

## Indonesians accused of torture

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INDONESIAN authorities have been accused in a human rights report of torturing 23 Papuan students held in prison for the past three months.

The report was prepared by the Catholic Church's Office for Justice and Peace in the Papuan diocese of Jayapura after representatives from justice and peace sections of three different churches visited the detainees in the police prison in Jayapura.

"There were wounds on the pale faces of the detainees around their temples and eyebrows, which they said they had sustained during a number of police interrogation sessions, which went on for many days," the report said.

Its release coincided with yesterday's meeting between Prime Minister John Howard and Indonesian Prime Minister Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, which followed Indonesia's angry denial of claims by 43 Papuan asylum seekers of human rights abuses by Indonesian authorities.

One detainee, Selvius Bobii, told the human rights monitors: "We were heavily tortured during the first few months as they tried to get information about the network and about who was behind the PEPERA (the Act of Free Choice Group).

"The head of criminal investigation, Paulus Waterpauw, once threatened to shoot me by aiming his gun at my mouth."

The 23 students were arrested on suspicion of involvement in a demonstration in Abepura over the Freeport mine on March 16. That turned into a riot in which five Indonesian security force members were killed.

The students were arrested in a reprisal crackdown in which 11 students reportedly "disappeared". Others hid in the hills or fled to Papua New Guinea, while 21 made an intercepted bid to escape by boat to Australia.

Meanwhile, a Papuan church has said human rights abuses are increasing in the province.

The Reverend Socrates Sofyan Yoman has implored Australia to mediate between the Indonesian Government and the Papuan leadership to end a campaign of terror.

"Indonesia has no respect for human rights, or equality or justice in West Papua. The human rights abuses are still going on," said Mr Yoman, chairman of Papua's Baptist Church.

Speaking to *The Age* from Jayapura, Mr Yoman said Jakarta had increased troop levels in Papua over the past year, and human rights abuses had reached "critical and dangerous" proportions.

Death squads had indiscriminately killed a number of Papuan citizens since the protest against the Freeport mine, he said.

Nick Chesterfield, Australian head of the Free West Papua Movement, said he had grave fears for 200 students who had disappeared since the mine riot.

He recently returned from Papua New Guinea's border with Papua where he videotaped the testimony of Papuan students who fled to PNG after the riot.

"One student described how his mother was captured, beaten, burnt with cigarette butts and raped repeatedly so the security forces could find out where he is," Mr Chesterfield said.

A spokesman for the Indonesian embassy in Canberra denied Mr Chesterfield's reports.

While Mr Yoman commended Australia's decision to grant 42 Papuan asylum seekers temporary protection visas earlier this year, he said "all Papuans need protection". "There's no freedom here, there's just military force," he said.

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