

The Papua Monitor: Q3/2023



October 2023 Update: Human Rights and Conflict Developments in West Papua, Indonesia - Covering Events from 1 July to 30 September 2023 (3rd quarter 2023) ()

Violations	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3
Torture	8 victims in 5 cases	4 victims in 3 cases	25 victims in 5 cases	16 victims in 3 cases
Freedom of expression	200+ victims in 12 cases	14 victims in 2 cases	7 victims in 3 cases	6 victims in 4 cases
Killings	4 victims in 4 cases	17 victims in 6 cases	5 victims in 4 cases	17 victims in 6 cases
Disappearances	-	-	2 victims in 1 case	-
Intimidation	1 victim in 1 case	1 victim in 1 case	1 victim in 2 cases	4 victims in 2 cases
Criminalisation	3 victims in 1 case	-	7 victims in 3 cases	2 victims in 1 case
Ill-treatment	63+ victims in 12 cases	46 victims in 8 cases	25 victims in 5 cases	24 victims in 4 cases
Cultural rights	18+ victims in 2 cases	-	Dozens of victims in 1 case	-
Arbitrary detention	196 victims in 15 cases	28 victims in 4 cases	100 victims in 6 cases	75+ victims in 11 cases
Right to information	1+ victims in 1 case	-	1 victim in 1 case	-
Freedom of assembly	130+ victims in 10 cases	-	Dozens of victims in 4 cases	43 victims in 2 cases
TOTAL	More than 638 victims in 28 cases	More than 110 victims in 13 cases	More than 173 victims in 35 cases	More than 187 victims in 33 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

Human rights statistics indicate a stagnation of the human rights situation in West Papua. The pattern of violations continues to differ from other parts of the country strongly. Particularly, the figures on unlawful killings, arbitrary arrests, and criminalisation are significantly higher than in any other part of the country. This deviation is closely related to the armed conflict and the heavy security force presence in West Papua. Meanwhile, [human rights defenders keep criticising the National Human Rights Commission](#) (Komnas HAM) for a lack of responsiveness to investigating allegations of human rights violations in the Papuan provinces.

The criminalisation of human rights defenders and political activists in West Papua remains rampant. The West Papua National Committee (KNPB), a civil resistance movement promoting the right to self-determination through non-violent action, remains among the most persecuted. Many Papuan activists have been convicted of treason and sentenced to imprisonment despite the lack of supporting evidence in court. The pattern is, on the one hand, caused by the police and public prosecutors and, on the other hand, affirmed by the judges. The [prosecution of Papuan activist Mr](#)

[Victor Yeimo](#) and [three University students in Jayapura](#) illustrates persistent deficiencies in the justice system.

The widespread impunity is another reason for the devastating human rights situation in West Papua. [Recent military tribunals](#) related to the enforced disappearance and two cases of extra-judicial executions of indigenous Papuans in the regencies [Intan Jaya](#) and [Mimika](#) illustrate the pressing issue of accountability and impunity in West Papua. The failure to detain defendants and the leniency of sentences in cases of violence against civilians perpetuate a climate of impunity. The recent [sentencing of five police officers in a public trial](#) in Manokwari and two military members in a [military tribunal in Manado](#) in July 2023 remain exceptional and positive examples of law enforcement against perpetrators of human rights violations in Indonesia. [Corruption allegations against public prosecutors in Manokwari additionally highlight](#) the shortcomings of the Indonesian justice system.

Conflict

The armed conflict in West Papua continues to substantially impact the human rights situation in West Papua throughout the 3rd quarter of 2023, particularly concerning cases of unlawful killings, torture, ill-treatment, arbitrary arrest, and the criminalisation of activist and human rights defenders. Security forces continue to trace down members of the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB) in conflict-affected regencies. The raids in the regencies Yahukimo, Puncak, Nduga, and Fakfak were conducted with utmost brutality, involving acts of torture and arbitrary arrests.

Residents were arbitrarily detained, and dozens were tortured. HRM documented 38 armed attacks and clashes during the 3rd quarter of 2023, reportedly causing twelve fatalities among security forces, twelve among TPNPB fighters, and twenty civilian casualties. Statistics on armed clashes and the number of fatalities among combatants and civilians indicate a further aggravation of the conflict.

The humanitarian crisis in West Papua continues to exacerbate. Armed clashes and security force operations have caused the internal displacement of more than a thousand additional people in the regencies Fakfak, Yahukimo, and Pegunungan Bintang in August and September 2023. According to data compiled by human rights defenders in various regencies across West Papua, [a total of 76,228 people, most of them indigenous Papuans, remain internally displaced because of the armed conflict as of September 2023](#).

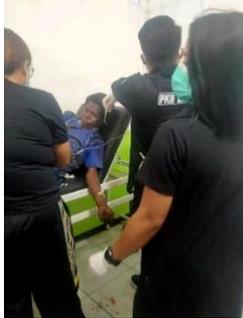
International

On 4 July 2023, the UN Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, [in her opening remarks during the 22nd Meeting](#) of the 53rd Regular Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland, expressed concerns regarding the human rights situation in the easternmost provinces in Indonesia. [She highlighted the harassment, arbitrary arrest, and detention of Papuans](#), which had led to the appropriation of customary land in West Papua. She encouraged the Indonesian Government to ensure humanitarian assistance and engage in “a genuine inclusive dialogue”.

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor of the United States Department of State published a [new report on the human rights situation in Indonesia throughout 2022](#). The report emphasises credible accounts of serious human rights abuses in the Papua provinces.

Cases

Torture & Ill-treatment



Indigenous woman injured by bullets during armed clash in Intan Jaya

An indigenous woman, Mrs Dilagalu Hagsimijau, was injured by bullets during an armed clash between security forces and members of the West Papua National Liberation Army in the Sugapa District, on 4 July 2023.

[Read more](#)

Five police officers torture and rob suspect in Manokwari – Case submitted to prosecutor

On the night of 8 April 2023, five police members tortured Mr Ahmad Widodo in the town of Manokwari, Papua Barat Province. The [five officers were found guilty during a public trial, and sentenced to six months](#) in prison.

[Read more](#)



Security forces alleged of arbitrarily arresting residents and burning houses in Dekai, Yahukimo



Joint security forces reportedly raided residential houses near the Kali Bonto Estuary in the district of Dekai, Yahukimo Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province, on 21 August 2023. Reports reveal acts of arbitrary arrests, torture, burning of houses, and killing of livestock during the raid on 21 August

2023. Dozens of people fled their homes to avoid arbitrary arrest. Those detained described being beaten, tied up, and tortured without understanding the reasons behind their arrests.

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Security forces shoot Papuan minor during raid in Nduga Regency

Shootings and arbitrary arrests of villagers reportedly accompanied raids in the Krepkuri District in Nduga. Fifteen-year-old Arigoba Kogoya was allegedly shot by security force members in the Village of Alguru, Krepkuri District, Nduga Regency, on 1 September 2023.

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Police officers raid residential house and Tabernacle Church office in Nduga – Six persons arbitrarily arrested, twelve tortured



Members of the Nduga District Police and the Damai Cartenz Police Task Force raided a residential house and the local head office of the Papuan Tabernacle Church (Kingmi Papua) in the town of [Kenyam](#), Nduga Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province, on 17.09.2023. The officers tortured twelve persons, among them three pastors.

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Unlawful killings and enforced disappearances



Police shooting triggers civil unrest in Dogiyai – Three Papuans killed, six others injured with bullets

A series of unlawful shootings and outbreaks of horizontal violence unfolded in the Dogiyai Regency, Papua Tengah Province, on 13 July 2023. The events occurred shortly after Damai Cartenz Special Police Unit members shot dead Mr Yosua Keiya, 20. The arbitrary execution triggered further violence and civil unrest in the towns of [Moanemani](#) and [Ekemanida](#), Kamu District. Joint security forces reportedly shot dead Mr Yakobus Pekei, 21, and Mr Stepanus Pigome, 19, in [Moanemani](#).

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Military member alleged of beating Papuan man to death in Timika

A military member allegedly killed twenty-six-year-old Mr Markus Kamisopa outside the town of Timika, Papua Tengah Province, on 2 August 2023. The fatal beating was reportedly triggered after a resident resented the victim for playing music loudly and called a TNI member to intervene.



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Joint security forces allegedly burned houses and killed three Papuans during raids in Puncak Regency



Human rights observers have expressed concerns regarding a series of security force raids in the Gome District, Puncak Regency, on 15 August 2023 in response to armed clashes re-erupting in the Ilaga District on 12 August 2023. Security force personnel allegedly killed three indigenous Papuan men: 21-year-old Meton Magay, 20-year-old Mr Derminus Waker, and 32-year-old Mr. Wanimbo.

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Joint security forces kill five indigenous Papuans in Fakfak – Human rights organisations demand independent investigation

Joint security force members carried out raids in the [Kramongmongga District, Fakfak Regency, Papua Barat Province](#). Security force personnel killed five suspects during two separate raids on 31 August and 9 September 2023. Twelve other villagers, including women and children, were reportedly arrested in different locations.



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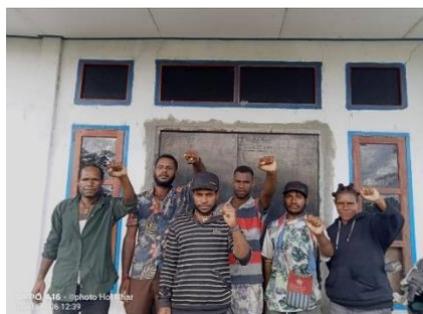


Five Papuans found dead after armed clashes in Yahukimo

On 15 September 2023, police officers found the bodies of five Papuans near the Brazza River estuary in the [Dekai District, Yahukimo Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province](#), one day after a shootout between Indonesian military members and the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB).

[Read more](#)

Freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly and association



Yahukimo Police arrest six KNPB activists in Dekai without warrant

Members of the Yahukimo District police arbitrarily arrested six activists belonging to the West Papua National Committee (KNPB) in the town of Dekai, Yahukimo Regency, on 6 July 2023.

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Police officers arrest ULMWP activist in Sorong

On 5 July 2023, four armed plainclothes police officers forcefully arrested 52-year-old ULMWP activist Mr Viktor Makamuke and detained him at the Sorong Selatan District Police Station.



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Police intimidate journalist while covering destruction of mangrove forest in Jayapura



Police officers reportedly intimidated Mr Abdel Gamel Naser while reporting on the destruction of mangrove forests in the Youtefa Bay conservation area in Jayapura, Papua Province, on 11 July 2023. He works for the Papuan media newspaper Cenderawasih Post.

[Read more](#)

Series of arrests of KNPB members in Jayapura and Yahukimo – 37 activists arrested, 16 tortured

At least 37 supporters of the West Papua National Committee (KNPB) were reportedly arrested and 16 tortured in relation to peaceful demonstrations to commemorate the 1962 New York Agreement in the towns Sentani, Jayapura Regency, and Dekai, Yahukimo Regency, on 14 and 15 August 2023. In Sentani, 16 KNPB activists were arrested while distributing leaflets for the rally.



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Papuan journalist's coverage of Minister's visit to Dogiyai blocked by police



The work of Mr Aleks Waine, a Papuan journalist who is also the coordinator of the Dogiyai Journalists Association (AWD), to cover the working visit of the Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Culture (Menko PMK) in Dogiyai district, Central Papua Province, on 20 July 2023 was blocked by members of the Dogiyai Regional Police.

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Papuan students in Mataram face intimidation and racial discrimination at Mataram University

Three Papuan students reportedly faced intimidation and racial discrimination during the Judicium event at the university in Mataram, Nusa Tenggara Barat Province, on 1 August 2023. Campus security guards and intelligence members reportedly monitored the students and forced them to pack away a poster and bracelets with the Morning Star symbol.



[Read more](#)

Criminalisation & intimidation



Four Papuan activists arrested in Jayapura Regency – Police press charges against two KNPB leaders

More than seventy police officers detained Mr Agus Kossay, Chairman of the West Papua National Coalition (KNPB), Mr Benny Murip, KNPB Secretary in Jayapura, Mr Ruben Wakla, member of the KNPB in the Yahukimo Regency, and Mr Ferry Yelipele on 2 September 2023.

[Read more](#)

Other violations

Police arrest Asom Giban at Sinakma Market without warrant

Four officers reportedly arrested Mr Asom Giban, while walking with his daughter at the Sinakma Market, Jayawijaya Regency, on 12 July 2023.

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Administrative court rejects palm oil company's lawsuit, Awyu tribe's forest restored



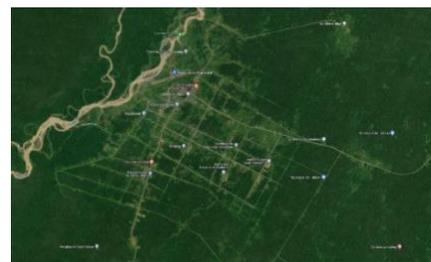
On 5 September 2023, the Jakarta State Administrative Court (PTUN) rejected a lawsuit filed by two palm oil companies against the Indonesian Minister of Environment and Forestry, Mrs Siti Nurbaya Bakar. The verdict has significant implications for the rights of indigenous peoples and the principle of free prior informed consent (FPIC).

[Read more](#)

Police officers arrest six Papuan youths in Yahukimo Regency without warrant

On 13 September 2023, Police Mobile Brigade (Brimob) officers arbitrarily arrested Mr Yulex Sobolim, Mr Erik Sobolim, Mr Denias Sobolim, Mr Tony Mohy, Mr Yeros Sobolim, and Mr Kary Sobolim in the town of [Dekaj](#), Yahukimo Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province.

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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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¹ 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.