

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 21/61/97

UA 284/97

Fear of torture/ill-treatment

26 August 1997

INDONESIA
Yulius Petege
Yahya Pigome
Ben Kotouki
five others (names unknown)

Attempts by the Indonesian security forces to quell disturbances which began on 21 August 1997 in the Timika area of Irian Jaya - Indonesia's easternmost province - have resulted in two local tribes people being shot dead and 15 others being beaten, in some cases severely. Among those beaten were eight people belonging to the Ekari tribe: Yulius Petege, Yahya Pigome, Ben Kotouki and five others were walking towards Timika airport on 22 August when they were reportedly beaten by police and taken away in buses. There is no further information on their whereabouts and there is concern that they may be at risk of torture or ill-treatment in custody.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The latest clashes between local people and the security forces in the troubled area around the US-owned PT Freeport Indonesia Mine at Tembagapura were sparked off by an incident in which two local people died and two were injured after apparently falling or jumping from a truck owned by Freeport on 20 August. A spokesman for Freeport quoted by *Agence France Presse* claimed that the two were victims of a traditional tribal execution. Local people believe that the deaths require independent investigation. The deaths fuelled existing high levels of tension in the area between local people and Freeport over the disbursement of a trust fund set up by the firm to help tribal communities in the area.

On 21 August local people set up a blockade near Timika Airport to protest about the deaths. Some groups broke away from the blockade and marched towards the town of Timika Indah where they attacked the houses of Freeport employees. The following day the blockade continued. Meanwhile, two groups of people belonging to the Moni tribe marched to Timika to the office of the local regent to press their rival claims to the Freeport trust fund. A quarrel broke out between them, prompting troops from the 733 Patimura Infantry Battalion and members of the police force to beat the protestors with guns and clubs. Seven people are reported to have been injured in this clash; no one is reported to have been arrested.

In another incident on 22 August two people are reported to have been shot dead when a crowd approached Timika police station to demand an investigation into the deaths of Nela Pakage and Akuilan Kotouki (the deaths linked to the incident involving the Freeport truck, above). Passing the place where Nela Pakage's body had been found, youths in the crowd threw stones and shot arrows at troops guarding the spot. The troops opened fire, hitting Stevanus Tekege (23) in the head and Timotius Koga in the stomach. According to some reports the troops had been using rubber bullets.

Indonesia's National Commission for Human Rights (Komisi Nasional Hak Azasi Manusia - Komnas HAM) has announced that it will investigate the latest violence in Timika and other longstanding problems in the area between local people and Freeport.

Opposition to Indonesian rule of Irian Jaya, both peaceful and armed, has continued since authority over the province was transferred to the Indonesian Government in 1963. Protests, some involving the Free Papua Movement, *Organisasi Papua Merdeka* (OPM), a group advocating independence for the province, have included armed clashes with the Indonesian Armed Forces, flag-raising and peaceful demonstrations.

The Indonesian authorities have responded to the opposition with widespread human rights violations including arbitrary arrests, "disappearances", extrajudicial executions, torture and the imprisonment of prisoners of conscience.

In recent years the issue of land and resources, particularly around the PT Freeport Indonesia Mine at Tembagapura, has generated discontent. This has focused particularly on the perceived lack of benefits to the local community from the Freeport mine and the social and environmental impact of the mine's presence. In response to mounting protests both nationally and internationally, Freeport set up a trust fund representing 1 per cent of the mine's profits to be distributed among local communities. Local church leaders have recently published a statement demanding that Freeport postpone and review any further disbursements under the fund because it is creating tension among local people.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Bahasa Indonesia, English or your own language:

- urging the authorities to provide details of the whereabouts of all eight members of the Ekari tribe arrested on 22 August 1997 including Yulius Petege, Yahya Pigome and Ben Kotouki, and to provide details on the identities of the other five;
- expressing concern at reports that the eight were ill-treated on arrest, and seeking assurances that they will not be subjected to torture or ill-treatment while in detention;
- calling on the authorities to allow the eight to have access to lawyers of their own choice, their families and adequate medical care;
- urging the authorities to ensure that the security forces exercise restraint in controlling current disturbances in Irian Jaya, in accordance with international standards.

APPEALS TO:

Military Commander Region VIII/Trikora

Brig. Gen. Wirdhana
Pangdam VII/Trikora
Markas Besar KODAM VIII/Trikora
Jayapura
Irian Jaya, Indonesia

Telegrams: Pangdam VIII/Trikora, Jayapura, Indonesia

Salutation: Dear Brig. Gen. Wirdhana

Chief of Police for Irian Jaya

Brig. Gen. (Pol) Wayan Karya
Kapolda Irian Jaya
Jayapura
Irian Jaya, Indonesia

Telegrams: Kapolda Irian Jaya, Jayapura, Irian Jaya

Salutation: Dear Brig. Gen. (Pol) Wayan Karya

COPIES TO:**National Commission on Human Rights**

Ketua Komisi Nasional Hak Azasi Manusia

Jl Veteran No 11

Jakarta, Indonesia

Faxes: c/o Ministry of Justice - + 6221 314 1625

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 October 1997.