

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

6 December 2011

Index: ASA 21/037/2011

In high-level meeting Amnesty International calls for human rights accountability in Papua

In a meeting held today in Jakarta with Djoko Suyanto, the Coordinating Minister for Law, Politics and Security, Amnesty International urged the Indonesian government to integrate human rights in their efforts to address the situation in Papua.

The Indonesian government has the duty and the right to maintain public order, but it must ensure that any restrictions to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are no more than is permitted under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which the Indonesian government has ratified.

At least 90 people are currently detained in prison in Papua and Maluku for peaceful pro-independence activities. Filep Karma, a Papuan prisoner of conscience, is currently serving a 15-year sentence in Abepura, Papua province.

The Indonesian government should free all those who are detained in Papua and Maluku for peacefully expressing their views, including through raising or waving prohibited pro-independence flags, and distinguish between peaceful and violent political activists.

Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has recently initiated discussions with Papuan activists and established a special task force to enhance economic development in the resource-rich but under-developed region.

Amnesty International called on the government to implement the full provisions of the 2001 Special Autonomy Law, in particular, by establishing a human rights court and a truth and reconciliation commission.

The Coordinating Minister expressed the government's commitment to ensure accountability for human rights violations committed by security forces but Amnesty International criticized the use of lenient administrative penalties or closed-door trials in response to human rights violations involving members of the security forces.

Amnesty International also expressed concerns about ongoing attacks against human rights defenders and journalists as well as the lack of independent and impartial monitoring of the human rights situation in Papua. The organization called on the Minister to allow international observers, non-governmental organizations and journalists unrestricted and ongoing access to the provinces of Papua and West Papua.

The meeting was proposed by President Yudhoyono during a Cabinet meeting in late October in response to Amnesty International's concerns about human rights violations surrounding the Third Papuan Peoples' Congress in Abepura, Papua on 19 October 2011, where at least three people were killed and hundreds arbitrarily arrested and ill-treated by Indonesian security forces.

Amnesty International takes no position whatsoever on the political status of any province of Indonesia, including calls for independence. However the organization believes that the right to freedom of expression includes the right to peacefully advocate referendums, independence or any other political solutions that do not involve incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.