

By Caroline Office
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22 January 2009 - The South East Asia's Green MEP has called on the UK authorities and the European Commission to bring Indonesia to account over continuing reports of human rights abuses in West Papua.

- MEP receives reports of detention and abuse of West Papuan independence activists

Link:<http://www.carolinelucasmep.org.uk/2009/01/22/green-mep-urges-foreign-office-to-address-continuing-human-rights-abuses-in-west-papua/>

Dr Caroline Lucas MEP has written to Foreign Secretary David Miliband and EU Commissioner for External Relations Ferrero-Waldner to call for action following reports of the arbitrary arrest, detention and physical abuse of West Papuan independence activists by Indonesian police.

Dr Lucas MEP has repeatedly urged the UK to raise concerns over the serious abuses of West Papuan human rights with Indonesian President Yudhoyono, and to demand the withdrawal of Indonesia's violent military presence in the area.

She said: "I have been informed by a South East constituent who has just returned from West Papua that two individuals, Buchtar Tabuni (Committee Chairman of the International Parliamentarians for West Papua in Papua) and Sebby Sambom, have been arrested and detained.

"Both men were reportedly arrested because of their support for International Parliamentarians for West Papua (IPWP), which was launched at the Houses of Parliament in London in October 2008 as an initiative to help free West Papua from an oppressive Indonesian occupation.

"There are an estimated 35,000 Indonesian troops – one soldier for every 44 indigenous people – currently stationed in West Papua. Systematic human rights abuses including arbitrary detention, rape, torture, beatings in custody and extra-judicial killing are commonly reported, yet Western governments turn a blind eye."

Dr Lucas also responded angrily to reports from the Central Highlands that, in recent days, Indonesian security forces have attacked villages in Tingginambut, burning houses and killing two people.

She continued: "We stand in solidarity with the people of West Papua, who were promised a referendum on independence when the Dutch former colonial rulers withdrew from the country four decades ago.

"They are still waiting, and continue to endure terrible repression, violence and abuse at the hands of an Indonesian government more interested in securing lucrative business deals than honouring historical agreements " or obeying international law.

"Today I urge Mr Miliband and Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner to demand that Indonesia ends its curbs on the freedom of journalists and human rights observers, withdraws its military presence from West Papua, and engages in dialogue with the West Papuan leaders."