

**Jacob Rumbiak, Foreign Affairs Minister, West Papua Government,
West Papua Womens Office-Docklands (Victoria, Australia), 26 November 2023**
(15-min video, speech starts at 02:40, transcript edited for clarity and brevity),

The success of the West Papuan independence struggle depends upon:

- i) The West Papuan people organisation of themselves, and their ability to work closely with, and educate the Indonesian people and international community about our struggle;
- ii) An interested, active, and educated international community of supporters;
- iii) Our faith in God to bless our struggle and achieve its aims.

“We stand today and are not lonely because we have international forces behind us. We are part of the Pacific peoples of Melanesian, Micronesia and Polynesia (but the only one without independence). The African Caribbean Pacific Group of States also supports our struggle.

“I would like to congratulate brother Clovis Mwamba (from the Democratic Republic of Congo) because our struggle is also your struggle. I also wrote notes in prison, as you did on those flattened packets of cigarettes. All political prisoners try to find a way to inform the world so that the story goes out.”

“Some claim we failed this year because the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) did not accept West Papua’s application for membership. But freedom fighters never feel that we fail. Remember that it was Apollo 11 that landed on the moon. That means the ten missions before it didn’t succeed. Struggle is like that, it eventually succeeds, it never fails”.

“This year there were arguments between our leaders and the MSG leaders, and they sent our case to the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF). But the MSG is a combination of modern and traditional government, and the people claimed the government failed. But the power is always with the people, not the politicians. To have a future we must build real power, and true power comes from the people. So I would say that we did fail with the leaders of the MSG, but we still have a way to go forward through the people.”

“While the MSG leaders didn’t accept West Papua’s application for membership, they did call on the Jakarta government to report in April 2024 on the UN Fact-Finding Mission to West Papua (which Indonesia agreed to in 2017-18). If Jakarta doesn’t allow the visit to Papua, we don’t know if the MSG leaders will expel Indonesia as an Associate Member of the MSG”.

The MSG leaders passed our case to the Pacific Island Forum (which has 18 member-states, whereas the MSG has only four) where I believe it will be solved like the Bougainville crisis. Bougainville was never on the UN agenda. The resolution of its struggle with the colonial PNG government was an initiative of the Pacific Islands Forum led by New Zealand. Fifteen years later they had a referendum and Bougainville will get full independence in 2025.

But as a future generation in this era, we want to go forward based on international principle because our case is part of the global policy to allow Indonesia to control our territory. So we are still trying to get our case back to the UN, with the support of the African Caribbean Pacific Group, and hopefully PIF and the European Parliament as well, and hope that our sponsor country can lobby for a two-thirds majority support for listing with the UN. After that our sponsor-country lawyers will sue the United Nations. We will not sue Indonesia, because our case comes from the United Nations violating international law. So we still have a long way, but I believe that when we work in the right way, with the right agenda, and we stand with the right leaders, then we will get the result.”

One thing I do want to say is that in West Papua we are united; we have people from highlands, valleys, coast, and islands. Last week, from 20-23 November 2023, we had the first ULMWP Na-

tional Congress in West Papua, and our government was re-elected, with President Benny Wenda and Prime Minister Edison Waromi, with cabinet members announced on 1 December. Also reinforced at the congress was our Green State Policy that was raised during the UN Climate Conference in Glasgow.

So now we are ready to negotiate inside Indonesia but we also continue negotiating at the international level. Why? Because international law, based on the Montevideo Convention, requires each nation that wants independence must fulfill certain requirements: that is, a defined territory, a permanent population, a government, and a capacity to enter into relations with other states. (Our sponsor country, Vanuatu claims that we now have 86 UN Member-States that support us). So we have already fulfilled all the requirements of state-formation based on international law, and we only need all of your support, and I hope that we continue to work together.

One thing that is very important is our unity. We are united, despite what some people say. All political parties are united within the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP). I hope all this information is clear.

So the agenda of West Papua's Foreign Affairs office (upstairs) for 2024 is:

- i) Lobby UN Member-states to enter into bilateral agreements with the West Papua Government;
- ii) Lobby to raise funds to support our people and our cabinet activities when something changes;
- iii) Continue to build links with UN Member-States and encourage them to push the UN to address the issue, and to push Jakarta into peace talks with the West Papua Government.
- iv) Continue to flesh out our Green State policy

I want to make it very clear that our struggle has never been against the Indonesian people. We recognise Indonesia's territory, but we also want them to recognise our territory. We have never been against the right of Indonesia to exist. Nor have we ever tried to, or want to, undermine the Indonesian state. We just want Indonesia to recognise our territory.

So once again, West Papua is ready for independence, but we need your support, because the future of West Papua is also the future of the world. We should stand together as a family and look after peace and justice in the world, starting from our state. Thank you very much.

Jacob Rumbiak,
Minister for Foreign Affairs,
West Papua Government, 23 November 2023