

The Papua Monitor: Q1/2024



April 2024 Update: Human Rights and Conflict Developments in West Papua¹, Indonesia -
Covering Events from 1 January to 31 March 2024 (1st quarter 2024)

Violations	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1
Torture	23 victims in 4 cases	16 victims in 3 cases	6 victims in 3 cases	10 victims in 4 cases
Freedom of expression	4 victims in 2 cases	6 victims and more in 4 cases	Dozens of victims in 2 cases	3 victims in 3 cases
Killings	7 victims in 4 cases	17 victims in 6 cases	1 victim in 1 case	6 victims in 5 cases
Disappearances	2 victims in 1 case	-	1 victim in 1 case	-
Intimidation	1 victim in 2 cases	4 victims in 2 cases	Dozens of victims in 1 case	Dozens of victims in four cases
Criminalisation	7 victims in 3 cases	2 victims in 1 case	-	-
Ill-treatment	28 victims in 6 cases	24 victims in 4 cases	More than 13 victims in 8 cases	10 victims in 6 cases
Cultural rights	-	-	Dozens of victims in 1 case	-
Arbitrary detention	100 victims in 6 cases	More than 85 victims in 11 cases	86 victims in 8 cases	5 victims in 4 cases
Right to information	1 victim in 1 case	-	-	-
Freedom of assembly	93 victims in 4 cases	43 victims in 2 cases	More than 21 victims in 7 cases	Dozens of victims in 2 cases
TOTAL	155 victims in 17 cases	More than 139 victims in 21 cases	More than 102 victims in 20 cases	More than 70 victims in 19 cases

Table 1: Violation and victim data per quarter. 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 situation in West Papua during the 1st Quarter of 2024 was overshadowed by the release of [two videos showing a Papuan man being tortured in the Puncak Regency on 3 February 2023](#). These videos sparked public outrage and raised questions about military operations in West Papua. It is evident that a significant number of human rights violations, particularly killings and torture, occur during these raids.

The trend of documented cases throughout the 1st Quarter of 2024 continues to show these violations. They have become common as Indonesian security has increased its presence in conflict areas and escalated operations against the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB). Reports of such operations came from the regencies [Puncak](#), [Yahukimo](#), and [Intan Jaya](#) between January and March 2024. [Raids in Nduga](#) at the end of March and early April 2024 reportedly involved air raids, possibly part of a larger military effort

to free a [pilot who had been held hostage by a TPNPB group](#) since February 2023. [There was a glimmer of hope when the TPNPB announced the pilot's release](#), but the New Zealand pilot Philip Mehrtens remained in TPNPB custody.

On 8 January 2024, [judges at the Jakarta Timur District Court ruled that Indonesian human rights defenders Fatia Maulidyanti and Haris Azhar were acquitted](#) of defamation charges in the trial against the incumbent Minister for Investment and Maritime Affairs, Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan. The decision caused celebrations and public appreciation in West Papua. The verdict represents a significant victory for human rights defenders and activists in Indonesia.

However, the struggle against the criminalisation of activists in Indonesia persists. On 1 February 2024, the Jayapura District Court ruled on the case of West Papua National Committee (KNPB) Chairman, [Mr Agus Kosay, and KNPB Numbay Secretary, Mr Beni Murib, finding them guilty of incitement and the persecution](#) of Mr Ones Kobak on 18 August 2023. Mr Kosay received a sentence of 1 year in prison, while Mr Murib was sentenced to 10 months.

Another legal setback occurred in the trial of two military members responsible for the killing of Mr Eden Babari and Mr Ronny Wandik in the Mimika Regency on 13 April 2020. A [Supreme Court verdict overruled the Military Court III-17 Manado court verdict against two of the perpetrators](#), highlighting the issue of impunity in West Papua. Lieutenant Inf Gabriel Bowie Wijaya's sentence was reduced from seven to two years while Private Sugi Harnoto's sentence was reduced from six years to 1,5 years. In a second court process against the two other perpetrators in Denpasar, the Military Oditur III-13 Denpasar prosecutor withdrew the appeal against the ruling, which had acquitted both defendants of all charges.

Legal concerns also apply to cases of land conflict involving indigenous communities. The [Tenure Coalition revealed that indigenous communities have lost 8.5 million hectares of land](#). According to records from the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN), this land was seized between 2017 and 2022. The Awyu tribe in South Papua Province is claiming their land rights against a palm oil permit on their indigenous land in the Boven Digoel Regency at court. The [Awyu filed a cassation against the Manado Administrative High Court's decision to the Indonesian Supreme Court](#). On 1 March 2024, the Manado Court rejected the Awyu people's appeal regarding the environmental feasibility permit issued to the palm oil company PT Indo Asiana Lestari PT (IAL).

In early February 2024, heavy [rain caused landslides in the regencies Intan Jaya and Puncak Jaya](#), Papua Tengah Province, destroying residential houses, livestock, and gardens. The flash flood in Gurage District, Puncak Jaya Regency, on 3 February 2024, destroyed one bridge and severed road access between Kalome-Tinggi Nambut District and Mulia Town. Additionally, landslides in Wandoga and Yokatapa Villages, Sugapa District, and Intan Jaya Regency on 6 February 2024 washed away gardens and livestock, leaving residents devastated and displaced.

Conflict

As of [April 2024, an estimated minimum of 76,919 people in West Papua, mostly indigenous Papuans, remain internally displaced](#) due to the armed conflict in the region. While some two to three thousand people in the Maybrat Regency have reportedly returned home, new internal displacements have occurred in response to the assassination of a military member in the Paniai Regency on 11 April 2024. The [local](#)

[government facilitated a meeting between IDPs from Maybrat on 11 January 2024](#), which appeared to have the primary purpose of relocating the IDPs before the election on 11 February 2024 instead of finding a sustainable solution to the IDP crisis.

Human Rights Monitor documented 34 armed attacks and clashes between TPNPB and Indonesian security forces between 1 January and 31 March 2024, resulting in 14 security force members killed and seven injured. Four TPNPB members were killed and three wounded during the same period. Six civilians were killed and ten injured during shootings, raids, and arbitrary acts of violence against individuals by either party. The most armed clashes and attacks throughout the reporting period occurred in the Intan Jaya regency, with 13 reported armed clashes. The Indonesian military launched a [more extensive military operation in the Nduga Regency between late March and early April 2024](#), reportedly involving air raids by combat aircraft, drones, and helicopters.

Political developments

Indonesia conducted its national elections in February 2024. The elections proceeded peacefully, with only a few isolated incidents of violence between supporters. In West Papua, many observers expressed concerns regarding the underrepresentation of indigenous Papuans running for legislative candidacy. This underrepresentation has already become a reality in many local Papuan parliaments, such as in the regencies Sorong, Merauke, and Jayapura - to list only a few examples.

Prabowo Subianto was formally confirmed as Indonesia's next president in late March 2024. Defence Minister Prabowo and his vice presidential running mate, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, won with a majority of 59% of votes. The change of government under Prabowo is predicted to have negative implications for the general human rights situation in the country, particularly in the context of the armed conflict in West Papua. During the campaigning process, Prabowo restated that the Government should hold on to a security-based approach in West Papua instead of seeking peaceful solutions to the conflict.

Prabowo Subianto is a former member of the Indonesian special forces. He was involved in military operations that were accompanied by human rights violations and atrocities against civilians in West Papua and East Timor. Prabowo will be inaugurated as president in the new capital, Nusantara, on 17 August 2024.

International

On 8 February 2024, [the Global Legal Action Network \(GLAN\), with co-claimant the London Mining Network, filed a lawsuit](#) against the London Metal Exchange (LME or Exchange) at the UK High Court. The organisations argue that the Exchange breaches UK anti-money laundering and proceeds of crime legislation by enabling the global sale of 'dirty metals'.

The [Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights \(CESCR\) of the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights completed its review](#) of the report submitted by the government of Indonesia and adopted its concluding observations on 1 March 2024. In the [concluding observations](#), the Committee addressed human rights grievances in various fields. The urgent issue of armed conflict-driven internal displacements in the Papuan Provinces was mainly addressed in the section on the [rights to physical and mental health](#).

The UN Human Rights Committee reviewed Indonesia's report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) at Palais Wilson, Geneva, on 11-12 March 2024. During the review, the HRC questioned the President's neutrality in the election process, alluding to the decision of the Constitutional Court (MK) regarding changes to the age requirements for presidential candidates (presidential candidates) and vice presidential candidates (vice presidential candidates), which were changed at the "last minute" of registration of presidential and vice presidential candidates.

The [concluding observations on Indonesia's second periodic report](#), adopted on 28 March 2024, addressed human rights grievances in West Papua in the fields of [Impunity and accountability for past human rights violations](#), [Torture, and other forms of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment](#), [Participation in public affairs](#), and [Rights of minority groups and Indigenous peoples](#).

Cases

Unlawful killings

Military member kills Papuan man in Namblong, Jayapura – 958 non-Papuan residents evacuated in fear of ethnic violence



during the same incident.

A military member reportedly killed Mr Daud Bano, 35, in the Karya Bumi Besum Village, Namblong District, in the Jayapura Regency on 1 January 2024. Mr Yehuda Bano, 34, who accompanied Mr Bano as the incident occurred, sustained injuries after being beaten by the perpetrator

[Read more](#)

Security forces kill two Papuans and injure indigenous women during raids in Intan Jaya - about 4,400 residents displaced

A series of armed clashes in Sugapa District, Intan Jaya Regency, between 19 and 24 January 2024, resulted in two Papuan men killed and one Papuan woman injured by joint security forces.



[Read more](#)



Papuan minor shot dead during armed clash in Intan Jaya

On 1 March 2024, seventeen-year-old Papuan boy Nelson Sani was shot dead during an armed clash between the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB) and members of the Raider 330 military command in the Mamba Village, Sugapa District of Intan Jaya Regency.

[Read more](#)

Police officer kills his wife in Pegunungan Bintang Regency

Police officer Mr Roi Kopong, 38, reportedly killed his wife, Mrs Jein Urpon, 28, in the Kolomdol District, Pegunungan Bintang Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province on 5 March 2024.



[Read more](#)

Torture & Ill-treatment

Military members alleged of torturing four Papuan students after finding ammunition



On 1 February 2024, four students from Hitadipa were arrested and reportedly tortured during detention in the Sugapa District, Intan Jaya Regency. Military members had found ammunition in one of the students' bags.

[Read more](#)

Military members arrest two Papuans after armed clash in Yahukimo – One TPNPB member killed

Military members arbitrarily arrested Sem Baye and Beni Elopere while bathing in the Brazza River in Dekai District, Yahukimo Regency, on 22 February 2024. Photos taken during the arrest indicate that both minors were tortured. Lawyers who tried to meet the suspects during detention were obstructed from providing legal support to Sem and Beni.



[Read more about the case & obstruction of lawyers during detention](#)



Military members shot two Papuans during electoral activity in Mamba Village, Intan Jaya

On 28 February 2024, Yonif 330 members reportedly shot two indigenous Papuans, Selli Maiseni, 17, and Mr Mikalon Yoani, 26, in Titigi Village, Sugapa District, Intan Jaya Regency, Papua

[Read more](#)

Military members torture two Papuan men at Enarotali Market

On 29 February 2024, military members reportedly tortured Mr Marten Kudia, 30, and Mr Oktofianus Yogi, 31, at the Enarotali Central Market in the Paniai Regency, Papua Tengah Province.

[Read more](#)



Police officers alleged of torturing Papuan man in Timika during patrol

On 21 March 2024, police officers reportedly beat a Papuan man while purchasing cigarettes in a store in the town of Timika, Mimika Regency, Papua Tengah Province.

[Read more](#)

Security forces raid village Yenggernok - one Papuan pastor reportedly tortured

Security force members reportedly tortured a pastor named Rev Eriak Waker during a raid in the districts Omukia and Gome on 3 February 2024. The torture occurred during his interrogation in the Yenggernok Village.

[Read more](#)

Security forces raid villages in Omukia and Gome - three Papuans arrested and tortured, one died

Security force members arrested and subsequently tortured Mr Devius Kogoya, 20, Mr Andinus Murib, 21, and Mr Werinus Murib, 19, after being detained during raids in the districts Omukia and Gome on 3 February 2024. A video of the torture later went viral on social media and caused public outrage.

[Read more about the case & public reaction to torture video](#)



Arbitrary detention, intimidation, and criminalisation



Intimidation of Papuan Human Rights Defender in Nabire Town

On the evening of 27 January 2024, Papuan human rights defender, Mr Yones Douw observed unusual lights coming from a flying object above his house. He identified the device as a spy drone. It continued to hover over Mr Douw's house until approximately 12:10 am.

[Read more](#)

Police arbitrarily arrest Papuan boat operator in Timika

On 20 February 2024, plain cloth police officers reportedly arbitrarily arrested Mr Epsun Nirigi, 34, while working for the election commission at the Rafael Hotel in the town of Timika, Mimika District.



[Read more](#)



Police officers intimidate activists in Sorong

On 25 March 2024, police officers monitored a student discussion regarding the torture of three indigenous Papuans in the Puncak Regency. The participants perceived the police presence and the attempt to attend the discussion as an act of intimidation.

[Read more](#)

Police arrest Russian tourist taking photos in Enarotali

A Russian tourist, Mr Shmatov Ivan Aleksandrovich, was arbitrarily detained by Indonesian security forces in the town of Enarotali, Paniai Timur District, Papua Tengah Province, on 11 March 2024



[Read more](#)

Papuan activists receive threats after torture video goes viral

Mr Markus Haluk, the Executive Secretary of the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP), and political KNPB, Mr Ones Suhuniap, received threats shortly after a video of a torture scene recorded in the Puncak Regency in early February 2024 went viral on social media.

[Read more about threats against ULMWP secretary](#) & [threats against KNPB activist](#)



KNPB member arbitrarily detained in Timika

An arbitrary arrest occurred in the town of Timika, Mimika Regency, Papua Selatan Province, on 14 March 2024, as dozens of joint security forces raided the residence of a 50-year-old farmer and activist, Mr Effesus Hisage, in Timika, Mimika Regency. Mr Hisage was temporarily detained without a warrant and later released due to lack of evidence.

[Read more](#)

Freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly and association

Police prevent ULMWP Worship ceremony in Jayapura

On 7 February 2024, police officers intervened to disrupt a thanksgiving service and inauguration of the working structure of the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP) in Jayapura City, Papua Province. The authorities forcibly dismantled tents and prevented the event from proceeding as planned.

[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.

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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.