

# Joint Statement of Solidarity

## 20th Anniversary of the ‘Biak Massacre’, West Papua

Today - July 6 2018 - we stand in solidarity with the people of West Papua in commemorating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the torture, rape, killing and disappearances of many children, women and men who gathered near a water tower by Biak Port in West Papua for a peaceful protest against the Indonesian Government.

On July 6 1998, the Indonesian security forces open fired directly on the peaceful protestors, killing five people, injuring four, with persons missing.<sup>1</sup> Bodies -dead, alive and injured - were gathered up and taken away in military vehicles. Survivors were taken onto ships where torture and killings continued. Parts of their bodies were found floating in the sea in the following days. The location of the remains of most of the dead are still unknown. Meanwhile those still alive were detained and tortured in military facilities.

The Biak Massacre occurred 20 years ago but subsequent Indonesian Governments have remained silent on the issue of unlawful killings and other human rights abuses by the Indonesian security forces, despite many reports confirming such atrocities that remain unexamined by the authorities.

Today, the Indonesian security forces continue to threaten West Papuans who speak out for justice and accountability. Just a few days ago, Amnesty International released its latest report entitled “...Don’t bother, just let him die: Killing with impunity in Papua”<sup>2</sup>. The report highlights the ongoing systematic human rights abuses in West Papua carried out by the Indonesian security forces.

West Papua is the western half of the island of New Guinea, which borders independent Papua New Guinea. It became part of Indonesia following a discredited process known as the ‘Act of Free Choice’ in 1969, and comprises the Indonesian provinces of Papua and West Papua. We use the term ‘West Papua’ to refer to the Indonesian provinces of Papua and West Papua, as a region with a common culture and identity. Its population of 3.6 million includes over 250 ethnic and language groups. The influx of hundreds of thousands of migrants from heavily-populated islands of Indonesia, however, means that indigenous Papuans are rapidly becoming a minority in their own homeland<sup>3</sup>.

Papuan resistance to Indonesian rule and multinational exploitation of the rich natural resources

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<sup>1</sup> ELSHAM’s report “Names Without Graves, Graves Without Names” (only available in Indonesian) as quoted by the Biak Massacre Citizens Tribunal <http://www.biak-tribunal.org/names-without-graves-graves-without-names-elsham-papua-july-1999/>.

<sup>2</sup> Amnesty International report Indonesia: “Don’t Bother, Just Let Him Die: Killing with Impunity in Papua” accessed at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa21/8198/2018/en/> in July 2018.

<sup>3</sup> TAPOL “West Papua” retrieved from <http://tapol.org/our-work/west-papua> in July 2018.

of the territory have provided the backdrop to decades of widespread human rights abuses, environmental damage, violence and instability. While the Papuan people have yet to enjoy the right to self-determination, Papuan civil society continues to struggle for peace, justice, democracy and freedom<sup>4</sup>.

We would like to invite you to join us in campaigning for justice and human rights for the West Papuans by demanding the Indonesian Government take responsibility for the Indonesian security forces' actions as well as ending systematic human rights abuses in West Papua.

TAPOL

[www.tapol.org](http://www.tapol.org)



Franciscans International

<https://franciscansinternational.org/home/>



International Coalition for Papua

<http://humanrightspapua.org/>



Watch Indonesia!

<http://www.watchindonesia.org/n>



Westpapua-Netzwerk

<http://westpapuanetz.de/>



Geneva for Human Rights

<http://www.gdh-ghr.org>



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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.