

## Human Rights Update West Papua – October 2021

covering July - September 2021



### Summary

The number of arbitrary arrests has increased notably during this period. Mass arrests have taken place during security force operations in response to the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPN PB) attacks. This rise also relates to the dispersal of various protests against adopting the revised special autonomy law and supporting Papuan activist and

number of victims	Q4 '20	Q1 '21	Q2 '21	Q3 '21
Extra-judicial executions or killings (+ Enforced disappearances/allegations)	6+2	7+1	5+1	2
Torture / Ill-treatment	21	2	10	43
Assaults against / obstruction of journalists	-	-	1	1
Violations of right to health (fatalities)	-	26	1	-
Violations against / obstruction of HRDs	2	-	1	4
Environmental crimes	2	1	-	-
Violations of Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC)	1	1	-	1
Non-political arbitrary arrests	-	26	28	143
Political arrests	155	14	180	137
Treason & conspiracy charges (articles 106 & 110 KUHP) no. of accused	20	-	1	-
Violations of the right to fair and impartial trial & independence of judges	3	4	1	1
Internally displaced persons (Conflict)	60,000	> 3,600	>31,833	>8,845

human rights defender Victor Yeimo. The mass arrests have reportedly been accompanied by security force violence leading to a significant increase in cases of torture and ill-treatment. Simultaneously, the number of extra-judicial killings (EJKs) has decreased to two, both related to excessive use of force during law-enforcement operations. However, this decrease does not mean that the armed conflict in West Papua has lessened over the past three months. [Conflict-related violence has spread to the Papuan regencies Yahukimo and Pegunungan Bintang](#). Before, all three regencies had hardly been affected by the armed conflict. On 22 August 2021, TPN PB members killed and burned the bodies of two construction workers near the Kribun Village, Yahukimo Regency. On 2 September 2021, TPN PB members killed four and injured two army members in the Kisor Village, Maybrat Regency. The TPN PB also attacked a military post (Koramil) in the Kiwirok District, Pegunungan Bintang Regency, on 13 September 2021. One health worker died during the attack, and several public facilities were burned to the ground. Joint security forces responded by carrying out raids in the three regencies. Arbitrary arrests and torture reportedly accompanied the operations. Statistic figures indicate that the number of reported armed clashes will have tripled by the end of 2021 compared to 2017. The number rose from 24 in 2017 to 44 in 2018 and 64 in 2020. As of 30 September 2021, the ICP has documented at least 63 armed clashes across West Papua for the year.

The Indonesian Parliament officially [revised the Special Autonomy Law for Papua on 15 July 2021](#). By doing so, the government ignored the voices of the Papuan provincial parliaments, the Papuan Peoples Assemblies (MRP & MRPB) and thousands of West Papuans protesting against the unilateral revision of the law. The [draft bill suggested 19 amendments to the current special autonomy law](#), which concerned articles regulating the allocation of special autonomy funds and the formation of new autonomy regions. Others, such as establishing a Papuan human rights court and Truth & Reconciliation Commissions (KKR), were left aside. Security forces immediately dispersed protests against the revised law in various parts of Indonesia, claiming they violated COVID-19 health protocols. A [new report on freedom of expression and assembly in West Papua published by TAPOL](#) illustrate how these protests were repressed heavily by the Indonesian security forces, which used regulations against the spread of COVID-19 as a reason to do that.

Throughout the reporting period, many states expressed their support for a United Nations-steered fact-finding mission to investigate allegations of human rights violations in West Papua. In September 2021, the [Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States \(OACPS or ACP\)](#) sent a [letter to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\)](#), calling for "an urgent mission to West Papua to provide an evidence-based, informed report on the human rights situation". Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu also [declared their support for such a mission during the 76th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations \(UNGA\)](#). On 17 September 2021, the [UN published a new report on cooperation with its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights](#). The report was compiled by UN Secretary-General António Guterres and referenced five cases of criminalisation and intimidation against West Papuan human rights activists.

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

*The information in this report is collected by 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.*

### Update on trial against Victor Yeimo – Special procedures express concerns over arrest and deteriorating health during detention



*eVictor Yeimo during medical treatment at the Jayapura Hospital*

Victor Yeimo's [health condition has significantly deteriorated](#) since his [arrest](#) on 9 May 2021. The police charged him with multiple criminal charges, including Article 106 of the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP) on treason, Article 110 KUHP on criminal conspiracy against the state and Article 160 KUHP on incitement. Victor's [lawyers have called upon the police to release the activist](#). On 30 June 2021, [UN Special Procedures launched a communication](#) after various NGOs submitted a report on Victor Yeimo's arrest and detention. According to his lawyers, the [police repeatedly hampered access to medical treatment](#) and stopped his relatives from visiting him. The trial against him was launched at the Jayapura district court on 24 August 2021, regardless of his deteriorating health. On 30 August 2021, Victor Yeimo was taken to the public hospital in Jayapura after the [judge allowed him to receive medical treatment](#). The trial was indefinitely adjourned. On 20 September 2021, several [UN Special Procedures mandate](#)

[holders stressed](#) that "Indonesia must provide West Papuan human rights defender Victor Yeimo with proper medical care to keep him from dying in prison."

### Protest against the revision of Papuan Otsus Law in Jakarta, Jayapura, Kaimana & Sorong – 120 protesters reportedly arrested

Papuan students and solidarity groups launched peaceful protests against the revision of the Papuan Special Autonomy (Otsus) Law in the cities [Jayapura \(Papua Province\)](#), [Kaimana \(Papua Barat Province\)](#) and [Indonesia's capital, Jakarta](#). The Jayapura police forcefully dispersed a demonstration at the Cenderawasih University campus on 14 July 2021 and arrested 24 protesters. In Jakarta, the police reportedly arrested 40 protesters in front of the Indonesian Parliament building on 15 July 2021 while the Indonesian house of representatives passed 19 revisions to the Papuan Special Autonomy Law No 21/2001. The protest in Kaimana on 15 July 2021 was also dispersed, and 20 protesters were arrested. All three demonstrations were dispersed using regulations against the spread of COVID-19 as a reason. On 19 July 2021, police members dispersed another peaceful [protest against the law in Sorong](#). They arrested 36 protesters, including two minors, and at least six were injured.



*Police officers disperse the protest at Jayapura University campus*



*Bruises in Mr Yoman's face after being tortured*

## Officers torture son of Papuan church leader during police patrol in Padang Bulan, Jayapura

Police [officers reportedly tortured Charles Yoman](#) during a patrol in Padang Bulan, Jayapura, on 10 July 2021. Mr Yoman is the son of Rev Socrates Sofyan Yoman, president of the Fellowship of Baptist Churches in West Papua and a member of the West Papuan Council of Churches. The officers reportedly dragged him into the police truck. Subsequently, they tortured him in response to an argument between Charles Yoman and the officers. They allegedly punched and kicked Mr Yoman to the face and the stomach while two officers held his arms. Subsequently, the officers pushed him to the ground. They collectively kicked his chest, abdomen, testicles, head and legs with heavy combat boots.

## Military member opens fire at villagers in Mappi Regency

A [military member tortured two indigenous Papuans](#) in the Kanami Ville, Mappi Regency, during a dispute on 16 July 2021. The perpetrator reportedly attacked Mr Anes Samogoi. As his brother, Mr Yosep Kamogou Samogoi, stepped in to help, Mr Syarifudin drew his firearm and fired two shots at the brothers. One of the projectiles hit Mr Yosep Kamogou Samogoi in the leg. He was brought to the Mappi general hospital, where he received medical treatment.



*Roland levy (left) and Kelvin Molama (right)*

## Trial against 2 AMP members in Jakarta - Activists sentenced to 5 months imprisonment

On 22 July 2021, judges at the North Jakarta District Court found [Papuan activists and students Roland Levy and Kelvin Molama guilty](#) of attacking a student named Rajid Patiran and sentenced them to five months imprisonment. Both activists are associated with the Papuan Student Alliance (AMP), which has organised peaceful protests related to West Papua across Indonesia. The lawyers believe that the judges did not consider various pieces of evidence and the defendants' testimonies in the verdict.

## Torture of Papuan man in Nabire caught on video



*Police officer punishing Nicolas Mote to the back of the head*

Witnesses recorded two [police brigade officers torturing a Papuan man](#) in the Bumiwonoreja village on 28 July 2021. They had been deployed to the village to secure local elections. Shortly after the incident, a [video](#) was uploaded on social media. One officer apologised to the victim Nicolas Mote for the misconduct. He added he beat him because he thought he was drunk. The statement show the lack of professionalism and the continued racist stigma against ethnic Papuans among Indonesian security force members in West Papua.

## Two military members torture Papuan disabled man in Merauke – Video goes viral on social media

A [video](#) showing a [deaf Papuan being tortured by Indonesian army](#) members caused public outrage across West Papua. The video shows two Indonesian Airforce (TNI-AU) members pushing a deaf-and-dumb young Papuan named Steven Yadohamang to the pavement while stepping on the victim's head and left arm. This happened on 26 July 2021 in the Merauke Regency.



*Soldiers pushing Steven Yadohamang to the ground*

## Military members arrest 12 Papuans in Skofro – 9 arrestees due to alleged affiliation with TPN PB

Indonesian [military members reportedly arrested a group of twelve Papuans](#) near the village of Skofro, Keerom Regency, on 14 July 2021. The soldiers stopped the group in a pick-up truck driving from the Papua New Guinea border to Skofro. Nine arrestees are alleged of being affiliated with the TPN PB.



*Photo of the arrest in Skofro*

## Police officer opens fire at indigenous villager in Sorong Selatan

On 20 July 2021, a member of the Sorong Selatan District [Police reportedly attacked 46-year-old Nicolas Kemerai](#) in the Bariat village, Sorong Selatan Regency. The torture was meant to be a punishment for a broken timber deal. The officer was running a liquor business and had given 20 litres of liquor in return for two ironwood trees on Mr Kemerai's land. As Mr Kemerai's relatives prevented the police members from cutting the trees, he drove to Nicolas Kemerai's house to take revenge. The officer kicked him multiple times, pulled his gun and released five shots at Nicolas Kemerai. Mr Kemerai was able to avoid the shots but suffered various bruises from the kicks.



*Nimboran police station after being set on fire*

## Police officer opens fire at Papuan villager – Angry mob burn down Nimboran police station

A member of the Nimboran sub-district police opened fire at 22-year-old Fredrik Sem in the Worambaim village on 2 August 2021. Mr Sem sustained an injury to the head and was admitted to the hospital. According to witnesses, the police officer shot Fredrik Sem twice as he tried to avoid the arrest. A third shot to the head hit Mr Sem, causing him to fall to the ground. The police claimed he was intoxicated and attacked the officer with a crowbar. Following the incident, [relatives and residents burned down the police station](#)

[in Nimboran](#), Jayapura Regency.



*protesters during custody at the Jayapura police station*

## Protests for release of Victor Yeimo – 14 students arrested and temporarily detained

On 10 August 2021, Papuan [students launched a peaceful protest](#) in front of the Cenderawasih University in Jayapura. The protesters demanded the immediate release of Papuan human rights activist and international spokesperson of the West Papua National Committee (KNPB), Victor Yeimo. Police officers dispersed the protest and reportedly arrested 14 students. They were detained at the Jayapura Municipality police station. All were released in the late

afternoon.

## Nationalist organisation reports Bali Legal Aid Institute and four Papuan students to police

On 2 August 2021, the Bali-based nationalist organisation Patriot Garuda Nusantara (PGN) filed a complaint against the Bali Legal Aid Institute (LBH Bali) and four Papuan students to the Bali Regional Police (Polda Bali). PGN raised [allegations of treason against the Papuan students, and LBH Bali](#) after the Papuan Student Alliance (AMP) commemorated its anniversary at the Papuan student dormitory in the city of Denpasar, Bali Province. LBH Bali declared it monitored the event to ensure that Papuan students enjoyed their rights guaranteed under the Indonesian constitution.

## The Guardian: Merauke Police Chief alleged of torture was trained in Australia funded law enforcement facility

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In early August 2021, [The Guardian](#) revealed possible connections between the [torture of 14 Papuan activists](#) in Merauke and the Indonesian police training facility Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) in Semarang, Java Tengah Province. The [police education centre is partly funded and run by the Australian Federal Police \(AFP\)](#) to teach Indonesia's national police (Polri) best practice counter-terrorism and counter-people smuggling techniques. One of the activists died on 27 February 2021 during police detention due to the lack of healthcare services. The issue of Australian government funds being used to train alleged human rights perpetrators in West Papua has been raised by the [Make West Papua Safe Campaign](#).



*KNPB activists in Merauke display the marks of beatings by police officers*

### Chairperson of journalist association in Jayapura intimidated

The Chairperson of the Association of Independent Journalists (AJI) in Jayapura, [Lucky Ireeuw, was subjected to intimidation](#) on 8 August 2021. He also works as chief editor for the Papuan news outlet Cenderawasih Post. Mr Ireeuw parked his car on 7 August 2021 in Hamadi. As he returned to the car on the following day, unknown perpetrators had smashed a side window. In contrast to usual cases of criminal theft, no valuables were removed from the vehicle. Lucky Ireeuw reported vandalism to the Jayapura police and the Papuan Representative Office of the National Human Rights Commission.



*Damaged side window of Mr Ireeuw's car.*

### Security forces crackdown on peaceful protest for the release of Victor Yeimo – 49 protesters arrested, 19 tortured, one killed

The West Papua National Committee (KNPB) and multiple solidarity groups organised a [series of peaceful protests in the Papua province and other parts of Indonesia](#). The protesters demanded the unconditional and immediate release of KNPB spokesperson Victor Yeimo. The demonstrations in Jayapura, Dekai (Yahukimo Regency) and Ambon (Maluku Province) were forcefully dispersed by security forces. In total, 49 protesters were arrested. Nineteen protesters were reportedly ill-treated during arrest and police detention. One protester on Dekai sustained a bullet injury as police officers opened fire at the crowd. [Ferianus Asso passed away](#) at the Bhayangkara Police Hospital in Jayapura on 22 August 2021 due to bullet injuries.



*Protesters in Dekai demand the immediate release of Victor Yeimo*

### Update on the situation of palm oil plantations in West Papua

The Korean palm oil [conglomerate Korindo will lose its sustainability certification](#) by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) in October 2021. According to the FSC, there were no verifiable improvements in Korindo's social and environmental performance. The FSC had worked with Korindo, although various environmental groups repeatedly raised allegations of illegal deforestation and human rights violations against local communities.



*Cleared piece of forest in a oil palm plantation in West Papua*

The Papuan provincial government, in cooperation with an expert team of the Commission for Eradication of Corruption (KPK), [assessed 62 palm oil licenses in Papua Province](#) over the past two years. The expert team found irregularities among most examined licenses, covering violations such as overlapping concession areas, approval of concessions without clear location maps, and field operations outside concession areas without valid permits. In response to the findings, the local government in Papua Province suggested withdrawing 35 palm oil licenses with a total land area of 522,397 hectares.

Presidential instruction No 8/2018 concerning Suspension and Evaluation of Oil

Palm Plantation Permits and Increase of Oil Palm Plantation Productivity, also known as the "Oil Palm Moratorium", officially ended on 18 September 2021. The moratorium pursues four significant objectives: cancelling licenses and investments for new permits, and for expanding existing oil palm plantations within forest areas; evaluating existing oil palm licenses and business use rights in forests; redistributing to communities those forest areas released from oil palm production, and strengthening support to smallholders and productivity through compliance with sustainable oil palm schemes. Environmental observers and [NGOs have called upon President Jokowi to extend the moratorium](#), arguing that the government has not achieved the given targets.

## Update on the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in West Papua

### *Kepulauan Yapen*

A police operation in the Sasawa village, Kepulauan Yapen Regency, on 5 August 2021 reportedly caused the internal [displacement of 215 villagers](#), mostly women and children. The IDPs returned to Sasawa on 15 August, after members of the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) organised mediated talks with the IDPs, local security forces and the local government.

### *Puncak*

Church workers and a local lawmaker collected new data about IDPs in the Puncak Regency during a humanitarian visit in early July 2021. According to the Social Affairs Department in Puncak Regency, [at least 4,862 persons from 5 districts have been internally displaced](#) since April 2021. In addition, two women and three minors have reportedly died since being displaced. The head of local government called upon the IDPs to return their homes. The statement caused widespread rejection among the IDPs, as houses, churches, and gardens in many villages have been severely damaged during the raids (see photo).



*Church in the Puncak Regency damaged during security force raids*

### *Maybrat*

The [killing of four soldiers in the Kisor Village](#), Maybrat Regency, on 2 September 2021, was followed by multiple security force raids in various districts of the regency. A human rights coalition of Papuan faith-based organisations and NGOs has published a [report about internally displaced persons \(IDPs\) in Maybrat](#) in early September 2021. As of 1 October 2021, [at least 2,768 indigenous Papuans from more than 50 villages](#) have been internally displaced. According to the NGO Coalition, there are 338 minors, 17 babies and 40 older adults among the IDPs. Fifty-one IDPs are facing health problems but continue to hide in shelters without healthcare services.

### *Pegunungan Bintang*

Following the [burning of public facilities](#) in the Kiwirok District on 13 September 2021, about [1,000 indigenous Papuans in the Pegunungan Bintang Regency have been internally displaced](#). They fled in fear of state violence during security operations.



*New report "Ekonomi-Politik, Penempatan Militer Di Papua, Kasus Intan Jaya"*

## New NGO report reveals the relationship between military deployment and economic interests in West Papua

A new [report](#) has revealed the [involvement of high-ranking police and military officials in various mining companies](#) exploiting gold and other mineral resources in the Intan Jaya Regency, Papua Province. The security force presence in Intan Jaya raised significantly, causing the [internal displacement of thousands of indigenous Papuans](#) throughout 2020. Many security operations were accompanied by extra-judicial killings of multiple civilians, including Papuan [Pastor Rev Zanambani](#) and catholic catechist [Rufinus Tigau](#). The report explains that four companies benefit from the heavy presence of security posts near mining concessions in Intan Jaya. Retired and incumbent army members hold management positions or own shares in two of these companies. The security force members are responsible for ensuring access to and security at mining sites. Thus, there is a possibility that ongoing security force operations serve to evict indigenous land rights holders from their land and prevent opposition towards the project.

## Security force operation in Dekai accompanied by arbitrary arrest and torture

Joint security forces reportedly conducted a [raid in Dekai](#), Yahukimo Regency, on 28 August 2021. They arrested eight indigenous Papuans, among them community leader Etius Baye. He was allegedly tortured during the arrest. A witness confirmed that the security force member questioned Mr Baye at gunpoint and subsequently stroke him with the weapon into the face.

## Security force operations in Maybrat Regency - 31 arrested, nine tortured

As of 13 September 2021, [security force members have arrested thirteen indigenous villagers](#) since the operation against the TPN PB in Maybrat began. The number of arrestees quickly rose to 31 by the end of September 2021. Joint [security forces arrested six Papuan villagers](#) on 28 September 2021 in the Kokas Village (see photo). Four of them are not yet 18 years old and still attend junior high school. Human rights observers declared that the six arrestees from Kokas and [three other villagers were subjected to torture](#) and ill-treatment since the operation was launched on 2 September 2021. Twenty-three of the arrested IDPs have been released, while the others remain in custody.



*Six Papuan villagers, shortly after being arrested in the Kokas Village*

The police compiled a [list of 17 suspects](#) allegedly responsible for the attack on the Kisor military post. All names are affiliated with the West Papua National Committee (KNPB), a civil resistance movement that promotes the right to self-determination through peaceful means. The KNPB denied that any of its members were involved in the attack, stressing that their organisation only engages in peaceful action.

## Series of arbitrary arrests in response to armed clashes throughout September 2021



*Anias Yalak, closely guarded by police officers during medical treatment*

On 2 September 2021, members of the Nemangkawi police task force arrested Anias Yalak (also known as Senat Sol), Mekison Molama, Sapuk Itlai, Abet Molama, Pilias Matuan and Epias Yalak in a house at the Marten Indei Road in the town of Dekai, Yahukimo Regency. Police [officers shot at both of Anias Yalak's legs](#), claiming he resisted the arrest. He died at the Bhayangkara Police Hospital Jayapura on 26 September 2021. A Papuan student named Depron Wenda was arrested in Sorong, Papua Barat Province, on 9 September 2021. Police officers reportedly arrested a group of 22 Papuans at the Siep Asso Complex in the town of Dekai, Yahukimo Regency, on 20 September 2021. Among them were seven

children between 7 and 12 years and four other minors. Arnes Silak remained in custody while the other suspects were released after 2.5 hours. Human rights defenders have documented a total of 29 arrests in the Papuan regencies Yahukimo and Sorong throughout September 2021.

### **Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment files lawsuit against human rights defenders**

On 22 September 2021, the former military general and incumbent Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment, Luhut Binsar Panjaitan, filed a lawsuit against Mrs Fatia Maulidianti and Mr Haris Azhar. The human rights activists had discussed possible relations between security force deployments and economic interests behind gold mining operations in the Papuan regency Intan Jaya in a [video](#) uploaded on Mr Azhar's YouTube Channel on 20 August 2021. Previously, [Panjaitan had twice sent a subpoena to the activists](#), asking them to apologise for the allegations raised against him publicly. Panjaitan's lawyer declared that Mr Panjaitan had reported the activists for the alleged violation of the Indonesian Electronic Information and Transactions Law (ITE Law) and the Indonesian Penal Code (KUHP). Furthermore, Mr Panjaitan plans to file a civil lawsuit against Mrs Maulidyanti and Mr Azhar, demanding the activists pay 100 billion rupiahs (about six million Euro) compensation for defamation. [His lawyer announced](#) that the money would be donated to "the Papuan people" if Luhut Panjaitan won the lawsuit.



*Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment, Luhut Binsar Panjaitan*

### **Update on treason trial in Sorong – All defendants acquitted**

[Judges at the Sorong District Court acquitted the six Papuan defendants](#) Ham Nauw, Wenceslaus Saud, Cris Djanoma, Bertus Fenitruma, Jhon Bless and Doni Pattiruhu. The verdict was pronounced on 29 September 2021. The judges concluded that the evidence presented at court was insufficient to prove the defendants' involvement in a treasonous act or criminal conspiracy against the state as stipulated in Articles 106 and 110 of the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP).



*Court hearing against the Papuan activists in Sorong*



*Female protester is arrested and forcefully dragged to the police vehicle*

### **Police disperse peaceful West Papua rally in front of US Embassy in Jakarta – 17 protesters arrested**

[Police forces dispersed a peaceful assembly in front of the US Embassy](#) in Jakarta on 30 September 2021 and arrested 17 protesters. Observers stated that the officers dragged the protesters into a police truck. Some of them reportedly sustained injuries during the crowd control operation. One female protester was indecently touched as a police officer dragged her to the vehicle (see photo).

