

UA 193/98

Fear for safety

7 July 1998

INDONESIA Yopy Karma & 229 others

At least one person has been killed, 30 injured and 271 others arrested in the course of recent operations by the security forces to break up pro-independence demonstrations in towns across Indonesia's easternmost province, Irian Jaya. At least 230 people are believed to be still detained.

Information from this remote area of Indonesia is scarce and there are conflicting reports about the number of casualties and detainees from the various demonstrations. A clear pattern, however, is emerging regarding the use of excessive force to break up pro-independence protests, which are taking place in various locations in the province.

In Biak, a small island off the northern coast of Irian Jaya, a number of people were killed and others injured when troops opened fire on a peaceful flag-raising ceremony on 6 July 1998. It is not known how many fatalities there were. Twenty-three people are believed to be in the local hospital. The nature of their injuries is not known as the security forces are preventing local people from entering the hospital.

According to a report from the news agency *Agence France Presse*, the regional military commander, Colonel Agus Edyono, confirmed that live ammunition and rubber bullets had been used during the attack. He confirmed that 20 people were in hospital as a result of their injuries, but that he had heard of no deaths. The local police chief, Hotman Siagian, is quoted as saying that 180 people had been arrested in connection with the demonstration. According to one report, one of those detained is Yopy Karma, who has been shot in both legs.

On 3 July 1998 the security forces opened fire on demonstrators at a university in Jayapura, the capital of Irian Jaya. The protest is believed to have begun peacefully and to have turned violent after an Indonesian intelligence officer was spotted in the crowd and badly beaten. A law student, Steven Suripatti, was shot in the head and is now critically ill in hospital. A schoolgirl, Corina Onim, was also wounded by gunfire.

Forty three people were arrested in Jayapura, including two priests. All have now been released but six people have to report daily to the security forces. Students are still reported to be demonstrating at the university, raising fears that there may be further arrests and casualties.

Another death occurred on 2 July, when the security forces broke up a peaceful pro-independence demonstration outside the local parliament in Sorong in the north west of the province. The man concerned is reported to have died of gunshot wounds. Five others were injured.

Demonstrations connected to another flag-raising ceremony are currently believed to be taking place in Wamena in the Baliem Valley. According to the state news agency, *Antara*, 50 people have been arrested. There are serious concerns that the security forces may resort to excessive or lethal force to break up this demonstration.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Opposition to Indonesian rule within Irian Jaya has been both armed and peaceful since *de facto* authority over Irian Jaya was transferred from the Netherlands to Indonesia in 1963 and a subsequent plebiscite in 1969, which resulted in a vote for integration. The Free Papua Movement (*Organisasi Papua Merdeka - OPM*) is the most prominent group advocating independence for Irian Jaya, or West Papua as it is known to local people. The OPM advocates armed struggle, but many supporters of independence have employed peaceful means including demonstrations, flag-raising ceremonies, political discussion groups and appeals to the UN and other groups.

Members of the OPM and peaceful supporters of independence have been the victims of human rights violations, including extrajudicial executions, "disappearances", arbitrary arrest, torture, ill-treatment and imprisonment as prisoners of conscience.

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

- expressing concern at reports of deaths and injuries in the context of operations by the security forces to break up demonstrations in Irian Jaya and calling for immediate, impartial and thorough investigations into these incidents and guarantees that those found to be responsible will be brought to justice;
- requesting that orders be issued to members of the security forces in Irian Jaya to exercise restraint in dealing with pro-independence demonstrations and to act at all times in accordance with the United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials;
- expressing concern that those detained may have been arrested for the peaceful expression of their views and should therefore be immediately and unconditionally released;
- seeking guarantees that all detainees be given immediate access to independent legal representatives, members of their families and to medical attention.

APPEALS TO:

Commander of the Armed Forces (ABRI)

General Wiranto

Panglima ABRI

Markas Besar ABRI

Jl. Medan merdeka Barat No 13

Jakarta Timur

Indonesia

Faxes: + 6221 36 1471 + 6221 37 8144, + 6221 35 6404

Salutation: Dear General Wiranto

**Military Commander Region VIII/Trikora
(covers Irian Jaya)**

Major General Amir Sembiring

Pangdam VIII/Trikora

Markas Besar KODAM VIII/Trikora

Jayapura, Irian Jaya, Indonesia

Telegrams: Maj. Gen. Amir Sembiring, Markas Besar KODAM VIII/Trikora, Jayapura, Indonesia

Salutation: Dear Major General Sembiring

COPIES TO:

President Habibie

Presiden RI

Istana Negara
Jl Veteran
Jakarta Pusat, Indonesia

**Faxes (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs) + 6221 360 517/380 5511/345 7782/360
541**

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 18 August 1998.