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Indonesia Human Rights Committee

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West Papua human rights campaigner tours

Paula Makabory is a young West Papuan woman, a feisty and resolute campaigner for women's rights and human rights. Since her graduation from Cendrawasih University, Jayapura, she has been involved in documenting human rights violations – first as worker for the Papuan NGO Elsham and more recently in Australia for the Institute for Papuan Advocacy and Human Rights. In 2006, she was named as one of the “1000 women for peace” nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. However, praise for her work has not protected her from controversy and she currently lives in exile in Melbourne.

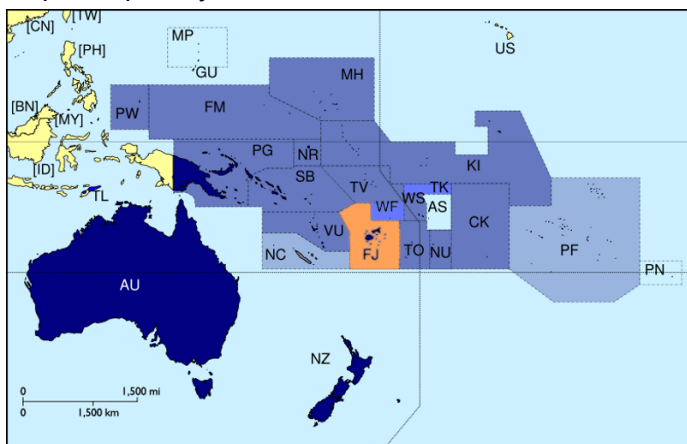
Paula has experienced Papuan marginalisation, as she has lived and worked in Timika, the mining town for the giant Freeport McMoran mining company responsible for the environmental and social degradation. Paula is part of the West Papuan lobby for peaceful dialogue with Indonesia as a step towards resolving longstanding grievances.



Paula Makabory

Fresh focus on West Papua as PIF priority

The Indonesia Human Rights Committee is again calling on Pacific Island Forum leaders to make West Papua a priority issue for discussion at the Forum to



Pacific Islands Forum member countries

be held in Cairns in August. We stressed that after 46 years of conflict, the West Papuan people should not have to wait any longer for the support of their Pacific brethren.

IHRC pointed out that “West Papuan people have no genuine freedom to express their political aspirations, as they risk arrest for the simple action of raising the *Morning Star* flag or even stitching the design of the flag onto an item of clothing. During 2008 at least 30 Papuan independence activists, including a 16-year-old boy, were in detention for daring to raise the Papuan *Morning Star* flag.

Two Papuan men Sebby Sambom and Buchtar Tabuni are currently on trial for peacefully supporting the launch in the United Kingdom of a new organisation,

International Parliamentarians for West Papua whose members include respected international political figures such as Lord Harries, Lord Eric Avebury (United Kingdom) Powes Parkop (Leader of the Opposition in Papua New Guinea), Senator Bob Brown from Australia and Russel Norman, co-leader of the New Zealand Greens.

During the April 2009 election period, West Papuans staged huge demonstrations calling for an end to human rights abuses and for freedom. The Indonesian response to the subsequent tension and violence has been to send in yet more troops. The Indonesian government also insisted that the International Red Cross close its office in West Papua and at the time of writing this office has not been reopened.

International human rights NGOs continue to shine a light on West Papua despite the difficulty of gaining access to conduct documentation. Human Rights Watch has reported on the widespread use of torture and abuse at Abepura Prison, and most recently on Kopassus brutality which has seen soldiers line up



police brutality

all the residents of a village and detain them or beat them. Amnesty International reports on political prisoners and also recently focused on torture, including sexual abuse, at the hands of an unaccountable police force.

In June there were several disturbing reports of further violence in Puncak Jaya, West Papua. A Brimob "sweep operation", was reported to have led to the deaths of several Papuans as homes have been raided and burned and farm animals killed.

A new exodus of people from their villages into the refuge of the forest is said to have happened. The information could not be independently confirmed.

A 13-year old boy, Isak Psakor, was reportedly shot and severely injured by a military ranger near the Papua New Guinea border as he was going home with his family from a traditional visit to family in PNG.

Three pairs contest in Indonesian elections

Presidential elections take place on 8 July 2009 with a possible "run-off" in September.

Three pairs are vying for President and Vice-President:

- Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Boediono
- Megawati Sukarnoputri and Prabowo Subianto
- Jusuf Kalla and Wiranto

TAPOL (Indonesia Human Rights Campaign UK) has condemned the lack of human rights debate in the Indonesian election campaign. TAPOL



Kalla and Wiranto

reports "Vice-presidential candidate Wiranto, the running mate of incumbent Vice-President Jusuf Kalla, has been formally indicted on crimes against humanity charges in East Timor for his role in the abuses committed by the armed

forces under his command at the time of the August 1999 vote for independence.



Sukarnoputri and Subianto

"Prabowo Subianto, the running mate of former President Megawati Sukarnoputri is allegedly responsible for the disappearance of dozens of pro-democracy activists

in May 1998 during the final days of the Suharto era. He also undertook a tour of duty in East Timor.

"President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who is predicted to win a second term in July, is also a retired general. He has chosen an economist, Boediono, as his running mate.

During his current five-year term, the President has failed to deal with the numerous human rights violations perpetrated in Indonesia over the past four decades, thus reinforcing the culture of impunity."



Yudhoyono and Boediono

Support needed for sustainable forestry

On June 18 Green MP Catherine Delahunty gained approval for an important bill to go before Parliament. The Customs and Excise (Sustainable Forestry) Amendment Bill promotes sustainable forestry in the developing world. The bill seeks to amend the Customs and Excise Act to prohibit the import into New Zealand of timber and wood products produced illegally and unsustainably.



Catherine Delahunty

“Illegal logging operations destroy old growth forests around the world.

This bill means New Zealand will only import sustainably produced timber and won't be part of that destruction in the developing world,” Ms Delahunty said, also noting that the bill would level the playing field for New Zealand wood producers.

IHRC was a strong critic of the Labour-led government's unwillingness to regulate the import of unsustainable and illegally logged wood.

Now the National-led government is backing away from its predecessor's plans for education and mandatory labelling of products. This means that consumers won't get information about whether a product has been made from legally



Minister of Forests David Carter

sourced wood unless the retail outlet has its own voluntary code of practice. New Forestry Minister David Carter also hopes that international climate change negotiations which will result in developing countries getting money in return for protecting their forests, and lead to reducing the “drivers” for deforestation and illegal logging.

But this approach to forest crime is not much help to a country like Indonesia, which has already signalled that it needs help to deal to the demand end of the problem. Local leaders in West Papua have banned the export of unprocessed logs and rough sawn timber, but export controls are weak and frequently breached.

However, in contrast to New Zealand's laissez-faire approach, Europe and the United States are tightening their controls on illegally logged wood. Last year the US banned the import of all plant products that were sourced outside the law in their country of origin and imposed strict new requirements on importers. This year, the European Union adopted stricter certification rules on timber sold within the bloc's markets. Member states must move towards an effective system

of labeling all products and there will be an EU wide system of penalties and sanctions.

IHRC has been taking its “don't buy kwila” message to a series of meetings with outdoor furniture and decking retailers and meeting with some helpful responses as well as some resistance from timber importers unwilling to accept that deforestation is destroying the foodbasket and way of life of Papuan forest dwellers.

IHRC was disturbed rather than flattered when Forestry Minister David Carter said our campaign showed the voluntary approach was effective. We are under no illusions that dialogue and demonstrations can be a substitute for government action, when profits are to be made. A quick internet search for kwila products on sale locally proves this point.

When it comes to the air we breathe and the forests that nurture us, relying on a voluntary code makes no sense. We need strong government action, as proposed in the Delahunty Bill.

The Oxford-based Global Canopy Programme estimated that the impact of one day's deforestation would be about the same as the impact of 8 million people flying from London to New York.

Reform of the military now stalled

Report on the “Indonesian Security Sector Reform Post-Suharto’s Regime - Achievements and Prospects” 12-13 June, Sydney, organised by Indonesian Solidarity and Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces. Selected highlights:

There was consensus among a diverse set of speakers at the Sydney Conference that reform of the military has stalled or is even going backwards. In 2004, a law was passed requiring the military to end its involvement in private businesses, but this goal is far from being achieved. The military retains its old attitude that it is more capable than other sectors and that its historic role in the independence of Indonesia gives it the right to intervene in civilian affairs. The military has preserved its territorial operation and presence in small local communities, and exploits ethnic and community conflict as part of the “politics of fear”.



Dr Peter King

Peter King of the University of Sydney Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies gave a presentation about the Lombok Treaty, Indonesian military reform and Australian occlusion of West Papua. Dr King suggested that the Lombok Treaty was a product of the sharp crisis in Australian-Indonesian relations brought about by the granting of protection visas to the 43 asylum seekers who arrived by boat in January 2006.

The Lombok Treaty contains a clause that the parties ... “shall not in any manner support or participate in activities by any person or entity which constitutes a threat to the stability sovereignty or territorial integrity of the other party, including by those who seek to use its territory for encouraging or committing such activities, including separatism, in the territory of the other party”. Given the strong voice in Australian NGOs and Churches in support Papuan self-determination this could be seen as a joint attack by both governments on their own and the other’s civil society!

Australia, Dr King suggests, is ignoring not only history but the current desperate protest actions in Papua. Dr King quoted Australia’s former Foreign Minister Gareth Evans who said in 2001: “I am one of those who have to acknowledge...that many of our earlier training efforts helped only to produce more professional human rights abusers.” Australia’s extensive military relationship ignores the fact that since the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998 no high ranking Indonesian military officer has been prosecuted for a human rights crime.

Australia and the United States continue to train Kopassus Special Forces soldiers despite ongoing evidence of Kopassus brutality. Human Rights Watch has just published a report: “What Did I Do Wrong?: Papuans in Merauke Face Abuses by Indonesian Special Forces,” which documents how Kopassus soldiers operating in the town of Merauke arrest Papuans without legal authority, and beat and mistreat those they take back to their barracks.

New Zealand has restored its military links with Indonesia. An Indonesia military officer has attended the six-month training course at the New Zealand Defence Force Staff and Command College in 2007, 2008 and one is currently enrolled in this course.

Although New Zealand’s defence ties are not large scale, IHRC believes they serve to confer a “seal of respectability” on the unreformed Indonesian military just as such ties did during the Suharto era, when the regular training deployments to New Zealand were often kept out of the public eye. IHRC renewed its call for defence ties to be suspended in a recent letter to Defence Minister, Dr Wayne Mapp.— *Maire Leadbeater*

Dangerous low point

Usman Hamid, Co-ordinator of Kontras and successor to Munir Said Thalib who was murdered in 2004, said in Sydney, that there is ‘no case more central to the security of human rights defenders in Indonesia than the 2004 murder of the prominent human rights lawyer, Munir. He said that the acquittal of senior intelligence official, Muchdi Purwopranjono charged as masterminding the crime, marks a dangerous low point. The trial showed that the Indonesian justice system is not yet able to effectively prosecute senior officials with powerful connections, due to weak prosecution capacity and witness intimidation. The State Intelligence Agency (BIN) continues to threaten the security of human rights defenders.

During the trial of Muchdi key evidence was not made available and some witnesses withdrew their earlier testimony. A key witness was reported to be in Afghanistan and could not appear. Militia groups espousing nationalist sentiments intimidated Munir supporters in the courtroom. The Justice for Munir campaign will take the case to Supreme Court appeal and is appealing for stronger international pressure.