

Oral Statement at the 45th Session of the Human Right Council
Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of indigenous people
24 September 2020

Delivered by: Fr Alexandro Rangga ofm

Madam President,

We welcome the Special Rapporteur report on the Asian Regional Consultation and commend the concerns on West Papua.¹ As the report points out, the indigenous Papuans are facing the consequence of the intensification of militarization.² This region remains the most militarized region in Indonesia.

Mr Special Rapporteur,

While preparing this statement, we were informed that on 19 September, Reverend Yeremia Zanambani, an indigenous Papua protestant pastor was shot dead in Intan Jaya regency, allegedly by member of Indonesian army.

We are also concerned on the serious case of internal displacement in Nduga region, in Papua Province. In December 2018, in response to the killing of 19 government contractors, the Indonesian government launched security force operations against the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPN PB) who was allegedly involved in the killing. As consequence of these operations, it is estimated that between 2019 and April 2020, there were more than 41,851 indigenous Papuan have been internally displaced in the regencies of Mimika, Intan Jaya, Puncak, Lanny Jaya, and Nduga. Until Feb 2020, 243³ of these displaced Papuans reportedly died as a result of sickness, malnutrition, exhaustion, and hypothermia.⁴

The COVID-19 outbreak in the region has aggravated this humanitarian crisis. The authorities in Papua have been imposing greater restrictions on the freedom of movement and freedom of assembly, and it is likely that hospitals, which already lag far behind national care standards, and medical personnel will not be able to cope with the rising number of patients. The enforcement of Covid-19 measures has led to an increase in violence against indigenous Papuans.

Despite the gravity of the situation of the indigenous people in Papua, we deeply regret that the access of international community to Papua, including humanitarian organisations, foreign journalists and other international observers are still very limited. Therefore, we urge the Indonesian government to scale-down the military presence and open access of Papua to the international community.

I thank you.

¹ West Papua here refers to the Provinces of Papua and Papua Barat in Indonesia.

² See the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, Regional consultation on the rights of indigenous peoples in Asia, A/HRC/45/34/Add.3, para 59.

³ See the data of TAPOL at https://www.tapol.org/sites/default/files/NDuga_Feb_2020.pdf

⁴ See https://www.humanrightspapua.org/images/docs/HumanitarianCrisisWestPapua_IDPCovid_July2020.pdf