

## Human Rights Update West Papua – January 2018

covering October - December 2017

### Summary

In the fourth quarter of 2017, the monitoring of human rights violations does not show a significant improvement in terms of violence in West Papua. While the number of political arrestees has decreased, the number and pattern of cases of political arrests remained consistent. The police appears to target arrests more instead of mere mass arrests. The West Papua National Committee KNPB continues to be the main target group of political arrests in West Papua. The number of extra-judicial executions or arbitrary killings as well as the number of torture victims has not decreased. The same applies to the number of assaults against journalists and human rights defenders. The right to health continues to be of serious concern, particularly in the central highlands of West Papua, which continue to be vulnerable to outbreaks of transmittable diseases.

Number of Victims 2017	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Extra-judicial executions or killings	4	1	3	2
Torture / Ill-treatment	7	17	135	16
Assaults against / obstruction of journalists	2	3	0	3
Violations of right to health	0	37	93	38
Violations against HRD	0	1	6	2
Political arrests	0	321	219	59
Treason charges (106 & 110 KUHP)	0	1	0	1

During the reporting period Papuan human rights defenders reported another case of health negligence in Yahukimo Regency in October 2017. 38 villagers died over a period of approximately three months due to various diseases, whilst the government did not take notice of the devastating health condition in the area. In the same month a local journalist was intimidated by security force members in Enarotali. In Moso, a small village in Jayapura Regency near the PNG boarder, four villagers were tortured by army members who maintain a security post at Moso. A further severe case of torture was reported from south Sorong Regency, where a conflict over land between palm oil company PT Permata Putera Mandiri (PPM) and indigenous land owners had peaked into several cases of intimidation and torture. The most significant event during the past three months took place in Tembagapura in November 2017, as violent clashes between security forces and independence fighters occurred. The case reached Indonesia-wide attention through national media as high officials of the army and police classified the situation as the 'taking of 1.400 hostages by a criminal armed group' because a village in the affected area had been cut-off from supplies. Media outlets also reported of two further cases in which security force members had committed physical assaults against local journalists in the regencies Mimika and Jayapura. The number of cases during the reporting period peaked in December 2017, which is commonly a month of concern due to commemorations of the 1<sup>st</sup> December in West Papua. As in previous years, several commemorations were accompanied by political arrests. A human rights coalition in the central highlands reported that security forces raided houses in the Mugi District of Nduga Regency. According to a press release by the coalition five villagers sustained bullet injuries while another four were tortured – amongst them three minors. Two human rights defenders faced intimidation after they had spread information about the security force raid. Security force members denied the incident. Moreover, human rights defenders reported two extra-judicial killings and one case of disappearance.

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 are lacking in remote areas, this compilation of cases cannot be regarded as complete.*

### 38 People in districts Semenage and Werima die due to absence of health services

A further case of health care negligence has been reported by local human rights activists in the districts of Semenage and Werima of Yahukimo Regency in the central highlands of Papua Province. Between May and August 2017, 38 villagers died of multiple sicknesses due to the absence of health services in the districts. All victims reported similar symptoms, among them coughing, flu, diarrhea, high fever and back aches. The head of the Papuan Provincial Government Health Agency confirmed the deaths of 38 villagers, claiming that the victims suffered Bronchopneumonia, TBC or other bronchial infections, as well as diarrhea, malaria and HIV/AIDS. The lack of health services had forced the villagers to walk several days to the highland city of Wamena, where the nearest hospital is located. In the village of Wesagelap the local health post already stopped operating four years ago.

[Read more details](#)

### Six military members search the house of Papuan journalist without warrant



Niko Hisage

Various independent Papuan media outlets reported that six plain cloth military members came to the house of 'Suara Papua' journalist Stevanus Yogi in Enarotali, Paniai Regency at around 12.00 am on 17 October 2017. The three military officers entered his house without asking for permission or showing him a warrant. They checked each room inside the house, while the other three officers were guarding the yard in front of the house. According to Stevanus Yogi, the military members were armed with bayonet knives and allegedly searching for a thief. However, the local journalist understood the incident as an act of intimidation against him, explaining that the security force members targeted only his

house in the whole area. The chief editor of 'Suara Papua', Mr. Arnold Belau also understood the house search as an act of intimidation against his journalist and linked the incident to the Paniai Shooting in December 2014. Stevanus Yogi was one of the journalists involved in the media coverage on the case which led to the publication of various critical articles.

[Read more details](#)

### Mysterious shootings at the Freeport mine continue



Picture of alleged members of the TPN Group in Tembagapura

A series of shootings between 'Police Mobile Brigade' (BRIMOB) forces and an unknown armed group has again been reported in the Freeport mining area in Tembagapura of Mimika Regency. Throughout the past 15 years, similar incidents repeatedly occurred, but the shootings became less frequent throughout the past few years. On 21 October 2017, an unknown armed group opened fire at a Freeport convoy and subsequently at several BRIMOB officers near Utikini Village. Two BRIMOB officers were injured. A further exchange of fire was reported on 22 October near Utikini, causing the death of one BRIMOB officer. Tensions in the armed conflict in Tembagapura increased after one further

BRIMOB officer was killed on 14 November 2017 during exchange of fire with members of the Papuan Liberation Army (TPN). One police officer and a Freeport employee sustained bullet wounds during the fight.

Some villages in the surrounding area of Tembagapura were cut-off from supplies because the security situation along the connecting road to Timika became more tense during past weeks. On 17 November 2017, an armed clash occurred as joint police and military forces approached the villages Banti and Kimbeli in an

attempt to evacuate the local population. The Indonesian military general Gatot Nurmantyo and the national police chief Tito Karnavian classified the situation as the 'taking of 1.400 hostages by a criminal armed group'. The security situation at the Freeport Mine received Indonesia-wide attention in national newspapers and television broadcasts. According to evacuated villagers, neither Papuan nor Non-Papuan villagers had been taken hostage, and no stores were burned down as it had been reported by the national media.

[Read more details](#)

### **Army officers torture villagers in Moso Village, Jayapura**

The Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Desk (JPIC) of the Christian Protestant Church in Papua reported multiple incidents in which members of the Yonif Para Raider 432 Kostrad Makasar military unit allegedly tortured villagers in Moso Village of the Muara Tami District, Jayapura Municipality. On 4 October 2017, four fully armed officers unlawfully arrested two villagers named Nolbet and Zakheus, after the two young men disturbed other villagers under the influence of alcohol. The officers also entered the house of teacher Thomas Manufandu without a warrant and arbitrarily arrested his son Kostan Manudandu. Subsequently, the army officers brought Nolbet, Zakheus and Kostan to the military post in Moso. At 21.30, Thomas Manufandu and his wife went to the post to request the release of Nolbet, Zakheus and his son. Thomas witnessed that the military officers slapped and beat Nolbet, Zakheus and Kostan to the face and body before they were released. On 5 October 2017, six fully armed army officers stopped Alfred Mandowen in Moso as he was driving his motorcycle. One of the officers kicked Alfred to the back, hence he fell to the ground. Subsequently, another army officer put his rifle aside and punched Alfred Mandowen twice to the chest in attempt to challenge him to a fist fight. The army officers allowed Alfred to leave after he had rejected the challenge.

[Read more details](#)

### **Land conflict between palm oil company and indigenous land owners results in police violence**

The NGO Pusaka has reported that the illegal expansion of an oil palm plantation owned by the company PT Permata Putera Mandiri (PPM) of the ANJ Group resulted in multiple cases of intimidation and violence against indigenous land owners of Puragi village, Metamani sub-district, South Sorong Regency of Papua Barat Province. The indigenous land owners erected "customary land blockades" after the company had been clearing forest areas beyond the boundaries of their concession since September 2017. The company has not carried out its obligation to hold a meeting with the community to reach an agreement about the status of the land and compensation for any ways in which they have been disadvantaged or lost sources of livelihood, including forest products and food sources.

On 23 October 2017, Yan Ever Mengge, also known as Bowake, put in place a law blockade after PT Permata Putera Mandiri (PPM) did not keep the promise to compensate his clan for land and timber, which had been cleared by the company the previous day. Thereupon, three Brimob officers chased and tried to run Bowake down with their vehicle. Bowake was able to avoid the crash, but the officers opened the left door, slamming it into Bowake's body. Three Brimob officers jumped out of the car and hit Bowake with rifle butts to his neck, back, waist and knees. The officers also kicked him with jackboots in his stomach, sides and chest until he fell to the ground. One Brimob officer stated. The Brimob guards also threatened to bury him alive. Bowake sustained severe bruises on the body, head, arms and legs. He was unable to walk, so the Brimob officers lifted him into the car and drove him to the company's camp. The Brimob officers continued to kick him at the camp until Bowake collapsed. After several days, a company worker brought Bowake to the hospital in Teminabuan because he continued to suffer a severe pain at the backbone and he repeatedly vomited blood.

[Read more details](#)

### **Media Freedom in West Papua under threat – two assaults on local journalists throughout November**

Multiple Papuan news outlets have reported two cases of violence against local journalists in the province of

Papua throughout November 2017. On 5 November 2017, 'Pasific Pos' journalist Ridwan Cholid Abubakar was attacked by a member of the Kodim/1704 Wamena military unit in Jayapura. Ridwan was waiting for a friend at the Argapura Bawah Complex as the military member with the initials TK stopped his motorcycle next to him and grabbed his arm, accusing him of been a drug user. When Ridwan explained that he did not take any drugs, the soldier punched him repeatedly in the face causing bruises on the journalist's left cheek and the neck. According to Ridwan Cholid Abubakar, TK was acting under the influence of alcohol.



Local journalist Salldi Hermanto after the attack

The Hong Kong-based human rights organisation 'Asian Human Rights Commission' (AHRC) reported that on 11 November, a group of at least six police officers of Mimika Police Office (Polres Mimika) ill-treated 'OKE Zone' journalist Saldi Hermanto as he was sitting in a public place near the police traffic control post, which is known as a meeting spot for local journalists. A group of at least six police officers approached Saldi and brought him inside the traffic control post, where they repeatedly punched him to the head and upper body. Saldi sustained bruises on the left temple and the right ribs, causing difficulties in breathing after the attack. The reason for the attack was a Facebook post in which Saldi allegedly criticized the performance of the local police in securing the outbreak of chaos during a public entertainment show at the Timika night market, resulting in public panic among the crowd.

[Read more details](#)

### **Amnesty International demands investigation into allegations of unlawful killing**

Amnesty International Indonesia (All) published a statement on 2 December 2017, in which the human rights organisation demanded Indonesian authorities to immediately conduct an independent, impartial and effective investigation into allegations of torture leading to the death of Ishak Yaguar in the Kimaam District of Merauke Regency, Papua Province. On 18 November 2017, four military members from the Yalet Post came to the house of Ishak Yaguar in relation to a protest, which had taken place three days before in Woner Village. At that time Ishak was sleeping. According to his family, the army dragged Ishak out of his house, stripped him of his clothing, kicked him, and beat him with a wood stick while taking him to Yalet Military Post, about 800 meters away. On the morning of 19 December, military personnel brought Ishak to the Kimaam Police Precinct, where he was transferred to the custody of police officers. In the afternoon, one of Ishak's family members was prevented from visiting him. In the evening, Ishak's family received information from the police that he had been transferred to a hospital in Kimaam. Later that night, one of Ishak's family members found out that Ishak had died.

[Read more details](#)

### **Papuan worker disappears as armed conflict near the Freeport Mine escalates**

The human rights group 'Amnesty International' has launched an urgent appeal in relation to the disappearance of Martinus Beanal, on 7 November 2017. The disappearance occurred as the armed conflict near the Freeport mine in Tembagapura of Mimika Regency intensified. According to 'Amnesty International', the Police announced that Martinus was dead and was buried by his family, a claim that has been refuted by his family. Martinus Beanal's whereabouts are still unknown.

[Read more details](#)

### **Police officer shoots dead Papuan man in Mappi Regency**

An officer of the Mappi District police with the initials D.E. shot dead 19-year-old Nikolausi Bernolpus on 25 December 2017 during a routine police patrol in Kepi Town of Mappi Regency. The incident was confirmed by the district police chief Wartono in an interview with the independent Papuan media outlet Tabloid Jubi. Prior to the incident, Nikolausi Bernolpus and several friends were sitting near the road as the police patrol passed.



An argument between a plain cloth officer and the group occurred after the officer suspected the young men of drinking alcohol, giving them the order to go home. The argument ended in a brawl, during which Nikolausi Bernolpus allegedly hit the officer with a wooden pole. According to police chief Wartono, the officer fell on the ground, draw his gun and released two warning shots. As Nikolausi Bernolpus tried to escape, the officer released a further shot, hitting Nikolausi from behind in the neck.

[Read more details](#)

## Security force raid in Nduga Regency – five victims injured by bullets, four tortured

The 'Advocacy Network on Law Enforcement and Human Rights of the Papuan Central Highlands' (JAPH-HAM) together with the 'Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence' (KONTRAS) published a press release on 20 December 2017 in response to an alleged security force raid in the area around the Daragma Airport in Mugi District of Nduga Regency, Papua Province. According to JAPH-HAM and KONTRAS, the raids between 12 and 15 December 2017 appeared to be an act of revenge after violent clashes between the Papuan Liberation Army (TPN) and Indonesian Military (TNI) had caused the death of a construction worker. One TNI soldier sustained bullet injuries during the exchange of fire.

JAPH-HAM and KONTRAS stated they received credible information from witnesses who saw that the joint security force members used civil airplanes, from which they released shots directed to people and houses around the airport. The press release states that, joint security forces tortured four indigenous Papuans and burned two houses to the ground. Five residents sustained bullet wounds during the raid. According to JAPH-HAM and KONTRAS three of the victims were minors. After the raid, security forces monitored the road from Jayawijaya to Nduga Regency and only granted access to those who had received permission letters from the police.

[Read more details](#)



Veronica Koman's Twitter posts as publicly shared by Stopfitnah.com

## Human rights defenders face intimidation after press release on security force raids in Nduga

Two human rights defenders have been intimidated after the Papuan advocacy network 'JAPH-HAM' published a press release about [raids by Indonesian security forces](#), which allegedly occurred between 12 and 15 December 2017 in the Papuan central highlands regency Nduga. On 19 December 2017 Theo Hesegem was intercepted by an intelligence member named Ardi after he attended an interview on the security force raids in Nduga at the RRI radio station in Wamena. The intelligence member asked Theo to provide information about his and his wife's identity. When Theo asked why his wife's identity was needed, the intelligence member did not reply. On 21 December 2017 a member of the Cenderawasih Military Command called Theo Hesegem, stating that the information in the press release was not

true. Three days later, on 24 December 2017, Theo Hesegem received a threatening SMS stating "... Let alone just being fired for alleged human rights violations, our bodies are ready to be sacrificed... But Please !!! Stop slandering us... because slander is more painful than death!!!!" Likewise, the Indonesian website Stopfitnah.com started an attempt to discredit Veronica Koman. Veronica Koman had shared information regarding the raid through her Twitter account and in an interview with the Indonesian news magazine 'TEMPO'. The website called the information [hoax news](#), and accused Veronica of spreading unconfirmed information from unknown sources.

[Read more details](#)

## 59 Political arrests between November and December 2017

ICP documented 59 political arrests of Papuan political activists during the last two months of 2017. The arrests occurred in various regencies of Papua, but also in Jawa and Sulawesi. Most arrests occurred prior to demonstrations organized by the pro-independence organization KNPB. Police members particularly targeted KNPB leaders and activists who had organized the demonstration. In one case police members followed a group of workers as they were on their way back to Lereh and arbitrarily arrested them because the officers suspected them to be members of the independence movement OPM. At least one political arrestee named Karel Yakarimilena was detained and charged with treason article 110 and the article 160 on information and electronic transactions as stipulated in the Indonesian Criminal Code KUHP.

For more information on political arrests and prisoners visit [www.papuansbehindbars.org](http://www.papuansbehindbars.org) and read the [December 2017 update of Papuans Behind Bars](#).

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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.

ICP Rudolfstrasse 137, 42285 Wuppertal, Germany, ☎ +49 202 89004-170, ✉ [icp@humanrightspapua.org](mailto:icp@humanrightspapua.org)

