegations of enforced disappearance in Nduga Regency – Two indigenous leaders missing after military operation

Tepania Wasiangge and Anle Gwijangge, were arrested on 28 September 2020 in Kiyabikma, Nduga regency, as military members ambushed a house that they suspected to be a hide-out for members of the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPN PB). Multiple witnesses saw that the military members arrested and gagged both men, handcuffed them and repeatedly hit them with a wooden stick before the soldiers brought them to a nearby military camp in the forest. A fact-finding team found indications that the military members executed both men and burned their bodies. The team found one of the victim's necklace and human remains in a hut, which the military members had burnt to the ground.



Remains of the hut where the team found evidence for the enforced disappearance of the village leaders

[Read more details](#)

Another church worker killed in Intan Jaya – Security force members accuse the victim of being TPN PB member

Human rights organisations have documented the extra-judicial killing of a church worker in the regency of Intan Jaya. Mr Rufinus Tigau, 28, was shot dead by members of the Nemangkawi Joint Security Force Unit in the village of Jalae on 26 October 2020. A bullet injured a minor named Meinus Bagubau as security force members released multiple shots in the settlement. Thereupon, the security force members forced a group of villagers to bury Rufinus Tigau's body without asking for his relatives' permission. Security force representatives claimed that Rufinus Tigau was associated with the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPN PB). A representative of the Catholic Diocese in Timika confirmed that Rufinus Tigau was officially appointed as a catechist in the Catholic Jalae congregation. The TPN PB spokesperson, Sebby Sambom, also denied that Rufinus Tigau was a member to the TPN PB.



Villagers excavating the body of Rufinus Tigau

[Read more details](#)



Papuan lawyer and human rights defender, Gustaf Kawer

Human rights lawyer intimidated in Jayapura

Papuan lawyer and human rights defender, Gustaf Kawer, was attacked by unknown perpetrators in the city of Jayapura on 7 November 2020. Mr Kawer stopped his car in front of a store as a red pick-up truck with a police plate number approached his vehicle from behind. The pick-up truck came so near that a side door and one side mirror were damaged. The perpetrators were able to escape. Mr Kawer tried to trace the plate number and found out that the vehicle used a plate number which was not officially registered. Mr Kawer understood the incident as an act of intimidation after the Indonesian political magazine TEMPO published an interview in which he gave his views about the enforcement of human rights in West Papua.

[Read more details](#)



Korindo accused of illegally burning Papuan rainforest

Forensic Architecture and Greenpeace International have examined allegations of clearing rain forest with fires. The investigation concluded that Korindo has been using slash and burn practices to clear rainforests and is therefore in breach of the Indonesian law. The organisations proved the direct correlation between the appearance of fires and the expansion of Korindo's

palm oil plantation in one of the company's concession areas in West Papua. Korindo declared on its website that it has never used fire to clear land in any of its operations. Moreover, Korindo told the BBC that the fires were caused by extreme drought or villagers hunting wild rats.

[Read more details](#)

Members of Papuan Peoples' Assembly face intimidation and arrest during preparation of hearings about Papuan Special Autonomy



MRP member arrested and handcuffed in Merauke

The funding period for the Papuan Special Autonomy will end in 2021. Therefore, the Papuan Peoples' Assembly (MRP) has launched a series of consultation hearings to determine the Papuan people's aspirations regarding a possible prolongation of Special Autonomy funding. Article 77 of the law No. 21/2001 mandates the MRP to hold the consultation hearings across West Papua. The meetings were cancelled because MRP members faced intimidation and obstruction by civil groups, local government representatives and the police. In Wamena town, pro-government groups blocked the exit gate of the airport. They forced the MRP delegation to return to Jayapura without conducting the meeting. Members of the Merauke district police arbitrarily

arrested 55 persons, including MRP members before the consultation hearing. Meanwhile, the opposition against the prolongation of the special autonomy status has quickly grown. On 26 November 2020, a solidarity group of 102 organisations presented a petition against special autonomy signed by 520,261 people inside and outside West Papua.

Read more details about consultation meetings [here](#)

Read more about opposition against prolongation of Special Autonomy [here](#)



Edited image of Theo Hese gem, stigmatizing him as separatist and spreader of false news

Papuan human rights defenders threatened and stigmatised as separatist

Papuan human rights defender, Theo Hese gem, was verbally attacked and discredited by members of the government's customary organisation 'Lembaga Musyawarah Adat' (LMA) at the airport in Wamena on 15 November 2020. Mr Hese gem had come to monitor the security situation at the airport. The problem threatened to escalate as LMA members and sympathisers of the 'Red White Front' prevented an MRP delegation from leaving the building. Multiple plain cloth intelligence officers and military members recorded the incident with cell phone cameras without making any effort to deescalate the situation. Shortly after the incident, a fake Facebook account with the name 'Nur Fatatik' was used to discredit Theo Hese gem and his work as a human rights defender.

[Read more details](#)

Illegal logging in the Tamberau Regency – NGOs demand Govt to take action against PT. Multi Wijaya Wahana

A coalition of NGOs in the Sorong Regency demand local government and law enforcement institutions to immediately investigate allegations of illegal logging which have reportedly been committed by the company PT. Multi Wijaya Wahana (PT. MWW) in the regency of Tamberau. The NGOs found illegal logging practices during investigations between 2018 and 2019, which the company uses until today. The NGOs demand that PT. MWW's logging concessions shall immediately be withdrawn if investigations confirm the allegations of illegal logging practices. PT. MWW's logging concession had been extended twice in 2013 and



Rotting timber near the logging area in Tamberau regency

2018 ignoring strong indications for the violation of multiple laws and local regulations.

[Read more details](#)



Kris Douw, shortly after the torture

Papuan musician reportedly tortured for singing pro-independence songs

The Papuan musician, Kris Douw, was allegedly tortured by military members at the Kodim Military Complex in the Papuan town of Nabire on 21 November 2020. Military special force members beat up Kris Douw for writing and publishing a song and a video which promote Papuan political independence and the armed struggle by the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPN PB). He sustained multiple bruises in his face and body, including several broken teeth.

[Read more details](#)

Lethal Shooting in Puncak Regency – four Papuans shot dead, one survives with severe injuries

Three more bodies were found at the Limbaga Mountain in Gome District. This happened only three days after security force members allegedly shot dead seventeen-year-old Atanius Murib and injured Manus Murib, 17. The survivor later explained he and Atanius were intercepted by a group of security force members wearing balaclavas, black combat suits and bullet-proof vests. The bodies found belong to civil servant Akis Alom, 34, and two pupils named Wapenus Tabuni, 17, and Warius Murib, 12. The three were missing since 20 November 2020. The same day the security force members attempted to execute Manus Murib and Atanius Murib. Both shootings occurred on 20 November 2020 at Limbaga mountain with a time difference of less than two hours.



Warius Murib (12 years)'s body near the site of crime

Read more details [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)

1st December commemorations accompanied by arrests and violence

Many Papuans consider the 1st December as the Papuan nation's independence day celebrated with demonstrations and public prayer ceremonies throughout Indonesia. Human rights activists in other parts of the world raised the Morning Star Flag, among them in several cities in Fiji, Australia, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Great Britain, and Poland. Also in New Zealand people demonstrated outside the parliament today. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) of the UN issued a statement about the ongoing violations relating to public protests. The OHCHR urged "the Government of Indonesia to uphold people's rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association in line with its international obligations, particularly ahead of 1 December, when there are often protests, tensions and arrests." The majority of commemoration activities took place peacefully. Human rights defenders reported arbitrary arrests and police violence against protesters from the cities of Sorong, Manokwari, Merauke, Makassar (Sulawesi Selatan Province), Ambon (Maluku Province) and Sinjai (Sulawesi Selatan Province).



KNPB members in Merauke during police detention

[Read more details](#)



Relatives gathering around Demisien Kobak's coffin to grieve

Military members raid Soloitma Dormitory in Sentani – Eleven residents tortured, one Papuan woman killed

On 4 November 2020, members of the Yonif 751 Sentani Military raided the Soloitma Dormitory without showing a warrant. The military members tortured eleven residents and temporarily detained six of them. One of the victims, Demisien Kobak, was reportedly kicked in the abdomen and both thighs as she was lying sick in her bed. She died shortly after her admission to the Yowari Hospital as a result of the injuries which she sustained from the torture. The reason for the raid was a traffic accident between a military member and a dormitory resident shortly before the raid.

[Read more details](#)

Update on situation of IDPs from Nduga, Intan Jaya and Mimika

Local human rights observers estimate that around 60,000 people from the regencies Nduga, Intan Jaya and Mimika have been internally displaced since December 2018. The large majority of IDPs are left to themselves, without humanitarian aid from the government, relevant state agencies or the Red Cross. The vast majority of IDPs in West Papua originate from 12 districts in the Nduga Regency – their total number is estimated at 45,000 people. According to solidarity groups, 400 IDPs have died since January 2019 in the Jayawijaya, alone. The total number of IDPs from Intan Jaya is estimated at 13,000 people. In Mimika, 1,752



IDPs from the Hitadipa District, Intan Jaya, receive food supplies

IDPs are stranded in the town of Timika without humanitarian support from the central, provincial or local government. Eight IDPs had reportedly died since March 2020, when armed clashes between the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPN PB) and Indonesian security forces forced the residents to leave their villages. The IDPs urge the government to organise the return of IDPs to their villages as they are facing difficulties to live in Timika without humanitarian support.

[Read more details](#)

Former Papuan detainee sick – relatives suspect long-term consequences of torture during custody



Mispo Gwijangge sits in his traditional hut

The former Papuan detainee, Mispo Gwijangge, who had been arbitrarily arrested in 2019 and falsely prosecuted is currently sick. The relatives assume that the sudden drop of his physical condition is related to multiple acts of torture which Mispo Gwijangge experienced during custody at the Jayawijaya District police station. He was arbitrarily arrested in Wamena on 10 May 2019 and charged with Article 340 of the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP) on premeditated murder. The trial was then moved to Jakarta. Mispo Gwijangge was unconditionally released after a forensic examination of his teeth revealed his biological age of 16 years. Human rights defenders found multiple procedural violations in the police investigation, including, torture and the prevention of access to lawyers and translators during police interrogations.

[Read more details](#)

Celebration of International Human Rights Day in Nabire accompanied by arrests – Papuan Catholic Priests call for dialogue and reconciliation

Human rights activists in the town of Nabire had called upon the people to gather in multiple locations and commemorate the International Human Rights Day on 10 December. Police officers dispersed the crowd and

arrested at least 16 protesters without showing warrants. All were detained at the Nabire District police headquarters for one hour and subsequently released. A Nabire police representative declared that the commemoration violates the COVID-19 health protocol and poses a potential security threat during local elections.

[Read more details](#)



Police officers disperse peaceful commemoration in Nabire



Relatives gather at the graves of four students in Enarotali

Sixth Anniversary of ‘Bloody Paniai Case’ – No perpetrators prosecuted

On 8 December 2014, joint security force members opened fire at a crowd of indigenous Papuans in the Paniai Regency. The security forces shot dead four high school students and injured at least 17 other persons with bullets. The victim’s relatives gathered at the grave of the dead pupils at the Karel Gobai field in the town of Enarotali on 8 December 2020 to commemorate the tragic incident. They continue to demand justice for their lost ones. The relatives and local human rights organisations urged the Indonesian Government to

immediately allow the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit West Papua and push for the settlement of past gross human rights violations in Indonesia.

[Read more details](#)

KNPB members again arrested in Merauke – Police chief threatens to shoot activists in the legs

The Merauke police has again carried out raids against the political peaceful civil resistance organisation West Papua National Coalition (KNPB). On 13 December 2020, joint security force members allegedly destroyed parts of the KNPB office facilities in Merauke and arrested 14 KNPB members. Police officers beat the activists with wooden sticks during the arrest and detention at the police station. The police is investigating treason allegations against the activists. Merauke police chief, Untung Sangaji, declared that he would “shoot the KNPB activists in the legs” if they continue to conduct subversive activities in Merauke. Police officers reportedly used physical force to expel one of the relatives from the police station. She had come to bring food for the activists and request the official arrest warrant.



Small post in front of the KNPB office damaged during the raid

[Read more details](#)



Papuan woman in Tambrauw protesting against the military base

Military Base in Tambrauw inaugurated without consent of indigenous land rights holders

The local government in Tambrauw has inaugurated the new military district command headquarters (KODIM) on 14 December 2020. Indigenous leaders had provided a piece of land to the local government for building an office for the local Transportation Department. However, the local Government handed over the building and land to the military without prior consultation with the indigenous landowners. Indigenous people in Tambrauw have protested against establishing the base after multiple cases of military violence, and intimidation against local communities occurred in the past months.

[Read more details](#)

Update on law enforcement operation in multiple cases of human rights violations in Intan Jaya

On 23 December 2020, the commander of the army military police, Dodik Widjanarko, informed the public about the current status of law enforcement operations in four cases of human rights violations in Intan Jaya during a press conference in Jakarta. The military police have launched investigations into (1) the [arson of government health facilities](#) in the Hitadipa district on 19 September 2020, (2) the [shooting of catholic catechist](#), Agustinus Duwitau, on 7 October 2020, (3) the [enforced disappearance of Luther Zanambani and Apinus Zanambani](#) on 21 April 2020 and (4) the [torture and extra-judicial execution of Rev. Yerima Zanambani](#) on 21 September 2020. Human rights defenders reacted sceptical towards the announcement. They fear that the perpetrators will receive lenient sentences or enjoy impunity if the military succeeds to shift the legal process to the military jurisdiction instead of settling the cases through national human rights mechanisms.



Past military tribunal in Jayapura

Read more details about the investigation [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)
Read more about the law enforcement process [here](#)

Security forces and right-wing groups prevent peaceful 'Trikora' demonstration in Jakarta



Protesters inside the police truck in Jakarta

Joint security forces and multiple right-wing groups prevented Papuan students from holding a peaceful demonstration in commemoration of Soekarno's Trikora speech in Jakarta. On 19 December 2020, supporters of the Indonesian Peoples' Front for West Papua (FRI WP) and the Papuan Student Alliance (AMP) gathered in central Jakarta. Still, they were prevented by right-wing groups from walking towards the presidential palace. Security forces reportedly failed to undertake measures to push back the right-wing groups and allow the protesters to proceed. Police forces escorted to the Legal Aid Institute (LBH), where the crowd voluntarily dispersed.

[Read more details](#)

Security force members torture indigenous Papuan on New Year's Eve

Joint security force members reportedly tortured Petrus Tebai, 22, in the village of Mauwa, Dogiyai Regency, on New Year's Eve. Petrus Tebai was inside his house as he heard people arguing in one of the neighbouring huts. He went out to look where the sound was coming from, as a group of security force members intercepted him and collectively beat him up until he lost consciousness. The informants stated that Mr Tebai also sustained a bullet injury as one of the officers released a shot at him. He was admitted to the public hospital in Nabire the following day.



Petrus Tebai during medical treatment at the Siringi Hospital

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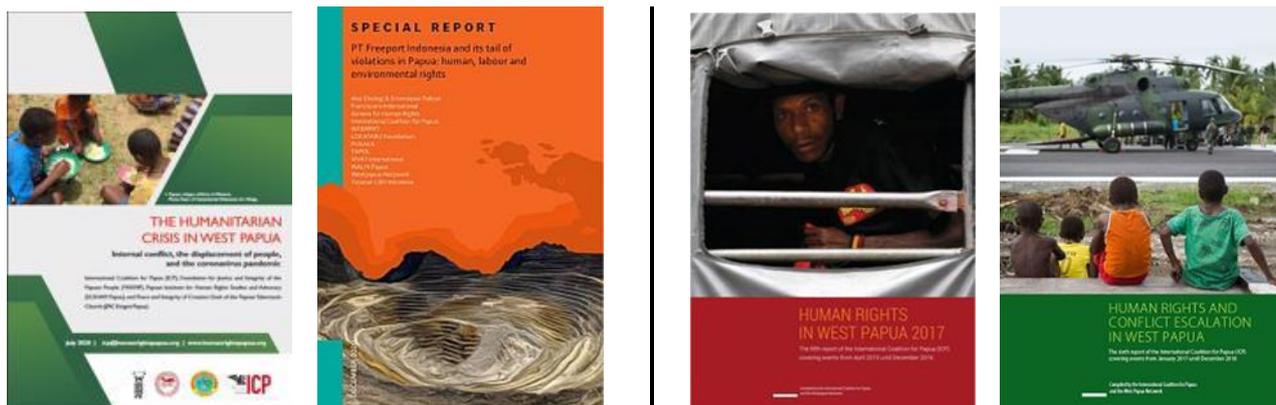
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About the ICP: The International Coalition for Papua (ICP) of faith-based and civil society organisations works to address the serious human rights situation in West Papua and supports a peaceful solution to the conflict there. The Coalition together with its partners supports advocacy work and networking at the international level for Papua as a land of peace and documents human rights violations in the region in cooperation with local sources. The ICP recognises all human rights and their fulfilment through active participation of civil society. Therefore, the Coalition sees the need to support partners striving for the recognition of basic human rights and seeking peaceful solutions to the implementation of the right to self-determination. The Coalition supports all human rights including the freedom to express political opinions peacefully, the right to self-determination and the critical role of human rights defenders in a peaceful transformation of the ongoing conflict.

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