The Papua Monitor: Q3/2026

October 2026 Update: Human Rights and Conflict Developments in West Papua[1], Indonesia - Covering Events from 1 July to 30 September 2026 (3rd Quarter 2026)

Violations	2025 Q4	2026 Q1	2026 Q2	2026 Q3
Torture	13 victims in 4 cases	38 victims in 16 cases	22 victims in 9 cases	6 victims in 3 cases
Freedom of expression	15 victims in 4 cases	More than 7 victims in 4 cases	More than a dozen victims in 3 cases	223 and dozens of victims in 8 cases
Killings	21 victims in 7 cases	9 victims in 4 cases	24 victims in 11 cases	9 victims in 6 cases
Disappearances	3 victims in 2 cases	-	2 victims in one case	1 victim in 1 case
Intimidation	More than a dozen victims in 2 cases	More than a dozen victims in 6 cases	11 and dozens of other victims in 5 cases	2 and dozens of victims in 5 cases
Criminalisation	1 victim in 1 case	3 victims in 2 cases	Hundreds of victims in 3 cases	1 victim in 1 case
Ill-treatment	40 victims in 15 cases	More than 22 victims in 6 cases	More than 51 victims in 14 cases	More than 75 and dozens of victims in 13 cases
Cultural rights	Hundreds of victims in 2 cases	-	Dozens of victims in 4 cases	Hundreds of victims in 2 cases
Arbitrary detention & arrest	28 victims in 9 cases	125 victims in 32 cases	37 victims in 18 cases	201 victims in 20 cases
Freedom of assembly	14 victims in 3 cases	More than 6 victims in 3 cases	Dozens of victims in 3 cases	223 and dozens of victims in 8 cases
All other violations (health, labour, food, environment, information, housing, fair trial, sexual assault, belief & religion)	3 and hundreds more victims in 3 cases	3 and thousands victims in 2 cases	3 and dozens victims in 2 cases	547 and hundreds more victims in 5 cases
TOTAL	**101 and several hundreds more victims in 30 cases**	**166 and thousands more victims in 41 cases**	**121 and hundreds more victims in 45 cases**	**828 and hundreds more victims in 40 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. You can conduct your own search and analysis in our case database at https://humanrightsmonitor.org/cases/.

Summary

[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 island of New Guinea and is recognised 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 peoples' rights.

Human rights

One of the most significant developments during the third quarter of 2026 was an apparent increase in restrictions on freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Documented cases indicate that Jayapura City and Sentani, Jayapura Regency, remained hotspots of police repression. Activists in these areas were forcibly dispersed and subjected to ill-treatment during peaceful demonstrations or while distributing leaflets for such events. A study entitled 'Ever Shrinking Civic Spacetime in Papua', developed by researchers from Universitas Gadjah Mada and the Papua Democratic Institute, described the particularly violent restrictions affecting civic space in West Papua. Meanwhile counter-insurgency operations in the central highlands continued in Yahukimo and Intan Jaya, reportedly resulting in civilian casualties and new incidents of internal displacements (see Conflict section below).

The number of individuals recorded as affected by documented human rights concerns rose from more than 121 in the second quarter to more than 828 in the third quarter. This increase was largely driven by a single mass food poisoning incident under the government-funded Free Nutritious Meals programme, in which 543 people received medical treatment. Several incidents in which large numbers of protesters were subjected to police violence during the dispersal of peaceful demonstrations further add to the increase. Moreover, the growing rush for customary lands in West Papua threatens the livelihood of entire local communities. Land grabbing by private companies and by the military, for example in Biak, Merauke and Teluk Bintuni, affects Indigenous communities that depend on their land for food security, cultural practices and traditional medicines (see Table 1, 'Cultural rights' and 'All other violations'). Two reports published in August 2026 by the Pusaka Foundation and Satya Bumi document what their authors describe as widespread violations of Indigenous peoples' rights caused by the National Strategic Project (PSN) for the Food and Energy Estate Area (KPPE) in Merauke Regency, Papua Selatan Province.

In early August, Indonesia's Supreme Court imposed a death sentence on Karel Fatem, a Papuan prisoner allegedly affiliated with the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB). Lower courts had sentenced him to life over the 2022 shooting of a soldier. Protesters gathered outside Sorong prison on 12 August. The United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP) condemned the ruling, warning that carrying out the death sentence would set a dangerous precedent for Papuan political prisoners.

Accountability for security-force violence remained rare, particularly if human rights violations occurred in remote conflict areas in the central highlands. Numerous cases from Dogiyai, Puncak, Mimika and Intan Jaya have stalled, and a torture complaint in Sorong has remained unresolved for sixteen months. Authorities failed to initiate prompt investigations or identify suspects, adding to the climate of widespread impunity in West Papua. An exception is the death of 18-year-old Pendite Weya in a June explosion in Lanny Jaya. A police team returned to the scene on 11 August to examine the site of the crime and question witnesses.

Conflict

Between July and September 2026, the armed conflict in West Papua remained highly escalated while spreading into new or renewed geographical clusters of violence and civilian harm. The most pronounced new escalation occurred in Yahukimo Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province, following the killing of US pilot Nicholas F. Goselin by members of the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB) on 2 July. Subsequent troop deployments and joint ground-and-air operations extended from Sobaham District into the Korowai area bordering Yahukimo, Boven Digoel and Pegunungan Bintang regencies. The Intan Jaya Regency, Papua Tengah Province, meanwhile remained a protracted conflict hotspot, with continuing military operations, alleged drone attacks, civilian casualties and mass displacement.

The developments indicate a broader trend towards geographically dispersed counter-insurgency operations involving drones, helicopters and increasingly dense military deployments in the central highlands.

According to Human Rights Monitor's (HRM) estimates, at least 127,031 people remained internally displaced by armed conflict and military operations across West Papua as of late August 2026. Separately, on 7 July 2026, Deputy Human Rights Minister Mugiyanto Sipin acknowledged preliminary government figures indicating approximately 122,000 internally displaced persons. The Yahukimo Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province, saw a sharp escalation of armed conflict and displacement in July and August 2026, centred on the Korowai area. In addition, increasing armed violence in Dekai town and military deployments to the Sobaham district in late July 2026, reportedly caused Indigenous Papuans to flee their homes.

HRM documented 42 violent attacks and armed clashes throughout the third quarter of 2026, a slightly higher number than in the previous quarter, counting 36 clashes. The majority of armed hostilities during the reporting period occurred in Yahukimo, with 21 armed clashes and attacks, followed by Intan Jaya and Jayawijaya regencies with four armed clashes and attacks each. Repeated armed hostilities were also documented from the regencies of Tolikara and Nduga. Isolated incidents of armed violence occurred in the regencies Sorong, Paniai, Maybrat, Puncak Jaya and Mimika.

HRM counted 25 civilians killed and 3 injured in attacks attributed to the TPNPB. This figure includes eleven civilians, including six children, who died in a fire in Enarotali, Paniai Regency, on 7 September 2026. The TPNPB subsequently claimed responsibility for setting fire to buildings in the area, although the circumstances and direct cause of the victims' deaths have not been independently established. Meanwhile, 7 civilians were killed, and 10 were wounded by security force members during armed clashes or counter-insurgency operations. Concerning the combatants, 17 security force members were killed, and 8 were injured during this period. In contrast, the TPNPB reportedly lost 12 combatants, with 6 guerrilla fighters being injured during armed clashes. The conflict casualty figures are presented separately from Table 1, which records alleged extrajudicial killings attributed to state actors. The two datasets may contain overlapping cases and should not be added together.

Comprehensive data on armed conflict violence in West Papua is available in the HRM 2025 annual report, published in March 2026.

Political developments

On 9 July 2026, President Prabowo Subianto announced that a scientific expedition in the mountains of West Papua had found "very large" gold and other mineral reserves. The expedition, made up of the National Research and Innovation Agency (Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional, BRIN) and several universities with support by the Indonesian National Armed Forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, TNI), had been under way for only two or three weeks. Prabowo gave no location or size of the reserves. Prabowo presented the find as part of a broader push for resource and economic self-reliance, alongside the B50 biodiesel launch and crackdowns on smuggling and corruption.

On 6 August 2026, Prabowo met about 150 BRIN researchers at the Presidential Palace, where agency head Arif Satria said Indonesia must build nuclear capabilities now so that it is not merely a technology buyer when it adopts nuclear power. BRIN cited potential reserves of 89,000 tonnes of uranium and 143,000

tonnes of thorium. BRIN also reported progress in uranium purification technology. Separately, a livestream of Prabowo's 31 July speech to the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kadin) was interrupted while he was discussing other countries' nuclear weapons. The video reportedly disappeared for a time and returned in edited form, prompting questions online about what was cut.

Over July and August 2026, Indonesia deepened defence ties across multiple partners: it signed a BrahMos supersonic missile deal with India during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit, agreed with Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul to expand military cooperation, held talks with senior US defence official Elbridge Colby, and reached an agreement with China to boost military links and cooperate on minerals, energy and technology.

International developments

Pacific leaders from the Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands, and Vanuatu have used the 81st UN General Assembly in New York to renew calls for Indonesia to allow the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit West Papua. The demands are a response to recurring reports of serious human rights violations in West Papua over the past decades. Indonesia rejected the criticism in its right of reply, stating that credible allegations would be taken seriously and addressed through national institutions and legal mechanisms, including the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM).

Indonesia is coming under growing regional pressure to allow a visit by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to West Papua, after Melanesian leaders warned that Jakarta's standing in their regional bloc could be reviewed if the long-standing invitation does not go ahead. Meeting on the sidelines of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) leaders' summit in Koror, Palau, on 31 August 2026, the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) asked its current chair, Fiji, to write to Indonesia requesting access for the High Commissioner's office so that a report on the human rights situation in the territory can be tabled at the next MSG summit in 2027. The MSG Secretariat formally conveyed the long-standing call for a United Nations human rights mission to West Papua, Indonesia, to the UN in Geneva during the 19th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), held in Geneva from 13 to 17 July 2026.

Cases

Unlawful killings and enforced disappearances

Pregnant woman and unborn baby killed by gunfire inside her home in Intan Jaya

Security force members reportedly killed a pregnant Indigenous woman, Mrs Melkiana Duwitau, 31, after a bullet penetrated the wall of her home in Wandoga Village, Sugapa District, Intan Jaya Regency, on 2 July 2026.

Conflicting accounts surround killing of four Indigenous Papuans during military operation in Intan Jaya

On 25 September 2026, members of the 315th Infantry Battalion/Garuda and the Taipur Team of the

TNI Habema Operations Command conducted a military operation in Danggomba Village, Intan Jaya Regency, Papua Tengah Province, resulting in the instant death of Mr Hermanus Hogajau and Mr Malobega Hogajau. Security forces reported the deaths of two further men, whom they described as TPNPB members. The two men were reportedly seen alive when security forces apprehended them. Local informants claim that only Mr Hermanus Hogajau was affiliated with the TPNPB, while the other three were civilians.

Indigenous Papuan dies following alleged police assault in Merauke, Papua Selatan Province

Mr Leonardo Konorop died on 8 September 2026 after being ill-treated by police officers and an Indonesian military (TNI) member in Merauke.

Police officer charged following fatal shooting of civilian in Timika

A civilian identified as BP was reportedly shot dead by an off-duty police officer on 2 August 2026 at the Raffles Residence 3 housing estate, Block M, Mimika Baru District, Mimika Regency, Papua Tengah Province.

Alleged security operations kill two civilians in Korowai area, Yahukimo – hundreds of Indigenous peoples flee to safety

Between 24 and 30 July 2026, joint Indonesian military and police operations reportedly killed two civilians in the Korowai region, causing hundreds of Indigenous Papuans, including children, pregnant women and elderly people, to flee their homes and seek shelter in the surrounding forest.

Security operation in Dekai District leaves two TPNPB members and one civilian dead

A security force operation in the KM 4 Logpon area of Dekai District, Yahukimo Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province on 17 July 2026, reportedly resulted in the death of two members of the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB) and one civilian named Mr Yafoluk Heluka.

Torture & ill-treatment

Civil servant arbitrarily detained and tortured at Marine Post in Maybrat

On 26 September 2026, Indonesian Marine personnel allegedly apprehended Mr Wilem Wakom, a civil servant (Aparatur Sipil Negara, ASN) and resident of Wakom Village, East Aifat District, Maybrat Regency, Papua Barat Daya Province.

Security forces open fire at a group of Indigenous Papuans in Yahukimo - Six evacuated in critical condition

Security forces reportedly opened fire at a group of six Indigenous Papuan civilians near Samboga Village, Yahukimo Regency, on 18 September 2026, while returning from a local gold-panning site.

Six Papuans arbitrarily detained and one civilian shot during security operation in Dekai

On 1 September 2026, security forces carried out an operation in the Kali Biru residential area around the former Election Commission Office (KPU), Dekai District, Yahukimo Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province.

Police officers allegedly beat Indigenous leader during detention in Nabire

On 30 August 2026, officers from the Nabire Police allegedly beat and arbitrarily detained Indigenous community leader Yulius Edowai, 50, in front of State Vocational High School (SMKN) 2 Jayanti in Nabire, Papua Tengah Province.

Three Indigenous Papuans injured in alleged military shooting in Maybrat

On 13 August 2026, Indonesian Navy (TNI AL) personnel reportedly shot three Indigenous civilians at a garden camp near the Kamundan River in the Ainod area, Aifat Timur Tengah District, Maybrat Regency, Papua Barat Daya Province.

TNI personnel arbitrarily detain and torture four Indigenous civilians in Intan Jaya

On 16 July 2026, personnel of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) arbitrarily arrested four Indigenous Papuan civilians during a military operation in the area of Jalai Village, Sugapa District, Intan Jaya Regency, Papua Tengah Province.

Naval military police shoot former soldier during attempted arrest in Sorong Regency

On 28 July 2026, Indonesian Naval Military Police personnel shot and injured Mr Timotius Rumpaidus at his residence in Klalin 6, Warmon Village, Aimas District, Sorong Regency, Papua Barat Daya Province.

Police arbitrarily detain and torture Papuan civilian in Dogiyai Regency

On 30 September 2026, officers of the Dogiyai District Police apprehended Mr Zeth Giyai in front of the Kamuu District Office in Mauwa Village, Dogiyai Regency, Papua Tengah Province.

Arbitrary detention, intimidation, and criminalisation

Papuan activist reportedly detained during land eviction solidarity action in Makassar

On 30 September 2026, police officers reportedly arrested Papuan activist Mr Tilius Telenggen, 26, in the Bara-Baraya neighbourhood of Makassar City, South Sulawesi Province.

Police officers reportedly detained two minors without legal representation in Dekai, Yahukimo

On 18 September 2026, Indonesian police reportedly apprehended two minors, Hariel Sengket, 17, and Peniel Magayang, 17, at the Telkomsel complex in Dekai town, Dekai District, Yahukimo Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province.

Police arbitrarily detain six KNPB members, including a minor, in Sentani

On 17 September 2026, officers of the Jayapura District Police reportedly detained six political activists, including a 17-year-old minor, affiliated with the West Papua National Committee (KNPB) at Old Sentani Market (Pasar Lama Sentani) in Jayapura Regency, Papua Province.

Military personnel detain two Papuan civilians during overnight operation in Intan Jaya

Military personnel reportedly detained Mr Melkias Hagismijau, 25, and Mr Pius Emani, 27, during an overnight military operation in Eknemba Village, Sugapa District, Intan Jaya Regency, Papua Tengah Province, beginning around midnight on 8 September 2026.

Indonesian military personnel arbitrarily detain five Indigenous Papuans in Sugapa – Detainees released after community protest

On 5 September 2026, personnel belonging to Infantry Battalion 509/Army Strategic Reserve Command (Kostrad) of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) reportedly detained five Indigenous Papuans near the TNI J2 post in Wandoga Village, Sugapa District, Intan Jaya Regency, Papua Tengah Province.

Marine personnel detain two civilians in Dekai, Yahukimo Regency

On 18 August 2026, personnel of the Marine Corps reportedly detained Mr Kelgi Bayage and Mr Dais Sikap without warrant in Yahukimo Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province.

Young man allegedly subjected to arbitrary detention and ill-treatment during two-day detention in Yahukimo

On 18 August 2026, plain-clothes police officers reportedly apprehended Mr Enes Magayang, 25, at Dekai Old Market, Dekai District, Yahukimo Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province.

Father and 17-year-old son arrested by joint security forces in Yahukimo

On 18 August 2026, Indonesian Marine Corps personnel and the Police reportedly apprehended Mr Dan Menegiy, 50, the village head of Walehikma, and his 17-year-old son, Ordi Menegiy, outside Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI) branch in Yahukimo Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province.

Security forces detain 24 Papuan activists during peaceful Independence Day protest in Timika

Security force members reportedly detained 24 activists of the West Papua Independent Student Forum (FIM-WP) during a silent protest in Timika, Mimika Regency, Papua Tengah Province, on 17 August 2026.

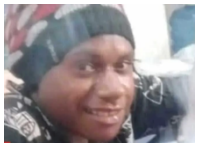
Civilian arbitrarily detained by military personnel in Yahukimo Regency

On 29 July 2026, personnel of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), reportedly affiliated with District Military Command (Kodim) 1715/Yahukimo, allegedly arrested Mr Ekinus Magayang, 23, a civilian and student from Senyom Village, Kwelamdua District, Yahukimo Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province.

Police officers detain 31 KNPB activists during leaflet distribution in Sentani

On 28 July 2026, police officers apprehended 31 members of the West Papua National Committee (KNPB) near the Old Market traffic lights on Jalan Pasar Lama Yahim, Sentani, Jayapura Regency, Papua Province, while they were distributing leaflets for a nationwide protest planned for 3 August 2026.

Teenager arbitrarily detained by Marine personnel in Dekai



On 22 September 2026, members of the Indonesian Navy's Marine Corps (Marinir) allegedly apprehended Nisel Payage, a teenager, in front of a shop in Dekai, Yahukimo Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province.

Freedom of expression, and freedom of peaceful assembly and association

Police disperse peaceful USTJ Student Protest in Jayapura with tear gas - Three students reportedly detained

On 30 September 2026, Indonesian police cracked down on a peaceful student protest at the Jayapura University of Science and Technology (USTJ) campus in Padang Bulan, Abepura District, Jayapura City, Papua Province.

Police detain and ill-treat student protesters while obstructing legal aid during anti-MBG protests in Jayapura

On 15 September 2026, police officers arbitrarily detained pupils and university students to disperse peaceful demonstrations, and obstructed access to legal assistance during a protests against the Free Nutritious Meals Programme (Makan Bergizi Gratis, MBG) in Jayapura City and Jayapura Regency, Papua Province.

Suspected Molotov cocktail attack targets Komnas HAM office in Jayapura

On 9 September 2026, an unidentified person threw a glass bottle containing an unknown liquid and an apparent wick into the compound of the Papua Regional Office of the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) in Dok V Bawah, North Jayapura District, Jayapura City, Papua Province.

Police crackdown on KNPB demonstrations in Jayapura leaves at least 15 protesters injured

On 15 August 2026, Indonesian police and military personnel forcibly dispersed demonstrations organised by the West Papua National Committee (KNPB) together with students in Pos 7, Sentani, Jayapura Regency, and Perumnas III Waena, Waena Expo, Uncen Atas (near Cenderawasih University) and the Abepura area in Jayapura City, Papua Province.

Officers forcefully disperse KNPB activists during protest preparations in Jayapura and Sentani – Seven activists sustain injuries from excessive police violence

Police officers allegedly used physical violence against seven members of the West Papua National Committee (KNPB) in two separate incidents in Jayapura City and Sentani, Jayapura Regency, Papua Province, on 11 and 13 August 2026.

Police disperse peaceful protest in Sentani amid reports of beatings – 33 protesters injured as a result of excessive police violence

On 3 August 2026, Indonesian police forces repeatedly blocked and dispersed a peaceful demonstration organised by the West Papua National Committee (KNPB) at several locations in Sentani, Jayapura Regency, Papua Province.

Other violations

Ateta Clan challenges palm oil expansion and alleged encroachment on customary land in Teluk Bintuni

On 13 July 2026, members of the Indigenous Ateta clan from Sumuri District, Teluk Bintuni Regency, Papua Barat Province, staged a peaceful protest beginning at approximately 07.00 am at the Office of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency (ATR/BPN) in Teluk Bintuni Regency.

Military intimidation in Biak: Indigenous Papuan family faces forced eviction, intimidation and loss of access to electricity

Air Force (TNI AU) personnel have allegedly subjected an Indigenous Papuan family to repeated intimidation, forced eviction measures and interference with their customary land rights in the Sorido Village, Biak Kota District, Biak Numfor Regency, Papua Province.

Merauke Food Estate: Indigenous land disputes, police investigations and court ruling intensify opposition to National Strategic Project

Indigenous communities in Merauke Regency, Papua Selatan Province, continue to oppose the implementation of Indonesia's National Strategic Project (PSN) for food security amid reports of encroachment on customary land, intimidation of Indigenous land defenders and environmental destruction.

Death sentence against Karel Fatem prompts protests and demands for protection at Sorong Prison

Papuan human rights activists and civil society organisations have called for the protection of Mr Karel Fatem following a death sentence imposed during cassation proceedings before Indonesia's Supreme Court in early August 2026.

Mass food poisoning linked to government nutrition programme affects 543 people in Jayapura Regency

On 4 August 2026, a mass food poisoning incident linked to meals distributed under President Prabowo's flagship Free Nutritious Meals (Makan Bergizi Gratis, MBG) programme affected hundreds of residents in Depapre District and surrounding coastal areas of Jayapura Regency, Papua Province.

Military personnel reportedly enter Catholic church compound during Sunday Mass in Intan Jaya

On 26 July 2026, Indonesian military personnel reportedly entered the compound of the St Francis Xavier Catholic Parish Church in Titigi Village, Sugapa District, Intan Jaya Regency, Papua Tengah Province, while parishioners were attending Sunday Mass.

Scientists warn: West Papua's last glacier nears extinction

The ice around Carstensz Peak in West Papua's central highlands had shrunk to about 16 to 23 hectares by 2022–2024 and could disappear entirely in 2026 or 2027, according to Donaldi Permana, a climate researcher who led glacier monitoring at Indonesia's meteorological agency BMKG.[2] Once part of a wider system of "eternal snow" crowning peaks such as Mandala and Trikora, the Carstensz glaciers are now the only ones left, having lost more than 99 per cent of their extent since around 1850.

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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[2] Emily Cohen, 'Indonesia may soon lose its last glaciers', Columbia Climate School, 15 May 2026, republished by PreventionWeb: https://www.preventionweb.net/news/indonesia-may-soon-lose-its-last-glaciers