



## **BUCHTAR TABUNI (1979—)**

### **Engineering Studies**

Makassar, South Sulawesi

### **Political Prisoner**

2008—2011

2012—2013

2019—2021

### **Activist**

Founder (2008) and Chair (2010), Komite  
National Papua Barat/KNPB (West  
Papua National Committee)

### **Politician**

Founder, West Papua National  
Parliament/PNWP (2012—)

Founding member, United Liberation  
Movement of West Papua/ULMWP (2014—)

Chairman of the Parliament, West  
Papua Transitional Government (2020—)

**Son, Brother  
Husband, Father**



## **An outsiders' view of highland life in 1996 when Buchtar was 17 years old**

“Waa, Waa, Waa!” You hear them first, a distance chorus rising up from the next mountain range as they pound along jungle trails towards the village. Suddenly they break through a clearing and charge onto a ridge beside a bush church. The men are naked except for penis gourds, smeared in pig fat and ochre colours, some in elaborate cassowary and bird-of-paradise headdresses and armed with spears, bows and arrow. The women follow in grass skirts, carrying children and bilum bags full of sweet potatoes.

“Waa, Waa, Waa.” The reception from host villagers is just as loud; soon hundreds of tribesmen and women are running around each other in concentric circles, whooping it up through a torrential downpour. Through the melee of shrill whistles and clattering bows and arrows, pigs roam and bonfires crackles as river rocks being heated for earth ovens explode. For several days Amungme, Nduga and Yali people have trekked across 3000-metre mountain ranges to reach this remote village in the heart of the Lorentz National Park. They have come to hear leaders from OPM’s Central Command talk on their behalf and raise the independence flag.

Ben Bohane, Australian photojournalist, after trekking through the highlands with West Papuan freedom fighters in 1996 (*West Papua, Follow the Morning Star*, Prowling Tiger Press, Melbourne 2003:p97)



## **Buchtar Tabuni and Komite Nasional Papua Barat/KNPB/West Papua National Committee, 2008**

When Buchtar returned from studying in Makassar (South Sulawesi) he worked with young West Papuans to develop Komite Nasional Papua Barat (KNPB), a media organisation that would educate its members to use the law to realize the Papuan right to self-determination. One of KNPB's first major campaigns was supporting the overseas-based International Parliamentarians for West Papua and International Lawyers for West Papua. After rallies around West Papua in 2008, Buchtar was arrested on 3 December 2008, and convicted of treason (Article 106), provocation (Article 160), and acts against the state (Article 212). Despite lobbying by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch he was not released until the completion of his prison-sentence on 17 August 2011.



## **Komite Nasional Papua Barat/KNPB/West Papua National Committee, 2008-09**

Young KNPB outreach activists in Jayapura, raising money for earthquake victims in neighbouring Papua New Guinea.



## **Buchtar looking after his KNPB colleagues, sewing on their dreadlocks**

In 2010, the KNPB held its first Congress and elected Buchtar as chair, even though he was still in Abepura Prison. At the Congress the young activists decided that if they wanted an independence-referendum they would first need a nation-wide organisation to bring about harmony between West Papuans, especially the political leaders. They therefore decided to pursue the formation of regional parliaments, and then a national parliament. By 2011 there were twenty-three regional parliaments across West Papua.



## National Parliament of West Papua (PNWP)

On 5 April 2012, a national conference of the 23 regional parliaments established a National Parliament of West Papua (*above*). Buchtart was elected Chair.

The twenty-three regional parliaments across West Papua were in Biak, Manokwari, Sorong, Fakfak, Kaimana, Timika, Paniai, Hubula, Numbay, Tabi, Yahukimo, Puncak Jaya, Yalimo, Baliem, Nabire, Intan Jaya, Star Mountains, Dogiyai, Deiyai, Yamo, Nduga, Ilaga, Tolikara.

In 2012 Indonesian security forces murdered 22 KNPB activists and incarcerated a further fifty-five.

*right*—Buchtart Tabuni is renowned for his attention to detail





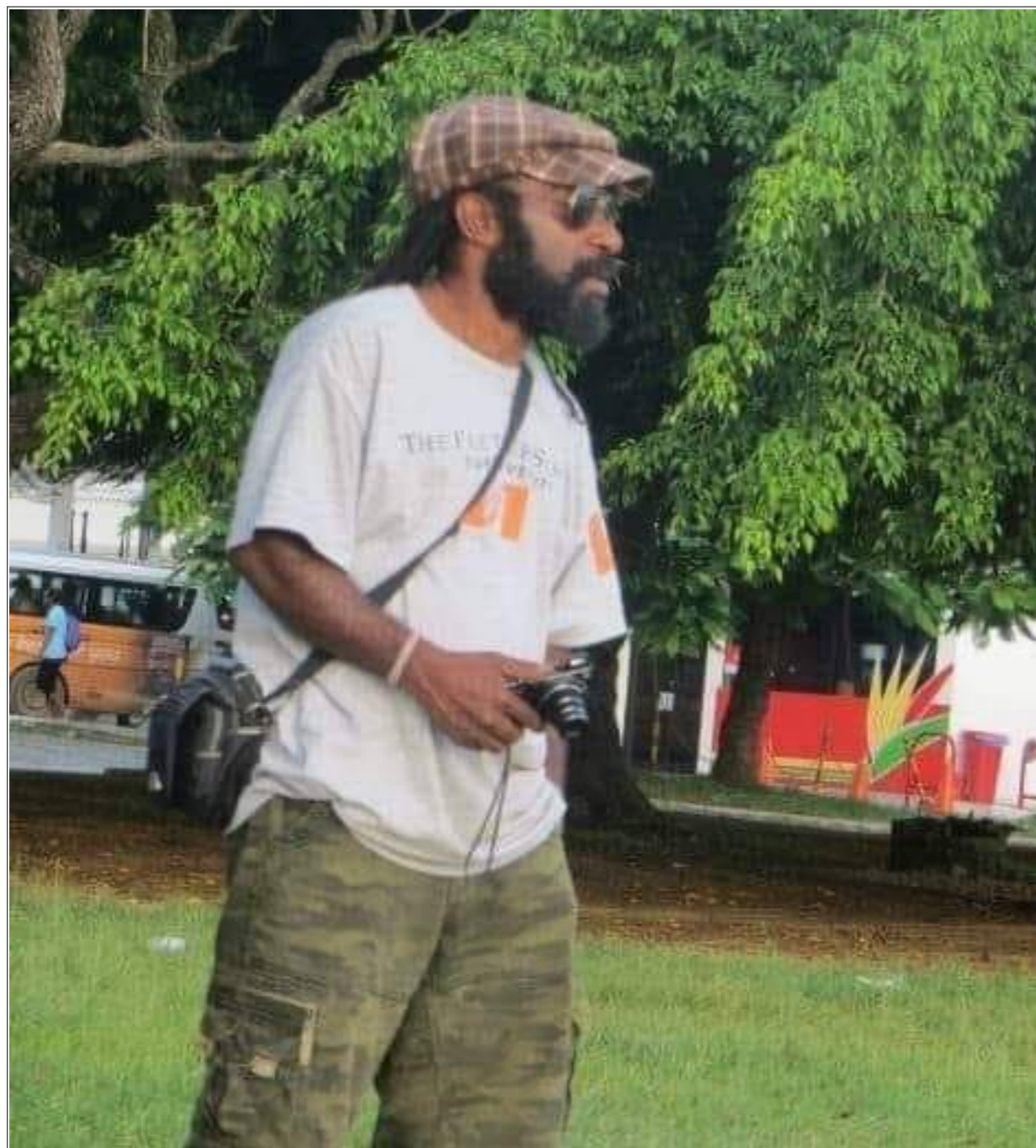
## **Buchtar as Chair of the West Papua National Parliament was arrested on 6 June 2012**

After the formation of the West Papua National Parliament, Buchtar was arrested again. No independent witnesses were permitted to observe his trial in September 2012, and journalists were heavily intimidated by police and court officials. Buchtar was represented by Papuan lawyer Gustaf Kawer, who easily disproved the Prosecutor's argument that Buchtar was guilty of: i) Shootings by 'Specially Trained Persons' in 2012; and ii) Shooting Miron Wetipo (a fellow highlander) in 2010. Eventually he was convicted of 'inflicting damage to the Abepura Prison' and of 'exchanging harsh words with prison warders', and incarcerated until January 2013. As soon as he was released he visited the assassination site of Mako Tabuni, his relative and KNPB colleague, who was killed by Indonesian soldiers of the Australian-funded Detachment 88 outside the student dormitories in Waena on 14 June 2012 (a week after Buchtar was arrested).



**Buchtar entering an Indonesian police station for another interrogation session**





above—KNPB activist Steven Itlay and Buchtar being arrested in 2012  
below—Buchtar and West Papuan lawyer Gustaf Kawer, September 2012



"Keselamatan seluruh makhluk, penghuni Pulau West New Guinea" dari ancaman internal maupun eksterna wajib di perjuangka" (Buchtar Tabuni).

*translation* .... We must fight for the safety, from internal and external threats, of all the inhabitants of West New Guinea.



**Buchtar in London and Vanuatu with Benny Wenda (President, West Papua Transitional Government)**



## **BUCHTAR TABUNI WEST PAPUA RECONCILIATION AND UNITY SUMMIT, VANUATU, 6 DECEMBER 2014**

The week-long summit in Vanuatu in 2014 was a broad-based regional initiative generated by church and women's organizations across Melanesia was sparked by the 2013 World Council of Churches Assembly in South Korea. It was supported by West Papua's *Gereja Kristen Injili (GKI)* Church; sponsored by Vanuatu Government and Pacific Conference of Churches; and mediated by Vanuatu Christian Council and Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs. (Photo—Tommy Latupeirissa)



**RECONCILIATION AND UNITY SUMMIT, VANUATU, EXCHANGE OF GIFTS, 6 DECEMBER 2014. West Papua National Parliament—Teri Yaram, Sabi Sambon, Victor Yeimo, Buchtar Tabuni**

During the summit, the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP) was established as an ‘inclusive, representative, united, co-ordinating body’, elected from and accountable to West Papua’s three key political organisations: the Federal Republic of West Papua, the West Papua National Coalition, and the West Papua National Parliament (Photo—Tommy Latupeirissa)



## **SARALANA DECLARATION, PORT VILA, VANUATU, 6 DECEMBER 2014**

United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP): Federal Republic of West Papua (Edison Waromi); West Papua National Coalition for Liberation (Rex Rumakiek); West Papua National Parliament (Buchtar Tabuni). Also Alfonse Adaikam, Elizier Awom, Leonie Tanggahma, Benny Wenda (head-dress), Mumu Yusefa, Sabi Sambon, Jack Waingai, Teri Yaram, Jacob Rumbiak (hidden). Photo—Tommy Latupeirissa.



**BUCHTAR TABUNI, SIGNING SARALANA DECLARATION FOR WEST PAPUA NATIONAL PARLIAMENT, RECONCILIATION AND UNITY SUMMIT, VANUATU, 6 DECEMBER 2014**

The extraordinary ten-day Reconciliation and Unity Summit for West Papuan leaders was skilfully mediated by Murray Isimeli from the Pacific Conference of Churches. Insert: Edison Waromi signing for Federal Republic of West Papua. (Photo—Tom Latupeirissa)



**BUCHTAR TABUNI (WEST PAPUA NATIONAL PARLIAMENT), ULMWP CHAIR BENNY WENDA, SOLOMON ISLANDS PRIME MINISTER SOGAVARE, MELANESIAN SPEARHEAD GROUP SUMMIT, HONIARA, JUNE 2015**

Prime Minister Sogavare’s inspiring opening speech of the Melanesian Spearhead Group Summit in 2015 propelled the inter-government regional block to finally accept West Papua’s application for membership. This was the first formal recognition by any government of West Papua’s political struggle, and for Papuans represented a shift “from darkness to the light”. (Photo—Tommy Latupeirissa)



## **West Papua National Parliament Meeting, 9-13 January 2018, Jayapura**

“After discussing the results of the ULMWP Summit in Vanuatu (27 Nov-3 Dec 2017) we accepted all the decisions made, but wrote to the ULMWP Executive with several suggestions, including to immediately revise the ULMWP structure as it did not reflect the ‘trias’ form of the organisation regulated in Chapter VI of the ULMWP constitution”.

(ORIGINAL: Rapat dengar pendapat Fraksi Parlemen Nasional West Papua pada 9-13 Januari 2018 di Hollandia. Tentang keputusan KTT ULMWP di Port Vila, Negara Republik Vanuatu pada 27 Nov-3 Des 2017. Telah menyatakan merima seluruh keputusan KTT ULMWP. Dann mengusulkan beberapa catatan kepada Eksekutif ULMWP salah satunya adalah eksekutif ULMWP agar secepatnya merevisi kembali struktur ULMWP sebagai koordinatif karena struktur koordinatif tidak relevan dan tidak mencerminkan dengan bentuk organisasi ULMWP yang berasas pada Trias Politika yang di atur dalam BAB VI dalam konstitusi ULMWP).





## With heads bowed...

Our hearts are lifted up,  
Declaring truth to the LORD OF TRUTH

With simplicity we become Models And Teachers of  
a mental revolution for the great Nation - "Papua"

O you Pioneers...  
road makers who continue to lay the steps of the  
struggle for liberation.

They (Colonialist Oppressors) have led us to a new  
strategy in the struggle for liberation...

O Patriots...  
your followers will move the grass roots of Balikpapan city.  
The oppressed people of Balikpapan will join our fight for  
independence.

Finally, with my whole body I declare Wa Wa Wa  
Inner voice. The simple people will change the world.  
Our colour. Addicts of Justice.

*English translation by Rev. Peter Woods of a poem on Facebook*

## Dengan kepala tertunduk...

Hati kami terangkat,  
Menyatakan kebenaran kepada TUHAN PEMILIK KEBENARAN

Dengan kesederhanaan kami menjadi Teladan Dan Guru  
revolusi mental bagi Bangsa yang besar "Papua"

Wahai kau Perintis...  
pembuat jalan yang terus meletakkan langkah perjuangan  
pembebasan.

Mereka (Penjajah) telah menghantarkan kita pada sebuah  
strategy baru dalam perjuangan pembebasan...

Wahai patriot...  
pengikutmu Akan menggerakkan akar rumput kota Balikpapan.

Rakyat tertindas Balikpapan akan bersama kita  
memperjuangkan kemerdekaan.

Akhirnya dengan sekuyur tubuhku menyabut Wa Wa Wa

Kata hati. Mereka yang sederhana akan rubah Dunia.  
Warna kita. Pecandu Keadilan.

*Original, on Facebook alongside photo at left*

## 2019: The Balikpapan Seven, convicted of treason

Buchtar Tabuni (11 months, Prosecutor wanted 17 years); Agus Kosay (11 months, Prosecutor wanted 15 years); Steven Itlay (11 months, Prosecutor wanted 15 years); Fery Kombo (10 months, Prosecutor wanted 10 years); Alexander Gobay (10 months, Prosecutor wanted 10 years); Hengky Hilapok (10 months, Prosecutor wanted 5 years); Irwanus Uropmabin (10 months, Prosecutor wanted 5 years)

KNPB's effective outreach since 2008 meant unprecedented support from Indonesians across the archipelago (see difference between Prosecution demands and sentences issued). However, the young West Papuan lawyers who represented the Balikpapan 7 both 'died' before their clients finished their prison terms: YULIANA ABANSABRA on 20 August 2020 and GANIUS WENDA on 3 July 2020. Before and during the trial both lawyers endured multiple forms of harassment, including physical assaults and death threats.



## **FORMATION, WEST PAPUA TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT, JAYAPURA, 22 OCTOBER 2020**

Buchtar Tabuni (Chairman of the Parliament), Edison Waromi (Prime Minister), Jonah Wenda (Spokesperson, West Papua Army)

“During the third annual session of the Legislative Council of the United Liberation Movement of West Papua in Jayapura, the ULMWP upgraded its [2015] by-laws to provisional constitutional status ... which then permitted the ULMWP to pass a bill and establish a government guided by the rules and norms of democracy, human rights and self-determination ... including those of Indonesian migrants and the West Papua National Army.” (Radio New Zealand, 22 Oct 2020 *West Papua Liberation Movement adopts provisional constitution*).

The West Papua Transitional Government was announced on 1 December 2020. Twelve months later, at the 2021 UN Climate Summit in Glasgow, this government announced it was pursuing ‘Green State’ status and policies.



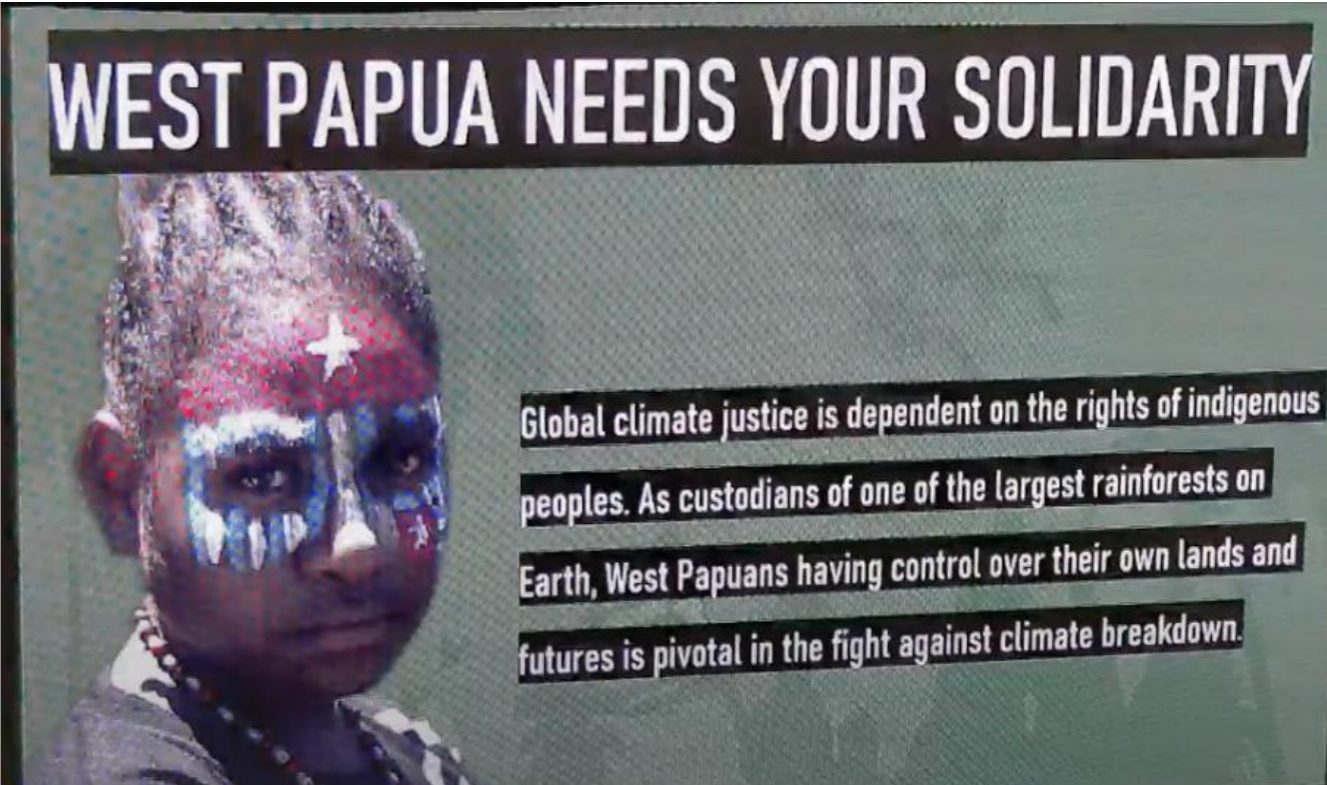
Buchtar Tabuni (Parliamentary Chair), Prime Minister Waromi, Jonah Wenda (Spokesperson, West Papua Army) signing their government's Green State Policy in Jayapura before its launch at the 2021 UN Climate Summit (*below*).



Free West Papua Campaign International Live Stream

12,065 views • Streamed live on 4 Nov 2021

457





Indonesian Special Forces have been sent to the Papuan highlands in increasing numbers since 2018, primarily to protect Wabu Block, a rich new gold site in the Wabu Mountains, in which prominent Indonesian politicians and an Australian mining company WEST WITS MINING have interests.



### **Buchtar on Facebook in October 2020**

“Waktunya kontruksi kembali tanpa meninggalkan jejak. Jadilah kehendak-MU ya Allah. Bravo Nasionalisme Papuan”

*translation ....* Time to rebuild without leaving a trace. By Your will O God. Bravo Papuan Nationalism.



### **in November 2021**

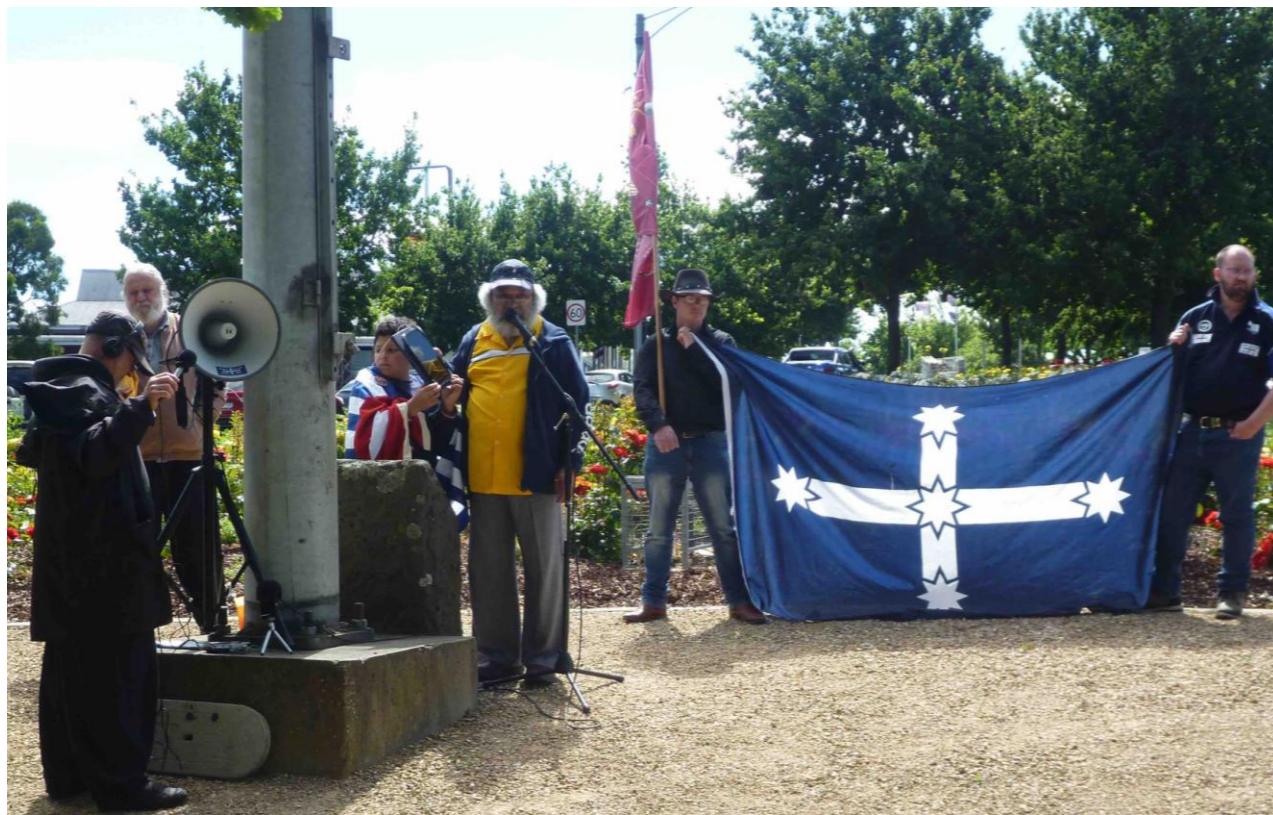
“Ini ade pu rumah yg hancur saat pohon rubuh”

*translation ....* Destroyed by nature when a tree fell.

## 2021 EUREKA AUSTRALIA DAY MEDAL AWARD CEREMONY, BALLARAT, 3 DECEMBER 2021

On 3 December 2021, during a moving ceremony on Bakery Hill in Ballarat (Victoria, Australia), **Edison Waromi**, Prime Minister of West Papua's Transitional Government, and Parliamentary Chair **Buchtar Tabuni**, were each awarded the 2021 Eureka Australia Medal.

The annual Eureka Australia Medal is awarded by the Anarchist Media Institute to “activists who have demonstrated, through their activities, the universal qualities outlined in the Eureka Oath taken by diggers (gold-miners) in the British colony of Victoria in December 1854 as they prepared for battle against government military, militia, and police: *We swear by the Southern Cross to stand truly by each other and fight to defend our rights and liberties.*”



Electronic links were established with the two West Papuans in Jayapura, but were disrupted when Indonesian police and military surrounded Buchtar Tabuni's home, forcing him to find a place to hide and take the call.

Both men addressed the appreciative crowd on Bakery Hill in Indonesian, with their speeches translated into English by Jacob Rumbiak.

### BAKERY HILL, BALLARAT, 3 DECEMBER 2021

Dr Joe Toscano presenting Eureka Australia Medal to Edison Waromi and Buchtar Tabuni, in front of the Eureka flag, with Jacob Rumbiak (translating), and Kamesan Woirei (holding the tablet).

Photos: Linda Duckham, FRWP West Papua Womens Office in Docklands



**Eureka Stockade 1854, George Browning (Australia's WWII artist)**

The successful rebellion of gold-miners in 1854 at Ballarat in Victoria (then a British colony) was instrumental in the development of Australia's representational structures and attitudes towards democracy and egalitarianism. Many of the diggers were politically engaged – some had participated in the Chartist movement for political reform in Britain during the 1830s and 1840, others in the anti-authoritarian revolutions that spread across Europe in 1848.

The Victorian Governor refused to listen to the miners' complaints about the police extorting money, accepting bribes and imprisoning people without due process. Eventually, on 29 November 1854, 1,500 miners gathered on Bakery Hill and swore "by the Southern Cross to stand truly by each other, and fight to defend our rights and liberties". "No taxation without representation" they cried as they raised an 'Australian' flag that women had made from their petticoats and their husbands' blue woollen work-shirts.

Governor Hotham immediately despatched 150 British soldiers of the 40th Regiment of Foot to reinforce the police and soldiers stationed in Ballarat, and on 3 December 300 they attacked the miners' stockade. Twenty-two diggers (including one woman) and six soldiers lost their lives in the government orgy of looting, murder and arson. Thirteen of the miners' leaders were charged with treason and transported to Melbourne for trial-by-jury—but all were found not guilty, including the African-American John Joseph. However, Henry Seekamp, the owner-editor of the Ballarat Times newspaper, was convicted of seditious libel and sentenced to six months goal. During his time in custody, Clara, his Irish wife, wrote, editorialised and published the newspaper.

In March 1855, the gold-miners licence fee was replaced by an export duty, and diggers were only required to pay an annual 'miner's right' fee of £1. Half the police on the goldfields were sacked. One warden replaced the multitude of corrupt gold commissioners (who had formerly issued the licences). Twelve were added to the Victorian Legislative Council, four appointed by the Queen and eight elected by those who held a miner's right. In 1857 male suffrage (voting rights) was instituted for men (female suffrage was not introduced until 1908).

The annual Eureka Australia Medal is awarded by the Anarchist Media Institute to "activists who have demonstrated, through their activities, the universal qualities outlined in the Eureka oath taken by the gold-miners in Ballarat in 1854.



# EUREKA AUSTRALIA MEDAL

*presented to*

Parliamentary Chair Buchtar Tabuni

*on this 3rd Day of December, 2021*

"We swear by the Southern Cross to stand truly by each other and fight to defend our rights and liberties" – Eureka rebellion oath 1854



# EUREKA AUSTRALIA MEDAL

*presented to*

Prime Minister Edison Waromi

*on this 3rd Day of December, 2021*

"We swear by the Southern Cross to stand truly by each other and fight to defend our rights and liberties" – Eureka rebellion oath 1854

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