

## **Bishop of Manokwari-Sorong protested the Police of Saonek**

**Sorong, 14 July 2004.** Most Rev. Hilarion Datus Lega, bishop of Manokwari-Sorong, sent a letter to the Papuan Chief of Police complaining the arbitrary arrest and detention of four human rights defenders on 7 July 2004, including **Freddy Sedik** (a staffer of the Office of Justice and Peace Sorong, inset), **Ludia Mentansan**, **Torianus Kalami** and **Simson Sanoy** (the staffers of the TRITON). In his letter, the Bishop clearly expressed his objection of “the reason of the arrest since it was only based on the findings of reading materials which were lawful and then the police used them as evidence to lay charge of treason according to Article 106 of the Penal Code against the suspects. This act breached Article 100 of Law no. 39/1999 concerning Human Rights and Article 1 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights Defender,” stated the letter dated 14 July 2004.



The four human rights defenders were arrested by the Police of Saonek while they were doing human rights education as part of the TRITON foundation's programs in the District of Saonek, the Regency of Raja Ampat. Besides, they were conducting an investigation into an allegation of illegal logging operating in this particular area. The Police of Saonek transferred them to the Police of Sorong before they were released on 8 July 2004 after their lawyer intervened. However, they were obliged to report themselves for a week.

The arrest resulted from a search conducted by the Commander of the Local Military Post of Saonek, **Andreas Pardede**, over a Sanoy's bag left unattended in Saonek market and someone brought this bag to the military post. The Commander claimed that he found the documents of the Free Papua Movement (OPM) whereas these materials were only Sanoy's personal reading materials downloaded from the internet regarding the political situation in Papua. The Commander, then, transferred these people to the Chief of the local police, **Edy Siswanto**, who then arrested and interrogated them for six hours (4-10 p.m. local time) without any lawyer available for them. Following this interrogation, the police transferred them to Sorong Police Station. The police in Sorong, then, confiscated their belongings, including Sanoy's mobile phone, the reading materials and the sample of evidence they had collected from the investigation such as spirit and instant noodles made in China. The Sorong police interrogated them at 11 a.m. at last following the complain made by the lawyer who noticed that his clients were waiting for nothing. This interrogation finished around 4 p.m. but the police only released them at 7 p.m on 8 July 2004.

Even though the Head of the Crime Department at the Sorong Police Station, **First Inspector Iwan P. Manurung**, in his press release acknowledged that the reading materials were not the OPM documents, these people were obliged to sign a statement stating that (1) they would not keep or possess any documents related to OPM, (2) they were prepared for punishment if they proved to do so, (3) they acknowledged that Papua was inseparable part of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia. The police charged Simon Sanoy, in particular, with treason according Article 106 of the Penal Code. Even though Sanoy signed a statement that the police returned his personal belongings, the police did not actually do so. To date, there is no rehabilitation made by the police to these human rights defenders. Therefore, the Bishop in his letter also asked for the release of their obligation to report themselves and the rehabilitation of their records.

The TRITON foundation is a Sorong-based NGO and have conducted human rights education programs, particularly in the area of the environment, to the local people in Raja Ampat area. The office of Justice and Peace is part of the ministry of the Catholic Church of the Manokwari-Sorong Diocese that conducts community organising in the area of the Bird's Head of Papua, as the diocese territory.