

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Indonesia: Authorities must investigate use of lethal force by police in Manokwari

Amnesty International calls for a prompt, independent, impartial and effective investigation by Indonesian authorities into allegations of the use of arbitrary and lethal force by police that led to the death of one man and injured at least six other men in Manokwari, West Papua province. The findings must be made public and those suspected of criminal responsibility, including those with command responsibility, must be brought to justice and victims granted adequate reparations.

On 26 October around 11pm local time, unrest broke out in Sanggeng, West Manokwari, apparently triggered after a young Papuan man was stabbed by a man from another ethnic group in a food stall in Sanggeng for not paying for his meal. Hundreds of Papuans then put up road blocks and were also allegedly involved in attacking a military officer, burning six motorcycles belonging to the police and attempting to destroy a police post.

In response, police personnel from the Manokwari Police Station arbitrarily opened fire indiscriminately into the crowd, hitting Onesimus Rumayom and at least six other men who suffered gunshot wounds. They were immediately brought to a Navy hospital but Onesimus died on the way there.

The Regional Chief of Police for West Papua (Kapolda), Brigadier General Royke Lumowa, issued a statement that the use of force complied with the police's protocols for responding to mass unrest. According to him, the police were ordered to shoot only at the legs and said that police firearms were loaded with rubber bullets. He also denied that Onesimus Rumayom, who had been wounded in the thigh, died as a result of the shooting and said he had ordered an autopsy to be carried out. Onesimus was buried on 29 October and to date, no autopsy has been performed to establish the cause of the death.

Amnesty International acknowledges the complex and dangerous environments police officers and other law enforcement officials often find themselves in when carrying out their duty to protect the safety of the public. This role, however, must be carried out in a way that ensures full respect for the right to life, liberty and security of all persons, including those suspected of crime. The use of force is subject to strict human rights safeguards as set out in the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials (1979) and the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (1990). The use of force by law enforcement officials in Indonesia is further

regulated by the Indonesian Chief of Police Regulation on the Use of Force in Police Action (No. 1/2009).

Under international law and standards, law enforcement officials may use force only when strictly necessary and to the extent required to carry out a legitimate law enforcement objective; they must not use firearms except in defence against an imminent threat of death or serious injury. Allegations of arbitrary or abusive use of force by police or other security forces carrying out law enforcement duties must be fully investigated through an independent and impartial mechanism. The authorities must also ensure that victims of such violations and their families receive full and effective reparations, including compensation.

Police accountability in Indonesia has been hampered by the lack of an independent, effective, and impartial oversight mechanism to investigate human rights violations committed by the security forces and to take forward its findings for prosecution. Criminal investigations into human rights violations by the police are rare in Indonesia and attempts to hold those responsible to account, mostly through internal disciplinary mechanisms, leave many victims without access to justice and reparation.

Background

Amnesty International believes that the Manokwari case is not an isolated incident but speaks to a culture of impunity that continues to exist in the Papua region. In many previous investigations into human rights violations committed by the security forces in Papua and West Papua provinces, including unlawful killings, the use of unnecessary and excessive force, and torture and other ill-treatment, have been unduly delayed, dropped, or their findings buried, leaving victims and their families without access to truth, justice and reparations.

In almost all cases that have been taken forward, members of the police forces in Papua and West Papua provinces do not face prosecution or are just given disciplinary sanctions when found to have committed human rights violations. There is still a lack of accountability for numerous cases that have occurred in the Papua region over the last few years.