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INDONESIA

Impunity persists in Papua as militia groups take root

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SUMMARY

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Amnesty International has welcomed recent efforts by the Indonesian authorities towards combatting impunity and enhancing human rights in Indonesia, including attempts to establish institutions for bringing those responsible for past and current violations to justice. However, the organization remains concerned that human rights violations are continuing in many parts of the country, including Aceh, Papua (Irian Jaya) and the Moluccas. The pattern of human rights violations in Papua has become well-established over the past three decades in the context of repressive measures taken by the authorities against the independence movement in the region.

At least 20 people are reported to have been killed and dozens injured by the security forces in Papua since the resignation of President Suharto in May 1998. Many of these violations have occurred as the Indonesian security forces have attempted to break up demonstrations in favour of independence for the region, in particular flag-raising ceremonies, a common form of protest in Papua.

This report details incidents of human rights violations in Papua between July 1998 and September 2000, including violations perpetrated in the context of flag-raising ceremonies in Timika (December 1999), Sorong (July 1999) and Biak (July 1998) as well as the following cases from this year:

- Three people were shot dead and 12 were injured when members of the police mobile brigade (Brimob) opened fire on around 60 people who had raised a Papuan flag outside a church in Sorong on 22 August 2000. At least 28 people were arrested, including five children, and 15 people remain missing.

- At least 13 people were injured when the security forces opened fire on a crowd demonstrating against the arrival of displaced people from the Moluccas in Sorong, northwest Papua, on 27 July 2000. At least one person was beaten by the police and several people were arrested. Six people continue to be detained in connection with the incident.
- In February/March 2000, a series of incidents in Nabire, a coastal town in the north of Papua, left three people dead and at least 18 others injured. Several people were arrested and held in detention where at least one is believed to have been tortured. Yance Pekei, a farmer, claims that his fingers and shoulders were burnt with molten plastic, his ears were punctured with a stapler and he was beaten with a rifle butt while he was held in Nabire Police Resort (Polres) between 28 February and 4 March 2000.
- Paskalis Betayob, an 18-year-old high-school student, was killed when police opened fire on a group of demonstrators in Merauke, a coastal town in southeast Papua, on 16 February 2000. Two others needed hospital treatment for gunshot wounds.

The report also raises concerns about the establishment of militia groups in Papua over recent months, namely the pro-independence Papua Taskforce (*Satgas Papua*) and the pro-Indonesian Red and White Taskforce (*Satgas Merah Putih*). Both are said to have thousands of members. Amnesty International believes that the development of such groups poses a serious threat to security in the region and is concerned at reported links between such groups and the Indonesian security forces.

Among its recommendations, Amnesty International urges the Indonesian authorities to launch impartial investigations into all allegations of human rights violations in Papua with a view to bringing those responsible to justice; to ensure that security personnel in Papua are trained in, and under orders to exercise, non-lethal methods of crowd/riot control; and to establish safeguards to ensure that no one is subjected to torture or ill-treatment.

In view of concerns about the militia groups, Amnesty International calls on the Indonesian authorities to ensure that law and order in Papua remains the sole responsibility of the police and is not delegated to members of militia groups; to take urgent steps to halt the growth of militia groups in Papua and prevent members of such groups from committing human rights abuses; to ensure that any militia members accused of committing human rights abuses are brought to justice in line with international human rights standards; and to investigate allegations that elements of the Indonesian security forces are involved with the training, financing and organization of such groups.

KEYWORDS: IMPUNITY1 / MILITARY1 / CIVIL DEFENCE1 / UNLAWFUL USE OF FIREARMS / DEMONSTRATIONS / TORTURE/ILL-TREATMENT / INDISCRIMINATE KILLING / UNLAWFUL DETENTION / EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTION

This report summarizes a 23-page document (9480 words): INDONESIA Impunity persists in Papua as militia groups take root (AI Index: ASA 21/34/00) issued by Amnesty International in September 2000. Anyone wishing further details or to take action on this issue should consult the full document. An extensive range of our materials on this and other subjects is available at <http://www.amnesty.org> and Amnesty International news releases can be received by email: <http://www.amnesty.org/news/emailnws.htm>

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