



## UNITED LIBERATION MOVEMENT FOR WEST PAPUA

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## West Papua Situation Update: March 2022

### 1. UN statement of concern over growing humanitarian crisis

In a statement released on March 1<sup>1</sup>, independent UN experts blew the whistle on the deteriorating human rights situation in West Papua, cataloguing ‘shocking’ violations carried out by the Indonesian state, including child killings, disappearances, torture and mass displacement of people.

The statement called for urgent action to end the ongoing violations and for unrestricted humanitarian access to be immediately provided.

It also highlighted the ongoing crisis of internally displaced persons (IDPs) since 2018 and noted that there are somewhere between 60-100,000 currently displaced<sup>2</sup>, with many unable to return home due to military operations and the presence of security forces. Further to this, the experts warned that IDPs were not only without access to food and healthcare, but that humanitarian aid is being deliberately obstructed by authorities.

The statement, which has been welcomed by the ULMWP and civil society organisations alike, echoes calls made in recent months by religious leaders inside West Papua<sup>3</sup> and the World Council of Churches<sup>4</sup>, for international attention to be paid to the worsening crisis. Community leaders have also been consistently calling for an end to military operations and for a UN visit<sup>5</sup>.

In an unprecedented outpouring, the Papuan Province Governor himself, Lukas Enembe, also raised the alarm<sup>6</sup>, with an emotional statement on the reality of the situation on the ground. ‘Intan Jaya is crying, Puncak Papua is crying, Nduga is crying, Maybrat is crying. Yahukimo people, Bintang mountain people cry. Papuans do not live safely in our own country.’

The ULMWP has welcomed<sup>7</sup> UN acknowledgement of the crisis and reiterated the need for urgent action, including access to be provided for the long-awaited visit of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Meanwhile, the Indonesian Permanent Representative in Geneva was quick to dismiss and refute the UN statement<sup>8</sup>, accusing the Special Rapporteurs and mandate holders of being ‘biased’ and ‘unprofessional’.

## 2. Increased militarisation

Indonesian military operations have been intensifying since 2018, with the deployment of an estimated 25,000 additional Indonesian troops<sup>9</sup>. Nduga, Intan Jaya, Puncak Jaka, Maybrat and Oksibil have been the worst affected<sup>10</sup>, turning much of the land into a war-zone.



Last year the president of the Indonesian Evangelical Church (GIDI), Pastor Dorman Wandikbo, described the effects of the military operations in Intan Jaya<sup>11</sup>: ‘our congregation was kicked out of their homes. Their houses, their schools, their churches are occupied by the military, because the security personnel there did not have a place to live. They used the people’s home, the people’s place of education’.

Since then, schools and churches continue to be occupied<sup>12</sup>, with access denied to religious leaders and groups wishing to check on the affected communities.

This situation is set to worsen, with central government plans to further divide West Papua into 7 different provinces<sup>13</sup>. It is feared the plan, which is being contested by Governors, would worsen the marginalisation of indigenous Papuans and be used as an excuse to increase the military and police presence.

## 3. Young boy killed, 6 others tortured and badly beaten

12 young children were reportedly arrested<sup>14</sup> on February 27 in Puncak Jaya district, after they were accused of stealing a gun.

While in custody, they were beaten so badly that Makilon Tabuni, 12, tragically died of his injuries. 6 other boys were also taken to hospital with injuries.



#### 4. Political Prisoners

On February 21, spokesman for the West Papua National Committee Victor Yeimo was formally charged with treason (*makar*), facing up to 25 years in prison. Yeimo was initially arrested in May of last year for his involvement in peaceful demonstrations against racial discrimination. His arrest and detention have been widely denounced by Amnesty<sup>15</sup>, amongst others<sup>16</sup>, as being arbitrary and politically motivated.

The International Lawyers for West Papua (ILWP) has raised concerns<sup>17</sup> about his health and the conditions of his detention, and called for his immediate release.

Similar concerns have been voiced<sup>18</sup> about the detention of 8 students arrested on December 1 for peacefully demonstrating in Jayapura. The students are all facing charges of treason and facing 25 years imprisonment.

These arrests and these charges violate international law, which requires protection of freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and upholding the right to peaceful protest.

#### 5. Strong words from the EU Commission

On February 21, in answer to various questions<sup>19</sup> posed by MEP Carles Puigdemont, Vice-President of the Commission, Josep Borrell, stated that<sup>20</sup> ‘The EU encourages Indonesia to allow the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit West Papua and has urged Indonesia to extend standing invitations to all Special Rapporteurs and Mandate holders.’

This call for access adds to the growing number of individual states and regional bodies that have voiced concerns over human rights violations in West Papua and Indonesia’s continued denial of access for a visit from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. These include the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF<sup>21</sup>) and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS<sup>22</sup>– formerly ACP).

The Commission Vice President also responded to questions raised over the EU’s trade agreement with Indonesia, which went into its 11<sup>th</sup> round of negotiations<sup>23</sup> last November,

and whether or not Indonesia's human rights record (in the context of West Papua) would be taken into consideration. He noted ongoing concern with regards to 'the safeguarding of freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly in West Papua' and that there would be a need for respect for human rights to be 'embedded in any Free Trade Agreement'.

With regards to the amount of funds the Commission has allocated to West Papua since 2001, it was also revealed that EUR 4.7 million had been sent, covering areas of 'democracy, civil society, peace process, health care, education, and land-use planning'. He added that EU has also spent EUR 112 million funding projects in Indonesia related to climate change, deforestation, education, health and human rights, which includes operations in West Papua.

The ILWP pointed out<sup>24</sup> that the EU should not be funding the Indonesian occupation and extraction of wealth from West Papua and that 'as it is currently envisaged, some elements of an EU trade agreement with Indonesia would likely be illegal under international law, following the General Court of the European Union ruling regarding Western Sahara<sup>25</sup> and EU trade agreements with Morocco'.

## 6. Growing support from individual EU member states

In a landmark intervention from the former colonial power, the Dutch House of Representatives also adopted their own motion on February 1<sup>26</sup> calling for the UNHCHR to visit West Papua.



This followed comments made in January 2021<sup>27</sup> by the Dutch Foreign Affairs Minister, who stated that, 'it is important to have such a visit' by the High Commissioner 'as soon as possible'.

On March 18 2021, The Foreign Affairs Committee of the Spanish Senate also passed a motion<sup>28</sup> calling on the Spanish Government to express its concern about the human rights situation in West Papua and urging the Government to also back the High Commissioner visit. In case of such a visit being continually blocked, the Senate pushed for the Spanish Government to support a motion on West Papua at the UN Human Rights Council.

In response to a follow up question, raised by Basque Senator and International Parliamentarians for West Papua (IPWP) Vice Chair<sup>29</sup> Gorka Elejabarrieta, on December 2, the Spanish government affirmed their support for the visit to go ahead. In reference to the long-denied access, the response also noted that ‘support to OHCHR entails a general rejection of any deterrent measure adopted by national authorities to hinder visits and inspections on the ground’.

This was in addition to a strongly worded motion of support, unanimously passed by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Basque Parliament<sup>30</sup> on October 8, 2021. The resolution noted that, ‘over 500,000 people have died in a genocide against the indigenous population,’ denounces human rights violations against West Papuans, and calls for a UN visit to the territory.

Supportive comments have also been made by the UK government<sup>31</sup>.

The High Commissioner’s office has said that it still aims to secure access to West Papua, but that obstacles are being placed in its way by the Indonesian state.

ULMWP provisional government PM, Edison Waromi, alongside 7 ULMWP regional Executives, have publicly announced that they are ready and waiting<sup>32</sup> to welcome a delegation of the High Commissioner to West Papua.



## 7. ULMWP Progress

In December, the ULMWP made a further step towards reclaiming sovereignty; by adding to its previously established constitution<sup>33</sup>, Provisional Government<sup>34</sup> and cabinet<sup>35</sup> by announcing the location of its government offices<sup>36</sup>. Headquarters are based inside West Papua, with the international office in Port Vila. A further government branch will be in Port Moresby, with diplomatic coordination offices based in the UK and Europe.

Last month, Interim President Benny Wenda and ULMWP Head of EU Mission Oridek Ap were hosted in the Basque Country by Senator Gorka Elejabarrieta and welcomed by the Spanish Senate and Congress in Madrid<sup>37</sup>.



The ULMWP delegation was received at the Basque Parliament in Gastiez (Vitoria) by the President of the Parliament, Bakartxo Tejeria Otermin and invited to provide an update to the Foreign Affairs Committee.

In the Parliament of Navarre, in Iruña (Pamplona), they were welcomed by President Unai Hualde<sup>38</sup> and briefed members of International Coexistence and Solidarity Commission, where concern was also voiced about access in view of the ongoing crisis.

In Madrid, the delegation was hosted by a cross-party group of Senators, who consolidated their support for the visit of High Commissioner Bachelet and offered their solidarity with the West Papuan people. President Wenda was able to thank them, on behalf of the ULMWP and the West Papuan people, for their motion, passed by the Foreign Affairs Committee last March.

Likewise, they were met by a cross party group of Congress Deputies who also shared their concern over human rights and offered their support.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=28180&LangID=E>

<sup>2</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1113062>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/Statement-for-International-Meeting-WP-Dec21.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.oikoumene.org/news/wcc-video-interview-describes-human-rights-crisis-in-west-papua>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/religionandethicsreport/west-papuas-catholic-priests-call-for-urgent-ceasefire/13615010;%20https://www.indoleft.org/news/2021-11-12/194-church-leaders-in-papua-call-for-end-to-military-operations-peace-talks.html;%20https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/440809/west-papuan-churches-call-for-un-to-come-to-papua>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ucanews.com/news/papua-governor-sets-up-human-rights-legal-team/96298>

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- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.ulmwp.org/interim-president-wenda-we-welcome-un-call-for-urgent-humanitarian-access-and-action-on-child-killings-disappearances-torture-and-mass-displacement-of-our-people>
- <sup>8</sup> <https://mission-indonesia.org/2022/03/01/press-statement-response-to-the-news-release-by-un-special-procedures-mandate-holders-on-1-march-2022/>
- <sup>9</sup> <https://suarapapua.com/2021/03/14/victor-yeimo-dalam-tiga-tahun-negara-sudah-kirim-21-ribu-anggota-ke-papua/>
- <sup>10</sup> <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=25322>
- <sup>11</sup> <https://www.abc.net.au/radio-australia/programs/pacificbeat/west-papua/13306150>
- <sup>12</sup> <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20220124073035-20-750265/bupati-yahukimo-klaim-sekolah-jadi-tempat-brimob-atas-izin-pemda>
- <sup>13</sup> <https://www.ucanews.com/news/indonesias-plan-to-divide-papuan-provinces-raises-concern/96244>
- <sup>14</sup> <https://www.ucanews.com/news/boy-dies-after-beating-by-indonesian-soldiers/96284>
- <sup>15</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions/papuan-political-activist-faces-life-imprisonment>
- <sup>16</sup> <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/pacific/462422/calls-for-nz-govt-to-condemn-charges-against-west-papuan-activist>
- <sup>17</sup> <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ec24444be68167e74a762fe/t/617ff098b5971308876b30f5/1635774616913/ILWP+Statement+-++Victor+Yeimo+1+Nov.pdf>
- <sup>18</sup> <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ec24444be68167e74a762fe/t/61bb1cdc44dd780d5208553b/1639652573360/ILWP+Statement+-++1+December+student+arrests.pdf>
- <sup>19</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-005382\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-005382_EN.html)
- <sup>20</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-005382-ASW\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2021-005382-ASW_EN.html)
- <sup>21</sup> <https://www.ulmwp.org/news-79-state-oacps-reiterates-call-for-un-human-rights-chief-to-be-allowed-into-west-papua>
- <sup>22</sup> <https://www.ulmwp.org/news-79-state-oacps-reiterates-call-for-un-human-rights-chief-to-be-allowed-into-west-papua>
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- <sup>24</sup> <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ec24444be68167e74a762fe/t/621649c56d514563f92f4d62/1645627846065/ILWP+Statement+-++EU-Indonesia+relations.pdf>
- <sup>25</sup> <https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2021-09/cp210166en.pdf>
- <sup>26</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1120035915466853>
- <sup>27</sup> <https://www.ulmwp.org/netherlands-becomes-83rd-state-calling-for-un-visit-to-west-papua>
- <sup>28</sup> [https://twitter.com/g\\_elejabarrieta/status/1372605757338890247](https://twitter.com/g_elejabarrieta/status/1372605757338890247)
- <sup>29</sup> <https://www.ipwp.org/ipwp-vice-chairs/>
- <sup>30</sup> <https://www.ulmwp.org/news-basque-parliament-passes-resolution-in-support-of-west-papua>
- <sup>31</sup> <https://www.ulmwp.org/uk-government-becomes-82nd-state-demanding-un-access-to-west-papua>

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- <sup>33</sup> <https://www.ulmwp.org/ulmwp-executive-welcomes-legislative-councils-adoption-of-provisional-constitution>
- <sup>34</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-indonesia-papua/papuans-rally-for-independence-from-indonesia-as-group-declares-govt-in-exile-idUKKBN28B48L?edition-redirect=uk>
- <sup>35</sup> <https://www.ulmwp.org/west-papuan-provisional-government-forms-cabinet-and-departments-in-blow-to-indonesian-rule>
- <sup>36</sup> <https://www.ulmwp.org/interim-president-benny-wendas-new-year-message>
- <sup>37</sup> <https://www.ulmwp.org/ulmwp-provisional-government-welcomed-in-the-basque-country-and-spain>
- <sup>38</sup> <https://www.pamplonaactual.com/articulo/politica/navarra-hualde-recibe-portavoz-movimiento-unido-liberacion-papua-occidental-benny-wenda/20220215185638292887.html>