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The last month has seen the biggest uprisings in West Papua since the country was colonised by Indonesia. In the last few days a violent crackdown has been launched by the Indonesian authorities, with villages burnt to the ground and dozens of activists arrested.

Amongst those detained is Sayang Mandabayan, a mother of three young children. She was arrested in the city of Manokwari after being caught carrying 1,500 small West Papua flags. She has been charged with treason by the Indonesian authorities and faces a lifetime prison sentence.



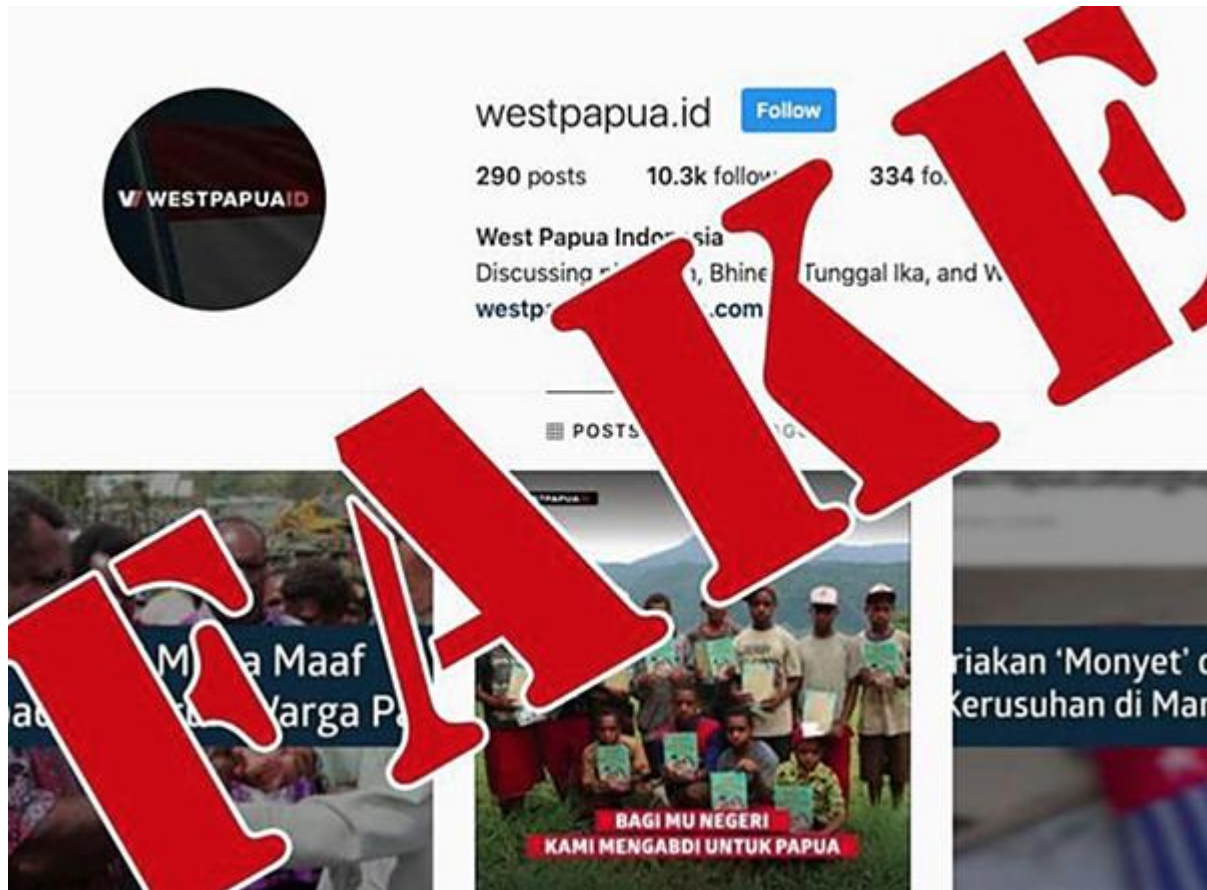
High-profile activist Buchtar Tabuni was also arrested earlier this week after a joint strike force of Indonesian police and military surrounded his home.

In another development, the Indonesian authorities have issued an arrest warrant for Veronica Koman - a prominent human rights lawyer from Indonesia who has represented many West Papuans. The Indonesian authorities accuse her of inciting violence. The truth is that the only ones inciting violence are the Indonesian authorities, their security forces and the Indonesian civilian militia groups that are now operating across West Papua.



Last week, UN Human Rights Council chief Michelle Bachelet renewed calls for calm in the region. Pacific countries are also increasing pressure on the Indonesian Government to finally allow a planned visit to West Papua by UN observers.

The Indonesian Government has also launched an online propaganda campaign, setting up dozens of social media accounts and using 'bots' to spread pro-Indonesian messages. Their attempts to silence the legitimate voices of the people of West Papua have now come to the attention of the internet authorities, and earlier this week the investigative journalism website Bellingcat released a report on their [in-depth investigation](#) into the Indonesian Government's illegal activity.



The Indonesian Government's increasingly desperate attempts to silence the voices of West Papua highlight how they have lost the argument on their continued occupation of West Papua.

The Act of Free Choice referendum of 1969 cannot justify Indonesian sovereignty over West Papua. The justification for such sovereignty, if it exists, must lie elsewhere in the legal rules governing the acquisition of sovereignty. Otherwise, West Papua is a territory that is under alien domination – a status forbidden by international law.





You can get more involved in campaigning by visiting our [website](#). Any action you can take - from joining a protest, to writing to your MP or just telling your friends about the struggle for freedom will make a difference.

You can also follow campaign updates on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



Thanks for all your support and joining us on the journey to liberate West Papua from Indonesia's colonial occupation.

All the best,

Everyone at the Free West Papua Campaign