

PUBLIC

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UA 248/07 Fear for safety

INDONESIA **Johanes Djonga (m), human rights activist, church pastor**

A military commander and his men have reportedly threatened to kill Pastor Johanes Djonga for his activism in defence of the human rights of people in Papua province. Amnesty International believes his life could be in danger.

The commander of the Army Special Forces (Kopassus) in Waris district, Papua province, Lettu Usman, and the soldiers under his command, allegedly threatened to kill Johanes Djonga and bury him in a 700-metre-deep gorge, on 22 August. They accused him of making false allegations about the situation in Waris district to local and international NGOs, and of being a *provokator* (provocateur) who was betraying the Indonesian state. A Kopassus military officer has also alleged on 16 September that Johanes Djonga is involved in illegal logging and food business. This appears to arise from Johanes Djonga's human rights activism: he recently presented a report to the governor of Papua and the military commander in the city of Jayapura, Colonel Burhanuddin Siagian, criticizing the actions of the military at the border between Waris and Papua New Guinea.

On 18 September, Johanes Djonga reported the death threats to the head of Papua Police. The police commander explained that if the person threatening him was a soldier, there was nothing the police could do to protect him. Johanes Djonga then reported the threats to the Chief of Military Regional Command in Papua province: he reportedly said he would take action, but would sue Johanes Djonga for defamation if his accusations turned out to be false.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There is an active independence movement in Papua province, and the Indonesian security forces have responded at times with excessive force, including extrajudicial executions, torture and arbitrary detentions. Members of local human rights organisations have been harassed and intimidated because of their work, and some have been forced to leave the province. Church leaders are among those who have voiced the concerns of the local population about human rights violations, and as a result have been publicly accused of being linked to the independence movement. Following her visit to Indonesia in June, the UN's Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders, Hina Jilani, stated that human rights defenders working in Papua province "continue to face torture, arbitrary detention and harassment from the country's police, military and security forces."

Amnesty International takes no position on the political status of any province of Indonesia. However, the organization believes that the right to freedom of expression includes the right to peacefully express political views, and that this right must be upheld.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Indonesian or your own language:

- expressing concern at reports that the Kopassus commander in Waris district, and his men, have threatened to kill Pastor Johanes Djonga, and urging the authorities to take immediate action to protect him, and order an investigation;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that the right to freedom of expression and assembly is upheld in Papua province, and that local and international journalists, humanitarian workers and human rights defenders have full, unimpeded and unhindered access to the people of the province;

- calling on the authorities to ensure that all members of the police and military are made aware of the legitimate role of human rights defenders and their responsibility to protect them, as set out in the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

APPEALS TO:

President

Mr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono
Istana Merdeka, Jakarta 10110, Indonesia

Fax: + 62 21 345 2685
+ 62 21 526 8726

Salutation: Dear President Yudhoyono

National Police Chief

General Sutanto
Jalan Truno Joyo No. 03
Jakarta Selatan, Indonesia

Fax: + 62 21 720 7277

Salutation: Dear General Sutanto

and to diplomatic representatives of Indonesia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 November 2007.