

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

IN PAPUA

PAPUAN FLAG IN TOP

***ESPECIALLY
DECEMBER 1, 1999 CELEBRATION***

Oleh

SEKRETARIAT KEADILAN & PERDAMAIAN

KEUSKUPAN JAYAPURA

**JAYAPURA
DECEMBER 1999**

KEUSKUPAN JAYAPURA
KOTAK POS 1379
JAYAPURA 99013
INDONESIA

DIOCESE OF JAYAPURA
Tel: +62 - 967 - 534993
Fax: +62 - 967 - 536427
E-mail: sekkp@jayapura.wasantara.net.id

No.: 126/TB/99/3.1.2.

JAYAPURA, 17 NOVEMBER - 6 DECEMBER

ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION

The situation in Irian Jaya has been marked by two major events over the last days: the raising of the flag in the Timika District since November 10th (till today), and the celebration of the 62nd birthday of Theys Eluay at Sentani on November 12th.

Both events have been met by the security forces with a lot of "sympathy". No actions have been taken against anyone involved in the two events and at the celebration at Sentani the security forces were among the invitees. Especially also in the aftermath of the celebration in Sentani, proclaiming independence and the plan to raise the Papuan flag all over the province on December 1st has been met with an astonishing sympathy by the security forces. Looks like nothing is wrong and actions that have been met with force over the last years all of a sudden are permitted and its importance "played down" (see especially the remarks made by the Kapolda as reported in the daily Cenderawasih Pos on the 16th of November; he puts the flag-raising in line with kids playing in their room and putting flags of foreign countries on the wall; "nothing wrong with that", is his simple comment).

Note: December 1st has been chosen as the date for the celebration as on December 1st 1961 the Papuan Morning Star flag has been raised for the first time alongside with the Dutch flag. It has been marked as the initial step to independence for West Papua.

Especially the attitude of the security forces is very surprising. What is on? Is there a major change in real attitude although expressed in a childish naive language? (the most optimistic interpretation) or is a high political game being played slowly leading to an irreversible conflict mainly focusing on horizontal level? (most pessimistic interpretation). Anyway the event raises questions! Why?

1. I still can understand that the security forces try to retain themselves and show more discipline facing local protest, but I don't understand the active stimulating role as expressed by security representatives. This is still more stunning as the statements are made while in Sorong the court case

against the people who raised the flag on July 5th is still in full process. Meanwhile in several jails all over the country people is still detained as they have raised a flag in the past; in Jayapura the most outstanding example is Philip Kamma (jailed for 6,5 years) who led the flag-raising in Biak, July 1998.

2. Both events are very well organized, even getting representatives in from various areas in Irian Jaya (for the celebration in Sentani as well as for the flag-raising in Timika). Who organized that and who paid for it? and why?
3. What is the role of Yorris Raweyai? His presence at the Sentani celebration raises a lot of questions, and also the public attention given to his presence (meeting him at the airport with all honors for a high official; giving him a lot of room for comments and interview in the local daily; orbiting him as one of the two -besides Theys Eluay- 'big leaders of the Papuan Community', and such). His role has been questioned by a lot of observers over the last two years -because of his clear position as Chairman of the Pemuda Pancasila Indonesia, and his very close connection with the Cendana-family-, but still he manages to put himself in the front-line and facilitating events. Rumors tell also that "Yorris' people" made it to Timika some days before the flag was raised over there (no confirmation on this). On the other hand some observers in Timika keep telling that they have the impression that the main actors in Timika (Pdt. Isaac dan Ibu Yosepha) give the impression to be "instructed by outside".
4. Is Theys Eluay used by others? Only two months ago Theys planned to hand over his leadership to "younger people" (rumours said that he was offered a seat in the MPR...) and now all of a sudden his 62nd birthday is used to stage a major demonstration for independence and to put him in the seat as the only and most important leader of the Papuan Community (besides Yorris!). It all sounds very little consistent, and raises a lot of questions.
5. A minor other question can be asked: why November 12th has been chosen as a 'historical date' and why not November 19th which at least is more history-loaded as it would have drawn attention to the 30th anniversary of the "act of free choice" way back in 1969.
6. Security forces officially attending the celebration in Sentani doesn't sound very logical to me. Everybody could know on forehand that it was not just a pure birthday-party or prayer-session.
7. A disturbing part in the speech by Theys telling that "once independent the national language will be the Biak-language and the capital will be Serui". This kind of a statement might be meant to get the support by the Biak and Serui community; on the other hand it will for sure trigger off the anger by other ethnic groups in the Papuan Community. Is this all said on purpose? Is there a move to split the Papuan Community and change the vertical

conflict (between Papuan Community and Government/Army) to a horizontal one (between Papuan groups)?

8. Why is the announced December 1st flag raising met with so much “understanding” in official circles (especially the security-circle)? Slowly some people start voicing their worries (among them rector UNCEN Wospaprik in the CEPOS November 16th, and governor Numberi in the CEPOS November 17th) or their mistrust (chairman Student IST, Kristian Sohilait in the CEPOS November 16th, and a staff-member of Pengadilan Negeri Jayapura, Bernard Akasian SH in the CEPOS November 17th). The same feeling of worry and mistrust is expressed in the circle of Human Rights organizations as Els-HAM and SKP, but the worries tend to get lost in the middle of more euphoristic and pushing voices.

Continued analysis

Jayapura, 6 December 1999

Looking back to the developments over the last weeks, it might be worthwhile to complete the initial notes made on November 17th.

A series of meetings has been started, mainly dealing with the problem: how to avoid bloodshed on December 1st. The question became more and more urgent for several reasons:

- The leaders of the security forces changed their tune. After the initial reaction of “no problem”, a rough ten days later the head of the army told that “allowing the celebration didn’t mean that it was approved or agreed on”; still later and closer to the day of celebration the tune became even more frightening when the flag-raising was declared “against the law” and that appropriate action would be taken against any act of violation of the law.
- An interesting detail, although it might not be directly connected with the up-coming December 1st celebration, was that on November 5th the Head of the Police in West Papua was replaced by a new one. Still more surprising on November 26th the Head of the Army was replaced by a new one. So just some days before the celebration we ended up with a brand-new “security-top”.
- The West Papua Governor had let everybody know that the flag-raising was illegal and so he forbade the celebration. On the eve of December 1st leaflets with the same message has been spread from a helicopter signed by the Governor and the Chairman of the Provincial Council of Representatives.
- From the “base-community” it was reported that the idea of a celebration (including the raising of the flag) was picked up with a lot of enthusiasm, also fueled by the initial “approval” by the security-forces. Almost all over

West Papua people started preparing themselves and organizing the celebration. A surprising exception in this line of reaction was Biak. Representatives in Biak made clear that they didn't support the action, but would celebrate the December 1st as a historical day in a proper way: praying, meeting each other and such, but no flag-raising. From other places (Nabire, Merauke, Serui, Sorong, Fakfak, Manokwari) it was reported that preparations were on their way. More and more the feeling was that the process couldn't be stopped anymore, while the tune by the security became more and more threatening.

These above mentioned elements became the setting for a number of meetings. There was little co-ordination in this variety, as meetings have been organized independently from each other by authorities, security, individuals. The meetings involved officials (in closed meetings such as the Muspida-meeting as well as in mixed meetings including community-leaders, officials, representatives of organizations), security people (same remark as above), individuals (partly on personal credit, and partly claiming representing an organizations, for example FORERI). The main topic of discussion or main target was: on one hand to get the December 1st celebration on, and on the other hand to settle for an agreement that no violent action might be taken by either sides involved (the Papuan community and the Security forces). The same kind of lobbying was done in Jakarta by a consortium of NGO's which even succeeded to reach the presidential circle before December 1st. According to several sources a last-minute 'gentlemen agreement' has been reached, allowing the celebration on condition that the flag would be taken down after 12 hours and that the organizing people would take responsibility; thus just an one-day celebration, and not as originally planned a flag-raising which would be the start of having the flag in top till independence would be given.

At the end the celebration on December 1st was very impressive and a real Papuan community event. It was pure joy and I guess for a lot of people something they hardly dared to dream about some years ago. The same liberating atmosphere in Merauke, Sorong, Manokwari, Fakfak, Serui, Sentani. Biak limited itself to a more modest celebration. A starting point, by some observers mentioned as "a point of no return". For an observer (and it might be as well for a number of insiders) the question remains: an opening to what? A start of what?

The next days don't give an answer yet on this vital question. Some events over the next days:

- December 2nd : a violent police crackdown on demonstrators in Timika who still refused to lower the flag at 18.00 on December 1st.

Result: 38 people injured, among them three people critical. The sweet memory of December 1st made fast place for mourning, anger, protest and the renewed feeling of powerlessness.

- December 2nd : Nabire shows a tense atmosphere as people refuse to lower the Morning Star flag. Negotiations with the authorities are still on.
- December 2nd : a group of 148 people led by Herman Awom challenges the DPRD demanding that their aspiration will be taken serious. The Provincial Counsel of Representatives has been given a week to organize a special session to discuss the demands (7 items; see attachment). If on December 9th the session has not yet been organized or settled for, the House of representatives will be occupied by the people. The same demand has been addressed to the district councils as well.
- December 2nd: after the meeting at DPRD a working-team has been set up under leadership of Herman Awom.
- December 3rd : first confirmation on a victim in Timika reaches the community; nobody knows what exactly this dead will trigger off. Lots of people still gathering on the same spot where the flag had been raised for three weeks. Tom Beanal still refuses to go to Timika, while FORERI start calling for a meeting
- December 3rd : the first organizing people (7 people) have been called in by the police for interrogation/"asking explanation". Followed by Theys on December 4th when he was called in. After the session for explanation they have been released and the reports will be passed on to the Department of Justice for further processing (if needed).
- ◆ December 4th : a group of about 40 people claiming to be "Papuan security" make their way to the Timika airport, and start checking on passengers. Main aim not to let local Papuans leave without their permission. The action is called "Saturday Action" and is quite similar to action taken by a local Papuan group in Manokwari when they started checking on people coming in by passenger boat (way back in September).

Some provisional conclusions/problems

First of all it might be clear that the situation has become very complicated, and very confusing for almost anyone who tries to understand what really is going on. Nevertheless some important observations might be made, as follows:

- Leadership has become a very confusing issue. Who is really in charge, or who is still a recognized leader for the local community? and based on what? The two most outstanding leaders till now, Theys Eluay and Tom Beanal have both been marked by recent events.
- Anyway the leadership in the Papuan community is still a big question-mark but on the other hand it is the most wanted at this very moment. Within this context it might be worthwhile to give some attention as well to the fact that potential elements of leadership present in circles of senior and junior civil servants, in circles of the church, and in the circle of intellectuals are relatively out of the picture. Little demand is made on them to take part, to join in for reflection and developing a strategy, using their personal insights and experiences. The need for it as well as the wish for it has been expressed again by some senior Papuan personalities who happened to be invited personally -not representing their institution- to take part in recent meetings.
- Closely related to local leadership and its expression is the issue about strong influences from outside, especially when that influence is valued “very questionable”. Both the Timika event as well as the Sentani event has been connected with “outside actors”. Enough has been said above to know why the questions raise. But still more important is to understand how this influence from outside might effect the credibility of the local leaders over here in West Papua. In case more and more signs/facts will prove the detrimental involvement of outside actors the leaders here will almost automatically lose their credibility. Above that, the issue about the possible influence from outside destructive actors, makes contacts among leading people over here difficult and feeds the mistrust among each other.
- How about the local people and their relation to the events and perspectives for the future? What is people in the villages expecting? They have picked up the December 1st celebration eagerly as they had been waiting for a long time after the initial euphoria way back in February (26th) when the demand for independence was delivered at the presidential palace. For a long time nothing had happened and for sure people started asking questions. Was there still some progress? Did the team of 100 still do its job, bringing the demand forward? What was FORERI doing? They have been receiving more questions than answers over the last nine

months. They were eager to back up the new sign of action, and therefore also very hard to stop especially after receiving the initial sympathy voiced by the (security-) authorities. They joined the party wholehearted, and are probably expecting more than just this one day of indeed liberating joy. Will they get more?

- Are we facing an increasing gap between the local community and the circle of activists? Although raising expectations to a high level in the local communities, the whole preparation (and it looks like the follow-up as well) of the event has been handled on “high level”, which means: the local community has been virtually left out of the discussions. The plan for the celebration was made public without any significant previous discussions involving a wide variety of people.