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Papua rebel leader killed

By Jakarta Correspondent [Geoff Thompson](#)

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Indonesian police have reportedly confirmed the leader of separatist organisation the Free Papua Movement has been shot dead.

Papua police's senior commissioner, Agus Riyanto, has been reported as saying that regional commander Kelly Kwalik was shot in a raid on one of his hiding places in Gorong-Gorong near the city of Timika.

He reportedly said that the best-known leader of the Free Papua Movement, known as the OPM, was carrying a gun when he was shot in the leg and later died in a Timika hospital.

The rebel leader's identity will be further confirmed through DNA tests.

Kwalik's name was first heard around the world for his involvement in the 1996 kidnapping of 12 scientists - four Indonesians, four Britons, two Germans and two Dutch. Two of the Indonesians were later killed in a military rescue raid.

Kwalik was also implicated in the shooting of two American teachers in an attack on Freeport mine vehicles in 2002.

Indonesian police have also accused his supporters of involvement in a string of ambushes which killed the Australian technician Drew Grant in July. Kelly Kwalik had denied this.

The OPM, which is seeking independence for Papua, has been waging a low-level insurgency in Papua since 1965.

Kwalik was recently heard rejecting allegations that his forces were involved in a series of ambushes on Freeport mine workers this year.