



## PACIFIC

# Low population in Papua an indication of genocide according to a church leader

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There are claims that the population of Papua province in Indonesia has declined dramatically compared with neighbouring PNG and that the Indonesian military is to blame.

The Reverend Socratez Sofyan Yoman, the president of the Communion of Baptist Churches in West Papua, and other Papuan activists will present seminars in Auckland over the next two days, on West Papua - The Hidden Pacific Conflict.

Rev Yoman says in 1969 when Indonesia took formal control, the indigenous population was substantially larger than in PNG - but the neighbour now has nearly six times as many people.

He puts the low population down to a range of factors, including poor health care, alcoholism and HIV/Aids, but says the principal factor is the activity of the military.

"There are many murdered, many murdered and silent killings happening in West Papua. We need help. Assistance from the international community to stop this terrible situation in West Papua."

Rev Yoman says they want New Zealand encourage the UN to send human rights investigators to Papua.