



**United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP)**

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Senator Payne  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Parliament of Australia, Canberra

28 October 2020

Dear Minister Payne

Further to my letter twelve months ago (19 October 2019) I write to update you on the situation in West Papua, and in Indonesia, in the hope of advancing our long-standing request for the Australian government to abandon its recognition of Indonesia's Special Autonomy over our territory and our people. We ask for this because Special Autonomy masks the militarised governance that exacerbates the fragility of our survival and is exhausting West Papuans of yet another generation of political, community, and religious leaders.

Minister, I hope that I am not being too bold in suggesting that the Australian government supports, instead, two diplomatic programs that will better serve the establishment of peace and justice in West Papua, as well as a framework of alliances that should help to stabilise our region's geo-political landscape.

1. The first program involves instructing Mr Fifield, Australia's representative at the UN, to actively support and vote for Vanuatu's motion to list West Papua on the UN Decolonisation List.
2. The second program involves Australia's Ambassador to Indonesia encouraging the Jakarta government to concede the liberation of West Papua under the auspices of an international third party.

Minister, in terms of the United Nations, we thank you for signing the ground-breaking Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) communiqué in 2019. We know that Tuvalu—the Forum host, and Vanuatu—West Papua's sponsor at the UN, especially welcomed Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand into the burgeoning alliance for West Papua. We were heartened of course when the African Caribbean Pacific Group (ACP) replicated PIF articles 35-37 a couple of months later (communiqué attached). Both communiqués saddled Indonesia with a fact-finding mission to West Papua by the UN Human Rights Commission, and on 8 October 2020, PIF Chair Kausea Natano asked UN High Commissioner Bachelet for an update on the arrangements.<sup>1</sup>

Minister, our second program—for Indonesia to negotiate with the United Liberation Movement of West Papua under the auspices of an international third party—was once considered controversial but is now the recommendation of the two Indonesian parliaments in West Papua, all the churches, both the universities, and all West Papuan political groups. It is also the message to Jakarta from Indonesian students and academics in many state and private universities across the archipelago; and even more tellingly, from influential Islamic nationalists like Professor Amien Rais. Rais is positioning his party for political life in a republic without West Papua, and during his recent remarkable address, which he published on Youtube,<sup>2</sup> he outlined how:

- Indonesia has failed to convince West Papuans that the history of integration was legal and just;
- Indonesia can no longer defend its abuse of human rights and exploitation of Papuan land and resources;
- Indonesia's retention of West Papua is difficult to justify now that the tide has turned internationally;
- Indonesia has not been a government of justice and because of that will surely fall.

Minister, in the current geo-political climate we believe that the two diplomatic paths outlined will contribute

<sup>1</sup> Solomon Islands Times, 8 Oct 2020, *PIF Chair Reaffirms Support for Open, Constructive Dialogues, Human Rights Mission to West Papua*

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdkCdifCtDw>

much more to Australia's security—and Indonesia's political—interests than will the maintenance of support for Special Autonomy and its endless war-of-attrition. The PIF declaration provides the political leaders of the Pacific island-states—including the Melanesians that have always been Australia's ring of security—with an international legal frame on which to base their activism. The ACP declaration has similarly galvanised Caribbean and African states. As Rais noted in warning his own government against the status quo and underestimating the capacity of the United Liberation Movement for West Papua:

“The President of Senegal, Abdulaye Wade, stated at a conference in Dakar, the capital of Senegal, on 23 August 2019, that “West Papua is now an issue for all black Africans.” The Ugandan Parliament has also expressed full support for West Papua's independence. That Benny Wenda [ULMWP Chair] was made an honorary citizen of the City of Oxford shows British sympathy for the ULMWP's actions ....”

Meantime, the Indonesian government is under serious threat from both violent riots and non-violent protests that are much broader and deeper than those that brought down Suharto in 1998. I attach James Balowski's informed and comprehensive summary (*Indonesia: a wave of protests against a pro-boss law*).

Minister, in preparation for our shift to independence, we have formed a transitional government, with experienced office-bearers, a constitution, and a range of departmental bureaucracies. This occurred during the third annual session of the ULMWP Legislative Council in Jayapura. As reported by Radio New Zealand on 22 October 2020, the ULMWP ‘upgraded its [2015] by-laws to provisional constitutional status ... and established a government guided by the rules and norms of democracy, human rights and self-determination ... including the rights of Indonesian migrants in West Papua’.<sup>3</sup> The West Papua National Army—which has long proved itself better disciplined than those it fights against—will continue, under the authority of the Prime Minister, to defend the West Papuan people and their territory.

Minister, I know that many Australians, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders—with whom we have close political and kinship relations—are waiting for both the Liberal and Labour parties to consider West Papua a distinct foreign affairs issue with policy aligned to strategies outlined in this communiqué.

Ms Payne, West Papuans are a God-fearing and a God-loving people, and we fervently believe that Australia, which voted sixty years ago to create our misery and bondage will now help deliver us our liberty. Last week Indonesia inserted (not rotated) two more battalions; that is 1,500 more soldiers strutting about our homeland. This morning they shot students in their dormitory at Cenderawasih University, and at Timika near the Freeport gold-and copper mine they shot a young pastor, the third they've killed in the past month.

Yours sincerely,



Jacob Rumbiak, ULMWP Spokesperson

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<sup>3</sup> Radio New Zealand, 22 October 2020 *West Papua Liberation Movement adopts provisional constitution*