

**Franciscans International, in conjunction with Dominicans for Justice and Peace,
demand an end to long-standing and ongoing human rights violations in Papua,
Indonesia**

**Statement to the 59th Session of the Commission on Human Rights
Item 9—Questions of Human Rights Violations in Any Part of the World
Delivered by Fr. Theo van den Broek OFM
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Introduction

I speak on behalf of Franciscans International, in conjunction with Dominicans for Justice and Peace, on the issue of long-standing and ongoing human rights violations in Papua.

Papua, formerly called Irian Jaya, is the easternmost province of Indonesia. The indigenous Papuans are among the most marginalized and victimized people in Indonesia.

As a Dutch-born, Indonesian missionary living and working in Papua for the past 28 years, I wish to give testimony on the situation of the Papuan people.

Concerns and situational factors

1. The Papuan people have a collective memory of 40 years of oppression and denial of their human rights, dignity and fundamental freedoms by the Government of Indonesia, which has consisted of:
 - a. A denial of their right of self-determination since the 1960s;
 - b. Racial and ethnic discrimination, their treatment as a ‘primitive’ people;
 - c. Exploitation and expropriation of their ancestral lands through imposition of development policies (including the extraction of natural resources without improving the local people’s economy);
 - d. Arbitrary detention, torture and extrajudicial killings for political beliefs and opinions expressed (criticism of the government or its policies is viewed as ‘subversive’ and/or ‘separatist’).

Hence, the Indonesian authorities use fear and intimidation to suppress and silence the community.

2. Victims are denied justice, since:
 - a. Human rights violations are not dealt with according to international human rights norms and standards (e.g. the Abepura case, Theys Hiyo Eluay case, Willem Onde case, Ilaga case and others);
 - b. The perpetrators of violations often benefit from impunity (as in the aforementioned cases, and evident in the way investigations take place or are not taking place at all – as in cases such as Willem Onde, Ilaga, Manokwari and others).
3. The military has a disturbing role, since it is:
 - a. Not under the effective control or oversight of the civilian authorities;

- b. Organising the training of a quasi-paramilitary group recruited from the local community (so-called “Defenders of the Nation”, assistants in military operations, etc.);
 - c. Combining diverse economic interests with its main task as a security force.
4. Conflicting policies by the central government include:
- a. Bypassing the regional authorities;
 - b. Using internal differences of opinion / interest within the Papuan community in order to reach the state of ‘*divide et impera*’ (the most recent example is the issuing of a Presidential Decree on the division of the Papua Province into three separate provinces, which directly contradicts the Special Autonomy Law ratified by the same government a year ago);
 - c. Practices which lead the local community to a situation of increasing horizontal conflict.

Recommendations

Franciscans International, in conjunction with Dominicans for Justice and Peace:

1. Urges the Government of Indonesia to open up a political dialogue on the history of the integration of Papua into the Republic (recent talks on Aceh might serve as a model).
2. Urges the Government of Indonesia to restore the practice of national and international legal standards, especially ending the practice of impunity for certain groups / persons.
3. Urges the Government of Indonesia to put an end to all efforts – covert or overt – to create paramilitary groups in Papua that serve political purposes and fuel horizontal conflicts in the Papua community.
4. Urges the Government of Indonesia to safeguard freedom of expression, including the peaceful expression of political aspirations and rights, as well as the work of people who serve to uphold human rights and dignity, such as community leaders and human rights defenders.
5. Urges the Government of Indonesia to constructively join with the parties in Papua who make sincere efforts to create a peaceful situation (under the motto “Papua, Land of Peace”), and who work to safeguard the Papuan people from living in fear.