

July 2023 Update: Human Rights and Conflict Developments in West Papuaⁱ, Indonesia - Covering Events from April 1 to June 30, 2023 (Q2)

Violations	2022 Q3	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2
Torture	7 victims in 2 cases	8 victims in 5 cases	4 victims in 3 cases	24 victims in 4 cases
Freedom of expression	15+ victims in 4 cases	200+ victims in 12 cases	14 victims in 2 cases	7 victims in 3 cases
Killings	7 victims in 4 cases	4 victims in 4 cases	17 victims in 6 cases	5 victims in 4 cases
Disappearances	-	-	-	2 victims in 1 case
Intimidation	1 victim in 1 case	1 victim in 1 case	1 victim in 1 case	1 victim in 2 cases
Criminalisation	-	3 victims in 1 case	-	7 victims in 3 cases
Ill-treatment	14 victims in 4 cases	63+ victims in 12 cases	46 victims in 8 cases	25 victims in 5 cases
Cultural rights	Hundreds of victims in 1 case	18+ victims in 2 cases	-	Dozens of victims in 1 case
Arbitrary detention	24 victims in 4 cases	196 victims in 15 cases	28 victims in 4 cases	100 victims in 6 cases
Right to information	-	1+ victims in 1 case	-	1 victim in 1 case
Freedom of assembly	13+ in 4 cases	130+ victims in 10 cases	-	Dozens of victims in 4 cases
TOTAL	More than 81 victims in 14 cases	More than 638 victims in 28 cases	More than 110 victims in 13 cases	More than 172 victims in 34 cases

Table 1: Violation and victim data per quarter. A "+" symbol following a number indicates a certain count (the number given) plus an additional, less precise count (e.g., dozens, several). Each column is an independent set, reflecting the possibility of multiple violations per victim or case. Totals represent unique counts per column, not aggregate sums.

Summary

Human Rights

The human rights statistics on West Papua throughout the reporting period indicate stagnation. The pattern of cases continues to be predominated by violations of Freedom of peaceful assembly and association, freedom of expression, torture, ill-treatments, and extra-judicial killings. While the number of victims may significantly vary between incidents, the number of cases shows few deviations. The pattern of enforced disappearance has re-emerged in the reporting period. This violation is closely linked to security raids in remote areas and can therefore be considered as an indicator of aggravating conflict violence.

The police and law enforcement institutions hold on to their strategy to limit the freedom of expression in West Papua, putting restrictions on the freedom of peaceful assembly and media freedom. Human rights defenders and political activists are subjected to criminalisation and intimidation. Prosecutors use vague legal charges such as Article 106 of the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP) in treason and Article 110 KUHP on criminal conspiracy against the state to silence critics. Arrests or harassment by members of the police are often accompanied by acts of ill-treatment and torture against suspects.

Prominent examples of criminalisation against pro-Papua activists are the ongoing [trial against Haris Azhar and Fatiah Mulidyanti](#) in Jakarta, and the prosecution of the West Papua National Committee (KNPB) international spokesperson, Mr Victor Yeimo. He was charged with treason and criminal conspiracy. On 5 May 2023, judges at the Jayapura District Court sentenced Mr Yeimo to [eight months imprisonment](#) for violating Article 155 (1) of the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP) regarding the act of broadcasting, showing, or pasting writings or paintings in public that contain statements of

hostile feelings, hatred, or contempt for the Indonesian government. The high court overruled the verdict in early July arguing that Mr Yeimo was proven guilty of treasonous acts. His sentence was raised to one year. The KNPB is a movement organisation promoting the right to self-determination through peaceful action and remains one of the most frequently targeted organisations in the region.

Conflict

The aggravating conflict in West Papua continues to have a strong impact on the human rights situation in West Papua throughout the 2nd quarter of 2023. Security forces conducted raids to trace down members of the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB) in conflict-affected regencies. The raids in the regencies Yahukimo, Intan Jaya, Lanny Jaya, and Tambrauw were carried out without a warrant. The inhabitants were arbitrarily detained, and dozens were tortured.

The government keeps on deploying additional security force members to West Papua. According to national media sources, at least 4,500 additional security force personnel was deployed to West Papua during the reporting period. Human Rights Monitor (HRM) documented 25 armed attacks and clashes during the 2nd quarter of 2023, reportedly causing 24 fatalities among security forces and 3 civilians.

The Indonesian military appears to increase its presence in conflict areas. A significant part of the deployments was related to the kidnapping of New Zealand Pilot captain Philip Mark Mehrtens. A TPNPB group captured Mr Mehrtens in the Nduga Regency in early February 2023. As of early July 2023, the negotiations about Mr Mehrtens' release have not brought about progress. The [TPNPB has officially withdrawn a death threat against him dated 26 May 2023](#). However, the group stressed that they will only release Mehrtens under their terms. They demand the withdrawal of troops from Nduga and diplomatic talks with the New Zealand Government under the facilitation of a neutral state party or the United Nations.

HRM received a growing number of data showing military (TNI) members patrolling indigenous houses, visiting schools, and taking over medical responsibilities in remote health centres (Puskesmas & Pustu). This is part of the TNI's strategy to transform the image of the military among the local population in West Papua. Many indigenous Papuans look back on a history of human rights violations and fear the military.

International

International human rights observers highlighted the aggravating human rights situation in West Papua at the United Nations. On 5 May 2023, [five Special Procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council initiated a communication with the Indonesian government regarding cases of violence, including extrajudicial killings](#) in West Papua.

Cases

Torture & Ill-treatment

Military members torture dozens of indigenous Papuans in Lanny Jaya, among them four minors – One victim killed

Military members reportedly opened fire at a group of indigenous Papuans from the Yugur Village in the Nduga Regency on 6 April 2023. [Read more](#)





Video of police officers torturing three Papuan students in Sentani goes viral

A group of police officers allegedly beat three Papuan students in the town of Sentani, Jayapura Regency, on 5 May 2023. Two of the beatings were caught on camera. [Read more](#)

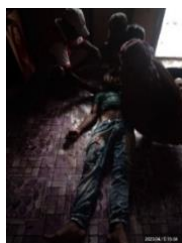
Papuan pastor in Sinak

Raider 303/SSM Sinak military command members reportedly opened fire at Rev Paniur Tabuni (40 years) and his three children while hunting in the Sinak District, Puncak Regency, Papua Tengah Province, on 5 May 2023. [Read more](#)

Military members shoot down



Unlawful killings & enforced disappearances



Security force member executes Papuan man with mental disorder in Jayawijaya Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province

A security force member allegedly shot dead Mr Stefanus Wilil while standing on the side of the road between Wamena and the Kurulu Village near the Mulima Village, Libarek District, on 10 April 2023. [Read more](#)

Suspect dies shortly after arrest at Bhayangkara police hospital in Jayapura – Relatives demand investigation into allegations of torture

The police suspect, Mr Delano Sayori (27 years), died at Bhayangkara Police Hospital in Jayapura City on 6 May 2023. Mr Sayori's relatives suspect that Mr Sayori died due to torture during the arrest and detention at the Papuan Regional Police Headquarters. [Read more](#)



Indonesia intensifies security operations in WP - In Sugapa, Intan Jaya raids come with killings

A widespread security operation was reportedly launched in Intan Jaya on 11 April 2023 in the districts Sugapa, Hitadipa and Agisiga. Indonesian military reportedly raided the villages Eknemba, Munimai, Danggoa, Mbamogo, Ndugusiga, Titigi, and Tousiga. Local observers claim that security forces set at least 29 residential houses and a church in the villages of Munimai and Danggoa on fire. [Read more](#)

Freedom of expression & Freedom of peaceful assembly and association

Police fail to protect Papuan students during peaceful protest in Bali - 13 protesters injured

Thirteen Papuan students have sustained bruises and injuries (see table and photos below, source: AMP) after being attacked by Garuda Nusantara Patriots (PGN) members during a peaceful assembly on 1 April 2023 in the city of Denpasar, Bali Province. According to AMP members, several plain-

cloth police officers present did not take action to disperse the crowd or protect the Papuan students during the attack. [Read more](#)

Police officer prevents Papuan journalist from covering trial in Nabire

On 3 April 2023, Mr Elias Douw, an indigenous Papuan journalist working for the local media outlets Tabloid Daerah and Wagadei online media, was reportedly prevented by police officers from covering a trial District Court in the town of Nabire, Papua Tengah Province. [Read more](#)



Police arbitrarily detain 17 Papuan activists in Tambrauw Regency, Papua Barat Daya Province – Three remain in custody

Members of the Tambrauw District Police arbitrarily arrested and detained 19 members of the West Papua National Committee (KNPB) in the Village of Sarwom,

Bamusbama District, on 9 June 2023. [Read more](#)

Police disperse peaceful assembly and arrest 54 protesters demanding justice for Victor Yeimo

Activists have been closely following the trial and repeatedly launched peaceful actions in support of Victor Yeimo in front of the district court in the city of Jayapura (PN Jayapura). Police officers arbitrarily arrested 54 members of the West Papua National Committee (KNPB) and supporters in the city of Jayapura and the neighbouring town of Sentani, Jayapura District, between 8 and 11 April 2023. [Read more](#)

Criminalisation & intimidation



Three students tried under treason charges for launching peaceful assembly inside Jayapura University

In late March and April 2023 early, the Jayapura District Court launched two trials against the Papuan students, Mr Devio Tekege, Yoseph Ernesto Matuan, and Mr Ambros Fransiskus Elopere. [The defendants were arrested and charged with treason and criminal conspiracy against the state after raising a Morning Star Flag at the Jayapura University of Science and](#)

[Technology \(USTJ\) campus on 10 November 2022](#). The trial is ongoing. [Read more](#)

Criminalisation of human rights defenders in West Papua continues - Sorong police chief presses legal charges against Papuan lawyer Leonardo Ijie

The Papuan Law Enforcement and Human Rights Coalition has called on the Sorong Police Chief to halt the legal process against human rights advocate Mr Leo Ijie. They understand this prosecution as an attempt to criminalise him for his professional work as a lawyer. [Read more](#)





Police officers intimidate female Papuan human rights defender in Jayapura

Police members followed and allegedly intimidated Papuan woman activist and human rights defender, Mrs Raga Kogeya, in Jayapura City, on 3 and 5 June 2023. [Read more](#)

Three Papuans found guilty of treason and sentenced to two years

Judges at the Makassar District Court in Manokwari found three Papuan defendants guilty of treason and criminal conspiracy against the state as stipulated under Article 106 of the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP) and Article 110 KUHP. Mr Kostan Karlos Bonay (85 years), Mr Andreas Sanggenafa (65 years), and Mr Hellesvred Bezalle Soleman Waropen (55 years) were sentenced to two years imprisonment each. [Read more](#)



Three Papuans sentenced for treason – Amnesty International calls for immediate release of defendants

On 14 June 2023, judges at the Sorong District Court found the defendants, Mr Elias Wetipo, Mr Marthen Samonsabra Oiware, and Mr. Yoran Pahabol, guilty of treasonous acts. They were sentenced to prison for delivering peaceful speeches and displaying banners with the Morning Star symbol at the airport in Sorong on 13 September 2022. [Read more](#)

Other violations

Military member alleged of raping woman in Nabire

The Telenta Keadilan Papua Legal Aid Institute (LBH TKP) has documented a case involving the alleged rape of Mrs L. by an Indonesian soldier in Nabire Regency, Papua Tengah Province. The alleged rape occurred on 11 May 2023. [Read more](#)

Police officers enter residential houses and arrest 21 indigenous Papuans in Dekai without a warrant

Joint security force members of the Damai Cartenz task force searched houses and arbitrarily arrested 21 Papuans in the town of Dekai, Yahukimo Regency, on 16 May 2023. [Read more](#)



Military secure land clearing for establishment of Papua Pegunungan Governor’s Office

On 27 May 2023, excavators cleared a vast area of customary land secured by dozens of armed military members and Police mobile brigade (Brimob) special unit officers. [Read more](#)

Police officers destroy house in Dekai and arrest two Papuans without warrant

Members of the Police Mobile Brigade Special Unit (Brimob) reportedly raided a residential house in the Eselon IV housing area in the Dekai District, Yahukimo Regency, on 31 May 2023 around 3.30 am. [Read more](#)



IDP Update, June 2023: Armed clashes and security raids cause new internal displacements in regencies Nduga, Intan Jaya and Kepulauan Yapen

Ongoing armed clashes between Indonesian security forces and the West Papua National Liberation Army have caused the number of internally displaced persons to rise while at the same time preventing them from safely returning to their homes. [Read more](#)

About Human Rights Monitor

The Human Rights Monitor (HRM) is an independent, international non-profit project promoting human rights through documentation and advocacy. HRM is based in the European Union and active since 2022. We are achieving our vision by documenting violations; researching institutional, social and political contexts that affect rights protection and peace; and sharing the conclusions of evidence-based monitoring work.

Our team members are based in and outside the European Union. Locally, in the contexts we monitor, we are collaborating closely with civil society organisations, churches, lawyers, human rights defenders, and journalists to verify information. Internationally, we partner with organisations such as the World Council of Churches on individual conflict and human rights situations. HRM works with international human rights mechanisms such as the United Nations Human Rights Council for the promotion of rights.

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ⁱ The term West Papua, also sometimes referred to as Papua, Tanah Papua (Land of Papua) or Western New Guinea refers to the western half of the New Guinea islands and is recognized by the United Nations as part of Indonesia since 1969. It is comprised of the Indonesian administrative provinces Papua Province, Papua Barat Province, Papua Tengah Province, Papua Pegunungan Province, Papua Selatan Province, and Papua Barat Daya Province. The unresolved [conflict about the political status of West Papua](#) continues to cause violence and violations of human rights and indigenous people's rights.