



**UNITED LIBERATION MOVEMENT FOR WEST PAPUA
PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT**

International Secretariat, Winston Churchill Street, 1571 Port Vila, Republic of Vanuatu.

West Papua Situation Update: December 2022

Filep Karma found dead in Jayapura

On November 1st, all of West Papua went into mourning after Filep Karma, the most famous and longest-serving West Papuan political prisoner, was found dead on a Jayapura beachⁱ.

One of West Papua's most important independence leaders, Karma spent his life fighting for justice, democracy, and freedom for West Papua. Across his life, he served as a ULMWP Minister for Indonesian and Asian affairs, was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prizeⁱⁱ, and spent eleven years in an Indonesian prison for raising the Morning Star flagⁱⁱⁱ.

Doubts have been raised about the official account of Karma's death. Karma died during a surfing trip, despite being a skilled diver, and a number of international bodies, including Amnesty International^{iv}, have called for an urgent impartial investigation into his death.

Karma's death sparked spontaneous mourning ceremonies among West Papuans. As thousands of West Papuans took to the streets to honour him, Indonesian soldiers blocked their way with heavy weaponry, and snatched Morning Star flags away from some demonstrators^v.

ULMWP Interim President declared a National Day of Mourning^{vi} for Karma, labelling him the West Papuan equivalent to Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King.



Buchtar Tabuni and two ULMWP Ministers arrested by Indonesian police

In October, Indonesian police arrested Buchtar Tabuni^{vii}, Chairman of the West Papua council and a member of the ULMWP Council Committee, after a peaceful ULMWP meeting at his private residence.

Tabuni was arrested along with Bazoka Logo, Minister of Political Affairs, and Iche Murib, Minister of Women's and Children's Affairs. Following their arrest, the trio were interrogated at a nearby police station. Protesters gathered outside the police station to call for their release.

The arrests were described by Interim President Wenda as "in breach of basic principles of international diplomacy and human rights". Tabuni has been jailed for his pro-independence advocacy before, and was previously arrested^{viii} (along with Logo) during an anti-racism protest in 2020.



ULMWP news: Open letter released in support of the Green State Vision

On the one-year anniversary of the Green State Vision's unveiling at COP27, over 140 organisations and individuals signed an open letter^{ix} in support of the ULMWP's groundbreaking ecological vision for an independent West Papua.

The letter stated: "West Papuans envision a new 'Green State' based on environmental and social protection, indigenous environmental management and respect for the natural world. This new social order will restore and protect the environment, and maintain balance and harmony in and amongst people and the environment. West Papuans intend to sustainably manage New Guinea's rainforests and its biodiversity for the good of the global community."

The letter was signed by individuals including Noam Chomsky, Peter Tatchell, Benjamin Zephaniah, Jeremy Corbyn, George Monbiot, and Jean Wyllys. Signatory organisations included Momentum, Extinction Rebellion UK, Green New Deal Rising, and Global Justice Now.



Seven West Papuan students arrested for peaceful protest

In mid-November, seven West Papuan university students were arbitrarily arrested^x for flying the Morning Star flag. The group included three students – Yosep Ernesto Matuan, Devio Tekege, and Ambrosius Elopere – who were arrested and jailed for ten months^{xi} last December for a similar protest.

Zode Hilapok, another of the December 2021 flag raisers, passed away in October^{xii}, ten months after his arrest. Indonesia had refused to treat Hilapok in a civilian hospital, instead transferring him to Bhayangkara military hospital following his arrest.

The seven students had gathered to commemorate the murder of West Papuan leader Theys Eluay^{xiii}, who was killed by Indonesian Special Forces on 10th November 2001. Their protest was peaceful, with the students raising the Morning Star and speaking about Eluay and his legacy.

At the same time, a separate group of West Papuan students were also criminalised and mistreated for protesting against the G20 in Bali^{xiv}. While marching outside their University they were beaten, doused with water cannons, shot at, pelted with stones and subjected to racist abuse. Later, they were barricaded inside their dormitory by Indonesian police, who fired shots at the group.



Indonesia's occupation heavily criticised in United Nations UPR

In a major blow to Indonesia's international standing, eight countries^{xv} called for immediate investigation of human rights abuses in occupied West Papua at Indonesia's Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

The eight countries that issued criticisms of Indonesia^{xvi} were Vanuatu, Australia, the United States of America, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Canada, the Marshall Islands and Slovenia. Of these, Australia, the US, Canada, Slovenia, and Netherlands recommended an immediate international investigation, with Vanuatu and the Republic of the Marshall Islands specifically repeating the 2019 Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)^{xvii} and Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States (OACPS)^{xviii} calls for an urgent visit to West Papua by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Marshall Islands' intervention was particularly significant, as they also called for West Papua to be allowed to exercise their right of self-determination. In practice, this would require an internationally mediated independence referendum to be held in West Papua – the primary demand of Interim President Benny Wenda and the ULMWP.

In response to the UPR investigation, Indonesia made a series of baseless claims about human rights in West Papua^{xix}, including saying that most cases of violence in Papua have been investigated and the perpetrators punished. In reality, Indonesian soldiers act with total impunity in West Papua, as illustrated by the recent acquittal of the one 'Bloody Paniai'^{xx} suspect on all charges^{xxi}.

Pacific Conference of Churches call for boycott of Indonesian goods

In a major development, the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) called for a boycott of all Indonesian products^{xxii} until Indonesia facilitates a visit to West Papua by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHRC)^{xxiii}.

The PCC, a major civil society body in the Pacific, have consistently drawn attention to the dire state of human rights in West Papua. PCC General Secretary Reverend James Bhagwan stated:

“The call for a boycott^{xxiv} comes in response to the lack of political will by the Indonesian Government to honour their commitment to this visit which was made 4 years ago”. Over 80 countries^{xxv}, including all member states of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)^{xxvi}, the Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States (OACPS)^{xxvii}, and the European Commission^{xxviii}, have now urged the Indonesian government to allow a UN visit.

Interim President Benny Wenda stated that the ULMWP supports the PCC’s call for a boycott^{xxix}. Wenda said that the boycott marks a “new level in our popular international struggle”.



Mass displacement occurs on Yapen Island in response to Indonesian militarisation

Ninety-five people have been forcibly displaced on Yapen Island^{xxx}, following sudden and significant Indonesian military buildup and intimidation of civilians.

Yapen residents had organised a peaceful prayer meeting on December 1st, West Papua’s national day. In response, the military arrived at Kaonda village, where three houses were demolished by the military, and residents had property and food stolen from them. Residents then fled into the forest, where they remain.

The displaced include 43 children and babies as young as 6 months. There are also a number of elderly people and a heavily pregnant woman among the refugees.

The displacements on Yapen Island are part of a refugee crisis that has been ongoing since 2019.

According to the UN, between 60,000 and 100,000 people have been displaced by Indonesian military force^{xxxix}, including 50,000 in Nduga Regency alone^{xxxix}. 25,000 additional Indonesian troops have been deployed to West Papua during that time^{xxxix}.



- ⁱ <https://www.ulmwp.org/open-letter-noam-chomsky-peter-tatchell-benjamin-zephaniah-jeremy-corbyn-george-monbiot-and-others-give-their-support-to-the-green-state-vision>
- ⁱⁱ <https://www.ulmwp.org/interim-president-national-day-of-mourning-after-death-of-filep-karma>
- ⁱⁱⁱ <https://twitter.com/VeronicaKoman/status/1587353700800299009>
- ^{iv} <https://www.bennywenda.org/2013/benny-wenda-and-filep-karma-nominated-for-nobel-peace-prize/>
- ^v <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/02/filep-karma-west-papuan-independence-campaigner-found-dead-on-beach>
- ^{vi} <https://www.freedom-now.org/cases/filep-samuel-karma/>
- ^{vii} <https://www.ulmwp.org/urgent-notice-buchtar-tabuni-and-two-ulmwp-ministers-arrested-by-indonesian-police>
- ^{viii} <https://www.ulmwp.org/interim-president-wenda-immediately-release-buchtar-tabuni-and-bazoka-logo>
- ^{ix} <https://www.ulmwp.org/interim-president-mass-displacements-occurring-in-every-corner-of-west-papua>
- ^x <https://suarapapua.com/2021/03/14/victor-yeimo-dalam-tiga-tahun-negara-sudah-kirim-21-ribu-anggota-ke-papua/>
- ^{xi} <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/Solidarity%20for%20Indigenous%20Papuan2.pdf>
- ^{xii} <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1113062>
- ^{xiii} <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/16/west-papua-pacific-leaders-urge-un-visit-to-regions-festering-human-rights-sore>
- ^{xiv} <https://www.pacificconferenceofchurches.org/2022/11/30/call-for-boycott-of-indonesian-products-and-programmes-until-un-human-rights-team-and-international-media-allowed-into-papua-and-cessation-of-military-brutality-on-papuan-people/>
- ^{xv} <https://www.ulmwp.org/interim-president-wenda-eu-calls-on-indonesia-to-allow-access-for-the-high-commissioner-for-human-rights>
- ^{xvi} <https://www.ulmwp.org/news-79-state-oacps-reiterates-call-for-un-human-rights-chief-to-be-allowed-into-west-papua>
- ^{xvii} <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/16/west-papua-pacific-leaders-urge-un-visit-to-regions-festering-human-rights-sore>
- ^{xviii} <https://www.ulmwp.org/netherlands-becomes-83rd-state-calling-for-un-visit-to-west-papua>
- ^{xix} <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/479884/churches-call-for-pacific-wide-boycott-over-west-papua>
- ^{xx} <https://www.ulmwp.org/interim-president-ulmwp-supports-pacific-conference-of-churches-call-for-boycott-of-indonesia>
- ^{xxi} <https://www.thejakartapost.com/world/2022/11/10/indonesia-faces-the-music-at-un-human-rights-review.html>
- ^{xxii} <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/405595/africa-caribbean-pacific-group-seeks-action-on-papua-rights-abuses>
- ^{xxiii} <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/16/west-papua-pacific-leaders-urge-un-visit-to-regions-festering-human-rights-sore>
- ^{xxiv} <https://www.tapol.org/press-statements/8-countries-call-out-indonesias-actions-west-papua-upr>
- ^{xxv} <https://en.jubi.id/bloody-paniai-trial-result-sets-bad-precedent-for-rights-enforcement-in-papua/>
- ^{xxvi} https://www.tapol.org/sites/default/files/Justice%20for%20Paniai%20Berdarah.web_.pdf
- ^{xxvii} <https://www.ucanews.com/news/rights-activists-slam-indonesias-baseless-claims-at-un/99396>
- ^{xxviii} <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/477404/morning-star-flag-raiser-in-west-papua-dies-of-illness>
- ^{xxix} <https://www.ulmwp.org/interim-president-immediately-release-eight-peaceful-student-demonstrators>
- ^{xxx} <http://www.indoleft.org/news/2022-11-10/police-arrest-7-students-for-flying-morning-star-flag-at-campus-rally-in-abepura.html>
- ^{xxxi} <https://www.tapol.org/reports/abduction-and-assassination-theys-hiyo-eluay>
- ^{xxxii} <https://en.jubi.id/papuan-students-in-bali-reject-g20-and-demand-self-determination/>
- ^{xxxiii} <https://twitter.com/amnestyindo/status/1587350732503912448>