

## MEDIA RELEASE

### West Papua honours UN leader at international summit

2.00– 4:00 pm EAST, Sunday 13 September, 2020



An international online summit will be held on Sunday 13 September to commemorate the work of Dag Hammarskjöld, UN Secretary-General, 1953-1961—a global champion for the fair treatment of colonised and emerging states.

At the zoom summit this Sunday, community and political leaders based in Europe, the United States, Australia, the Pacific and Africa will honour Mr Hammarskjöld's inspiring leadership and work on decolonisation, in particular his work for the emerging state of West Papua, and his principle of 'a peoples right of sovereignty over their land'.

Supporters of the work and initiatives Mr Hammarskjöld undertook to progress West Papua's decolonisation, have created short videos of tree-planting ceremonies that they have held around the world to honour his work and these will be shared at the summit.

The videos will be presented to the UN Secretary-General António Guterres on 29 September—the date Mr Hammarskjöld was buried in Sweden in 1961.

Dag Hammarskjöld was found dead in 1961, after a plane crash near the border of the Democratic Republic of Congo where he was mediating post-Independence conflict. Throughout his term in office, he ensured UN decisions were based on 'respect for the laws on which human civilization has been built' and 'strict observance of the rules and principles of the UN charter'.

The UN Secretary-General's death, which is still being investigated, prevented him from presenting his Decolonisation Program for the Non-Self-Governing Territory of Dutch-Nieuw Guinea (West Papua) to the 1961 UN General Assembly. The program would have deterred Indonesia's 1962 invasion of the emerging state of West Papua.

Mr Hammarskjöld's UN-led decolonisation program for West Papua was part of his OPEX initiative to assist new and emerging states in need of trained administrators and civil servants. After his death, Indonesia invaded, in January 1962, what it claimed was 'a Dutch puppet state'.

This Sunday's summit and the tree-plantings in honour of Dag Hammarskjöld aim to garner support for a motion in the UN General Assembly where West Papuans' current and historical arguments for right of sovereignty can be debated.

The Pacific Islands Forum (18 UN member-states, including Australia and New Zealand) and the African Caribbean Pacific Group (79 member-states) have passed motions of preparatory support for West Papua's registration on the UN Decolonisation List—a move delayed since 1961. The successful passage of the motion requires two-thirds majority support (130 of the 193 UN member-states).

Sunday 13 September, 2020 – Key summit speakers:

Dr Henning Melber, Emeritus Director and Senior Adviser, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Sweden

Mr Herman Wainggai, United Liberation Movement for West Papua, New York

Mr Francine Ngoya, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Mr Clovis Mwamba, politician and poet, Melbourne, Australia

Ms Litiana Kalsrap, Tongoa Shepherd Women's Association, Vanuatu

Ms Emeline Siale Ilolahia, Director Pacific Islands Association of NGOs, Fiji.

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*Photo: Dag Hammarskjöld, 1956, outlining the principles of his UN program for emerging states.*