

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Baroness Catherine Ashton,

Brussels, 26 March 2014

We are writing you to bring to your attention the pressing human rights situation in West-Papua, as a follow up to a parliamentary hearing on West Papua on 23 January 2014 and the vote by the European Parliament on 26 February 2014 on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of Indonesia and the European Union.

West Papua has been subject to a heavy military presence since Indonesia took administrative control of the region in 1963 and became part of the Republic of Indonesia in 1969. Different estimations from civil society organisations and churches allege that tens of thousands of indigenous Papuans were killed during military operations between the 1960s and 1980s. While these mass crimes have not been acknowledged by Indonesia, its government has sought to introduce reforms in West Papua since 1998. The military and police have been separated and West Papua has been granted the Special Autonomy Law in 2001. However, the reforms have not resulted in the accountability of the security forces for human rights violations.

Human rights organisations and churches continue to report extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrests, restrictions on freedom of expression and serious shortcomings in access for indigenous Papuans to the health and education sector. By the end of January 2014 the Papuans Behind Bars project reported at least 74 political prisoners in Papuan jails. The International Coalition for Papua had reported 25 activists and civilians being extra-judicially killed between October 2011 and March 2013. Peaceful expression of political dissent or independence aspirations is regularly being persecuted, activists arrested, demonstrations

dispersed and activists sentenced to up to 20 years imprisonment.

In this climate of conflict and human rights violations, we are concerned that the UN observers, international humanitarian and human rights organisations and independent journalists are regularly denied access or face serious restrictions to enter or to work in West Papua. Furthermore, local NGOs continue to report violence by the Indonesian army against civilians in West Papua. Whilst EU Member States sell arms to Indonesia, it is impossible to monitor whether they are used against civilians due to the restrictions on access to the region.

The Special Autonomy Law has been violated on several occasions. Other initiatives from Jakarta such as the Unit for the Acceleration of Development in the Papuan provinces (UP4B) and the planned new Autonomy Plus lack participatory elements for indigenous Indonesians. As a result current approaches from Jakarta towards the situation in West Papua address merely economic issues. While considerable funds have been made available for the construction of health care and education, the facilities are not fully functional.

Peace activists in West Papua and in Jakarta have been calling for a peaceful and neutrally mediated dialogue between West Papua and Jakarta. Even though Indonesian President Yudhoyono has on several occasions declared his support for a dialogue, the process is stalling.

In light of the above, we ask you to:

1. Encourage the Indonesian authorities to actively enter into dialogue with West Papuans as a measure of peaceful conflict resolution as demanded by peace activists in Papua and Jakarta;
2. Call for an opening up of the isolated conflict region to provide access to independent observers including EU observers and UN human rights mechanisms and to protect local media freedom in Papua;
3. Call on Indonesia to release all political prisoners and end the practice of charging persons engaged in peaceful political activities with criminal offences such as treason under Article 106 of the Indonesian Penal Code;
4. Support reforms in Indonesia that will ensure that security forces personnel responsible for human rights violations can be held accountable in independent courts for their acts against civilians, for example through the reform of the military court system and the outlawing torture according to UN norms;

5. Ensure that arms delivered by the EU member states to Indonesia are not used against the civilians.

Yours sincerely,

Members of the European Parliament,

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