

A human rights group has asked Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to launch talks with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in response to “fresh evidence that the suppression of civil, political and human rights in West Papua continues with full Indonesian government support.”

**'Indonesia says it does not govern West Papua through violence and repression. This is a lie.'**

**Richard Rumbiak,  
Australia West Papua Association**

The Australia West Papua Association statement came after British-based human rights watchdog TAPOL released a report on 11 West Papuans — known as the Manokwari 11 — who were detained in March 2008 on charges of subversion and sentenced to between three and three and a half years in prison by the Jayapura High Court.

Richard Rumbiak, the association’s spokesperson, said in a statement released on Monday that the decision was “a clear case of state-sanctioned political persecution against human rights defenders.

“Indonesia claims to respect and protect human rights. This is clearly not true,” he said.

“Indonesia says it does not govern West Papua through violence and repression. The case of the Manokwari 11 shows that this is also a lie.”

“I fear for the safety of these innocent people in an Indonesian prison system famous for their use of torture and abuse against political inmates. They are not criminals,” he said.

Like several human rights nongovernmental organizations, the association uses West Papua to refer to both the Papua and West Papua provinces of Indonesia.

The West Papua community in Melbourne, Australia, is expected to hold a rally today outside the Indonesian Consulate to demand the release of political prisoners held in Papua.

Teuku Faizasyah, a spokesman for the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, did not respond to phone calls or text messages from the Jakarta Globe.

The Jayapura High Court sentenced 10 Papuan activists to three years in prison and Jack Wanggai, the spokesperson of the West Papua National Authority, to three and a half years in prison for subversion.

According to the panel of judges, the activists posed a threat to the integrity of Indonesia by seeking the separation of West Papua.

The judges said stern legal action was needed to stop such activities in the future. The jail terms were much higher than those issued by a lower court, which had sentenced them to eight months in prison.