

# The Papua Monitor: Q2/2024



July 2024 Update: Human Rights and Conflict Developments in West Papua, Indonesia -  
Covering Events from 1 April to 30 June 2024 (2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2024)

Violations	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2
Torture	16 victims in 3 cases	6 victims in 3 cases	10 victims in 4 cases	2 victims in 2 cases
Freedom of expression	6 victims and more in 4 cases	Dozens of victims in 2 cases	3 victims in 3 cases	10 victims in 2 cases
Killings	17 victims in 6 cases	1 victim in 1 case	6 victims in 5 cases	3 victims in 3 cases
Disappearances	-	1 victim in 1 case	-	1 victim in 1 case
Intimidation	4 victims in 2 cases	Dozens of victims in 1 case	Dozens of victims in four cases	1 victim in 1 case
Criminalisation	2 victims in 1 case	-	-	1 victim in 1 case
Ill-treatment	24 victims in 4 cases	More than 13 victims in 8 cases	10 victims in 6 cases	34 victims in 7 cases
Cultural rights	-	Dozens of victims in 1 case	-	Dozens of victims in 4 cases
Arbitrary detention	More than 85 victims in 11 cases	86 victims in 8 cases	5 victims in 4 cases	93 victims in 7 cases
Right to health	-	Dozens of victims in 2 cases	-	-
Freedom of assembly	43 victims in 2 cases	More than 21 victims in 7 cases	Dozens of victims in 2 cases	More than 107 in 6 cases
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>More than 139 victims in 21 cases</b>	<b>More than 102 victims in 22 cases</b>	<b>More than 70 victims in 19 cases</b>	<b>More than 196 victims in 20 cases</b>

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, without a significant increase or decrease in cases of civil rights violations throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of 2024. However, Human Rights Monitor (HRM) received a growing number of cases of land grabbing from various regencies across West Papua. These cases exemplify private investors' scramble for land and resources in West Papua, who frequently bypass the process of obtaining Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) from the indigenous communities who own the land. Reports of this trend emerged from the Papuan regencies of [Merauke](#), [Mimika](#), [Deiyai](#), and [Sorong](#) between April and June 2024.

During the reporting period, all cases of extra-judicial killings and disappearances were linked to the ongoing armed conflict between the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB) and Indonesian security forces. This conflict is a major driver of human rights abuses. Victims were either civilians caught in the crossfire or individuals killed by security forces during operations.

West Papua continues to see restrictions on civil liberties. Police have broken up or blocked peaceful protests, preventing activists and journalists from speaking out about or reporting on injustices and calls for self-determination within and outside West Papua. Papuan student groups and solidarity movements often hold rallies in other parts of Indonesia to raise awareness about the human rights situation in the country's easternmost provinces. Police have been accused of mistreating and torturing protesters on several occasions, seemingly as punishment for their participation. The number of arbitrary detentions in recent quarters, as reflected in statistics, suggests a climate of fear among activists and human rights defenders.

Indonesia struggles to address impunity for human rights violations. Lack of transparency in internal investigations and light sentences for police and military personnel involved in abuses create a climate of impunity in West Papua. These practices make it difficult to hold perpetrators accountable. Civilian court proceedings against suspects remain exceedingly rare. [A recent case in the Nabire District Court involving a police officer accused of killing Mr Yulianus Tebai in January 2023](#) might be a step towards tackling impunity, though the officer's connection to the Civil Service Police Unit (Satpol Pamong Praja) might be a factor in bringing the case to court. It's unclear if the verdict will reflect the severity of the crime.

NGOs criticised the Indonesian National Army (TNI) for its lack of transparency in handling the [case against 13 soldiers accused of torturing three Papuan civilians in Puncak Regency](#). The [incident, which happened on 3 February 2024, resulted in the death of one civilian and left two others severely injured](#). Although the suspects were named on 25 March 2024, the Military Police Center (PUSPOM TNI) has not provided any updates on the investigation. This lack of transparency leaves the victims' families and the public in the dark concerning the identities of the suspects and the nature of the evidence gathered. This secrecy fuels significant concerns about a fair trial and raises fears that the perpetrators may evade proper punishment.

Military tribunals and disciplinary sanctions against police officers have failed to bring justice to the victims and their relatives. [On 16 June 2024, the family of Mr Moses Yewen, supported by local community members, initiated a blockade of the Satgas 623 post in Fef](#). This action was a response to the lack of transparency and unresolved legal proceedings concerning the death of Moses Yewen, who was allegedly beaten by two soldiers from the Yonif 762/VYS unit in 2021. The protest underscored the community's frustration with the military and judicial authorities for failing to provide clarity and justice.

## Conflict

As of early June 2024, [over 76,919 people remained internally displaced](#) due to the armed conflict in West Papua, with no humanitarian access. This number increased to more than 80,000 after more than [5,000 indigenous Papuans fled their homes following a raid by security forces in the Bibida District](#), Paniai Regency, on 14 June 2024. Updated figures show a total of 7,900 internally displaced persons (IDPs). In another development, [security forces helped around 1,200 IDPs](#) who were staying at the Salib Suci Parish in Madi to return to their villages.

HRM documented a surge in armed conflict in West Papua during the second quarter of 2024. There were 35 new clashes, raising the total to 69 by 30 June 2024. The period saw a rise in fatalities among the TPNPB. Two security force members were killed and five injured, while the TPNPB lost eight fighters and had one injured. This imbalance is linked to increased military presence in conflict areas. As in previous reports, civilians were the most affected, with six killed by the TPNPB and four by security forces.

Papuan communities struggle to prevent the central government from expanding military facilities near their homes. Residents fear being caught in the crossfire between security forces and the TPNPB as a result of this expansion. Additionally, communities living near military posts reportedly face constant monitoring and limitations on their movements. [On 25 May 2024, military members reportedly occupied the only functioning hospital in the Paniai Regency](#) for several days. Snipers on the top floor caused all patients to flee in panic. [Women in the Sugapa District, Intan Jaya Regency, called for the removal of military and police posts](#) due to the threat they pose to civilians caught in the crossfire. Likewise, the [Bibida District community is opposing the establishment of new military posts](#) following a security raid on 14 June 2024.

As of July 2024, there is no sign of rapprochement between the conflict parties. The Indonesian Government continues to hold on to a security-based approach, [with soldiers slowly taking over civilian responsibilities in the fields of healthcare and education in West Papua](#). The rise in military presence observed even beyond known conflict zones is alarming. The recent election of Prabowo Subianto as president adds another layer of uncertainty. Subianto's stance on West Papua has historically been aggressive, leading many to believe the situation could deteriorate under his leadership.

## Political developments

Recent political developments suggest Indonesia is gradually moving away from the spirit of reform that drove earlier governments to democratise the nation following the end of President Suharto's authoritarian New Order regime. The results of the February 2024 presidential election further support this observation.

The [Indonesian Parliament is considering revising Broadcasting Law No 32/2002](#), sparking concerns from academics, human rights activists, and media stakeholders. The Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) in Jakarta and NGOs have voiced their opposition, fearing the amendments could stifle freedom of expression and discriminate against minorities in Indonesia.

In light of current debates regarding the [revision of Law No 34/2004 on the military](#) (TNI), TNI Commander General Agus Subiyanto stated that [the TNI now has a multifunctional role rather than the dual function it had during the New Order era](#). This multifunctional role sees the military involved in various sectors, including health and education in West Papua. The statement raises concerns about the military's increasing influence in civilian affairs, potentially undermining democratic institutions and principles.

Recent developments related to the government's current agenda to revise the Police Law have caused concerns among Indonesia's civil society. On 28 May 2024, the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI) officially adopted the Third Amendment to Law No. 2 of 2002 on the Indonesian National Police or the Draft Law on Police. Civil society groups are concerned that the revisions expand police power without strengthening oversight or public control. They argue the revisions don't address existing weaknesses in police accountability.

A positive policy development regarding the legal recognition of customary land offers hope for customary communities in Indonesia. [Between 2022 and 2023, various indigenous groups in Papua have proposed the recognition of customary forests to the Ministry of Environment and Forestry \(MoEF\)](#). Nine clans from the Wambon Kenemopte Tribe in Boven Digoel Regency, South Papua, have submitted proposals. In a significant local development, the [Government of Sorong Selatan Regency has officially recognised the indigenous peoples and customary territories of four sub-tribes](#) in Konda District through a Regent Decree. The Awyu tribe continues to wait for a decision by the Supreme Court to protect 36,094 hectares of customary land from palm oil expansion. The Awyu have launched a [campaign](#) and [petition](#) to support their legal efforts with other forms of advocacy.

## International developments

The Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) expressed concern over the recent brutal torture inflicted on indigenous Melanesians in West Papua by Indonesian military members. Rev James Bhagwan, [PCC General Secretary called for Indonesia’s suspension or expulsion from the MSG if it refuses to facilitate a visit by the UN Human Rights Commission to West Papua](#).

The [Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal \(PPT\) held a session on State and environmental violence in West Papua in London, from 27 to 29 June](#). A panel of judges heard from the victims of human rights violations and questioned experts to investigate and assess the environmental impacts of development in West Papua and the human rights violations linked to those practices.

## Cases

### Unlawful killings and enforced disappearance

#### Firefight between security forces and TPNPB in Intan Jaya cause death of minor, one in a coma



An armed clash between security forces and TPNPB in the Yokatapa Village, Sugapa District, Intan Jaya Regency on 24 March 2024 resulted in the death of Ronaldus Duwitau, 13. Six-year-old Nepina Duwitau sustained multiple bullet wounds. [Read more](#)

#### Security force members kill Papuan man during raid in Paniai Regency

On 14 June 2024, Mr Pilemon Gobai, 42, was unlawfully killed, and Mr Melkias Yatipai, 47 sustained a bullet injury on the left heel as security force members raided the area around the Odiyai Village, Bibida District, Paniai Regency. [Read more](#)





## Military members accused of executing Papuan rebel and disappearing body in Intan Jaya

On 30 June 2024, military members allegedly arrested Mr Atinus Kum, a TPNPB rebel, in the Intan Jaya Regency, Papua Tengah Province. Relatives allege that soldiers tortured Mr Kum until he died and subsequently burnt the body. [Read more](#)

## Torture & ill-treatment

### Security force members ill-treat journalists and protesters during crackdown on peaceful demonstration in Nabire



Joint security force members dispersed a peaceful demonstration organised by the ‘Papuan Peoples Front Caring for Human Rights’ (FRPHAMP) in the town of Nabire, Papua Tengah Province on 5 April 2024. [Read more](#)

### Police prevent peaceful protests against torture in Sentani and Jayapura City - at least two activists ill-treated and injured in Jayapura on 2 April

Police officers reportedly prevented activists from distributing leaflets for the demonstration, carried out arbitrary arrests, and cracked down on protesters using teargas and batons at the road junction in the town of Sentani and in Jayapura City. Two protesters sustained injuries after being hit by teargas grenades on the head as officers dispersed the crowd.



[Read more](#)



### Four students injured and one arrested by police during conflict between the Me and Moni tribes in Nabire

Four students were reportedly injured by the police and one was arrested during a horizontal tribal conflict in Nabire, Papua Tengah Province on 27 April 2024. [Read more](#)



## Peaceful demonstration led by Papua Bali Student Community met with police repression in Denpasar - five arrested and at least five injured

On 10 June 2024, the Papua Bali Student Community Student Association organised a peaceful demonstration in Denpasar to support the indigenous Awyu and Moi tribes in their struggle to protect their customary lands. Tensions escalated when the crowd wanted to push through the police barricade. The police dispersed the crowd with water cannons and tear gas. [Read more](#)



## Arbitrary detention, intimidation, and criminalisation

### Police officers detain two Papuan men in Dekai without warrant

Police Mobile Brigade (Brimob) officers detained Mr Elki Pahabol, 27, and Mr Gerefas Silak, 18, in front of SD NEGERI 1 Primary School in the town of Dekai, Yahukimo Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province, on 05 April 2024, around 9:00 am, without showing a warrant. [Read more](#)



### Police arbitrarily detain Papua woman in Dekai, Yahukimo

Police officers arbitrarily arrested Mrs Keistina Selak, 23, at the old market in Dekai, Yahukimo Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province, on 9 April 2024.

[Read more](#)

### ULMWP Secretary receives threatening and insulting messages

The ULMWP secretary Mr Markus Haluk, received numerous messages with threats and insults on his mobile phone in early April 2024. According to Mr Haluk, he started receiving the messages shortly after the TNI published a press release regarding the terminology for armed pro-independence groups in West Papua on 10 April 2024. [Read more](#)

### At least six Papuan students arrested by police in Nabire

At least six students were arrested by police during a high school graduation celebration in Nabire, Papua Tengah Province, on 6 May 2024. [Read more](#)



### Police arrest Papuan man alleged of killing military member in Paniai - TPNPB claims suspect is a civilian and not affiliated with them

On 11 May 2024, Damai Cartenz Police members arrested Andarias Nawipa, a 30-year-old motorcycle taxi driver in the Bapouda Village, Paniai, accusing him of participating in the assassination of a driver.

[Read more](#)

## Freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly and association

### Police prevent peaceful protests against torture in Sentani and Jayapura City – 77 activists arrested in Sentani on 1 and 2 April



Police officers reportedly arrested fifteen activists on 1 April while distributing leaflets in Sentani, Jayapura Regency. They were released on the same day. On 2 April 2024, police officers again detained 62 protesters at Jayapura District Police Station. Police officers reportedly beat the protesters during the arrest. [Read more](#)

### Police fail to protect Papuan students during peaceful protest in Denpasar, Bali

Members of the nationalist the 'Patriot Garuda Nusantara' (PGN) organisation attacked a group of Papuan protesters with stones and wooden sticks in Denpasar, Bali province, on 1 April 2024. [Read more](#)



## Police prevent Papuan students' peaceful demonstration in Bali on 1 May

Police officers prevented a peaceful protest by Papuan students on 1 May 2024 to commemorate the 61st anniversary of Papua's integration into Indonesia. [Read more](#)



## Other violations

### Indigenous people Subur and Aiwat Villages protest against illegal clearing of their forest



In early April 2024, the community reported that PT MRJ had violated customary law by evicting land and forests without prior deliberation and consent from the indigenous landowners. Despite not receiving permits or recommendations from relevant provincial offices, PT MRJ has reportedly commenced operations. [Read more](#)

### Indigenous communities report and oppose illegal mining activities of PT Zoomlion in their customary land in Kapiroaya, Deiyai



Indigenous communities in Kapiroaya district are actively protesting the operations of PT Zoomlion, a Chinese company, which entered the area in 2023 to extract gold with heavy machinery without obtaining permits from either the customary right owners or the relevant government authorities. [Read more](#)

### Indigenous communities oppose Merauke Sugarcane Project over socio-environmental concerns

The Indonesian government's plan to transform Merauke town, South Papua (Papua Selatan) Province, into a major centre for sugarcane plantations and bioethanol production has sparked significant controversy and legal disputes. This large-scale agricultural endeavour, part of the National Strategic Project (PSN), aims to achieve sugar self-sufficiency by 2027. [Read more](#)



### Clearing of sago trees in Sorong to make way for palm oil plantations

The Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency (BPN) and the government of Sorong Regency, Southwest Papua (Papua Barat Daya) Province, are being urged to review the permits and impose strict sanctions on PT Inti Kebun Sejahtera (IKSJ) following recent trespassing on customary land. [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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<sup>i</sup> 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.