



Dejusticia



Human  
Rights  
Law  
Centre



19 July 2021

President Joko Widodo  
Jl. Medan Merdeka Utara No.3,  
Jakarta 10110, Indonesia

**Re: Worsening human rights situation in Papua and increased violations of the right to protest and to access information**

Dear President Widodo,

On behalf of the undersigned members of the International Network of Civil Liberties Organizations (INCLO), an international network of national human rights and civil liberties organizations from 15 countries in the North and South, we urge you to take action to ensure that the human rights of all those living in the provinces of Papua and West Papua are respected and protected, and to end the Indonesian government's militarized response that has escalated hostilities in the region.

We are deeply concerned about the worsening human rights situation in Papua. According to Indonesian human rights groups and UN officials, the ongoing tensions in the region of Papua have escalated in recent months. This is largely due to the deployment of undisclosed numbers of police and military forces to Papua, as well as the designation of several pro-independence groups as terrorist groups in April 2021. These actions have not only exacerbated an already difficult situation, but also led to increased reports of extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary detention, and a growing concern of large numbers of internally displaced persons.

Additionally, we are concerned about the ongoing internet throttling and shutdowns that continue to affect all Papuans and make it difficult for journalists, activists and NGOs to monitor and report on the human rights situation on the ground.

We urge you to promptly halt all police and military actions that violate human rights and to investigate and address the numerous allegations regarding:

- harassment, shootings, killings, arbitrary detention, extrajudicial killings, especially towards activists, civil society groups and students;

- the arbitrarily persecution of Papuan people by the security forces;
- lack of fair trial rights and inhumane prison conditions for arrested political prisoners;
- lack of justice for victims of human rights violations due to the lack of investigations and accountability for police and military actions;
- inability for Papuans to exercise their right to freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression because of the intimidation and repression of peaceful protests, and difficulties accessing information due to ongoing internet throttling and roadblocks to media workers and NGOs seeking to monitor the situation.

Rather than contribute to a further entrenchment of the conflict in the region of Papua and to an increase in human rights violations, we fully agree with the UN experts' recent statement<sup>1</sup> that Indonesia must "protect the rights of all people to peaceful protest, ensure access to the internet and protect the rights of human rights defender(s)." We ask that you ensure all Papuans' fundamental human rights are protected in compliance with the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, especially those related to the right to freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and freedom from arbitrary arrest and torture.

We urge you to abide by the Jakarta State Administrative Court decision 230/G/TF/2019/PTUN-JKT of June 30, 2020, which indicated that the Ministry of Information and Communication had acted unlawfully when slowing down and blocking internet access in the provinces of West Papua and Papua. Free access to the internet is a fundamental tool for the enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression and assembly, as well as crucial for economic activity and participation in civic life.

We applaud previous statements you have made saying the Indonesian government would revoke any restrictions for foreign journalists seeking to cover issues in Papua, but ask that you ensure that these statements are put into practice and that the removal of restrictions applies also to Indonesian journalists and all human rights NGOs seeking to monitor the situation in Papua.

Finally, we urge you to ensure that the Indonesian authorities follow the United Nations recommendations and standards regarding the use of counter-terrorism legislation and to avoid over-broad definitions that lead to human rights violations. We are particularly concerned about the most recently updated Undang-Undang Anti-Terrorisme No.5/2018 Law that gives police extraordinary powers to use force when conducting raids or interrogating.

We hope that the Indonesian government can engage in a fruitful and peaceful dialogue with Papuan civil society and groups regarding their concerns regarding the region's governance, but stress that this will only be possible if the human rights of all Papuans are respected and all allegations of violations are addressed fairly and with transparency.

Yours sincerely,

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<sup>1</sup> Comment by UN Human Rights Office spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani on Papua and West Papua, Indonesia - 30 November 2020 <https://bangkok.ohchr.org/papua-statement/>

- Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS- Argentina)
- Dejusticia (Colombia)
- Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (HCLU)
- Human Rights Law Centre (HRLC- Australia)
- Human Rights Law Network (HRLN- India)
- Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL)
- Kenyan Human Rights Commission (KHRC)
- KontraS (Indonesia)
- Legal Resources Centre (LRC- South Africa)

CC: Mr. Mohammad Mahfud MD, Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs of Indonesia