



# **WEST PAPUA:**

## **The Irrepressible**

## **Struggle for**

## **Freedom**

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# **WEST PAPUA: THE IRREPRESSIBLE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM**

**A Report by Peter Arndt, Executive Officer of the Catholic Justice & Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Brisbane**

**August 2015**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In January and February 2015, I was privileged to join ten other Christians from Australia, West Papua Fiji and the USA on what we called a peace pilgrimage to West Papua. While we had received an invitation to attend celebrations for the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Coming of the Gospel to the Land of Papua, the core aim of the pilgrimage was to begin to explore possibilities for Christians outside West Papua to accompany and support churches facing grave oppression inside this troubled land.

Two years prior to our pilgrimage, our co-leaders, a Papuan and an Australian who have worked inside West Papua to support church and civil society organisations to resist brutal repression in a nonviolent way, received a letter from Rev Dr Benny Giay, Moderator of the Kingmi Church in West Papua. He said the people of West Papua feel like they are “surrounded by violence” and “cannot escape. He went on to ask if there was some way in which Christians from outside West Papua could accompany them as they faced this oppressive violence. Our pilgrimage, thankfully, has opened up some possibilities for the building of relationships between Christians in West Papua and around the world which can break down the feelings of isolation in West Papua and give its people new hope.

West Papua is located on the western rim of the Pacific. It is one half of the island of New Guinea.





The eastern half is Papua New Guinea, an independent state since 1975. The western half is West Papua, made up of two provinces, Papua and Papua Barat. Tanah Papua (the Land of Papua), another name West Papuans give their country, has been forcibly occupied by the Indonesian Government since 1963 after an agreement forged between the Netherlands, the United States and Indonesia under the supervision of the United Nations. A systematic, brutal repression of Indigenous Papuans demanding the right to freedom has soaked this land in blood. It is an incredibly beautiful land. 75% of the mountainous interior is cloaked in lush, green rainforest. It is very close to Australia. From Boigu Island in the Torres Strait, Australia's northern most island, you can wade across to Papua New Guinea. From there it is a few days walk to the West Papuan border. West Papua may only be a swim and walk away from Australia but it may as well be the dark side of the moon. The country is what journalist, Mark Davis, called a 'secret story', hidden from the outside world by the vagaries of geopolitics and a policy of keeping foreign journalists, human rights workers and even diplomats out.

Rev Dr Benny Giay was not being dramatic in his letter. Only a month before we travelled to West Papua, four teenagers were shot dead by the Indonesian Police in Paniai, in the remote highlands. One of the young people had been savagely beaten by the army the night before. He and his friends had been holding a vigil at a makeshift roadside chapel when a car drove by without its lights on. The young people yelled at the driver to put his lights on. The car stopped and soldiers hopped out and proceeded to beat the boy. The next day, on 8 December 2014, the boy's friends went to protest the beating. When they arrived in town, they saw the car driven by the soldiers. Angry, they started hitting the car. That is when the police opened fire with live ammunition, killing the four youths and injuring many more.

Despite calls by civil society for a thorough and independent investigation no action against the police has been taken. Joko (Jokowi) Widodo, the current Indonesian President's response has been tepid. It now seems that this will be one more example in a five decade long list of cases of security forces impunity. It did not take much dialogue to peel back a layer of fear amongst many of the people we talked to in Paniai. This is a glimpse of the reality of West Papua and the context in which the pilgrimage took place.

Over the course of two weeks, we met with a range of Protestant and Catholic Church groups – the GKJ-TP (The Evangelical Church in the Land of Papua), the Kingmi Church, Catholic representatives from the Office for Justice and Peace in Jayapura, students from theological colleges and Catholics in the highlands. Pilgrims also had the great pleasure of meeting with Reverend Tabita Havea, the Moderator of the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) and his colleague, Netani Rika.

Aside from visiting Mansinam Island, Manokwari where the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations took place, we also travelled to Jayapura, Biak and the Paniai highlands. Every step of our pilgrimage was carefully negotiated with the Papuans we met.

In the months that followed the pilgrimage, I formed closer relationships with leaders of the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP), which formed in Vanuatu in December 2014. Out of that relationship grew a stronger collaboration with West Papua solidarity groups in Australia and New Zealand and emerging solidarity groups in Melanesian countries. The culmination of this relationship building and collaboration was participation in the final phase of the ULMWP campaign to seek membership of the Melanesian Spearhead Group in Honiara in June 2015.

This report provides a snapshot of the pilgrimage experience and the MSG campaign and presents some observations for churches and civil society outside West Papua and Melanesia to consider.

## **PRISING OPEN WEST PAPUA**

For some time, a rumour has circulated within West Papuan civil society that police permission is no longer needed to travel outside of the capital, Jayapura. For decades, access to West Papua has been tightly controlled by the Indonesian Government's intelligence services, immigration, military and police. Foreign journalists, human rights defenders, even diplomats – in fact, anyone considered meddlesome by the State – are all required to obtain and carry a Surat Jalan, or Letter of Travel, from the Police. Officially, the Indonesian Government wants to protect visitors. The Government's line is that foreigners' safety and well-being might be jeopardised by Papuan guerrillas active in the remote mountains and jungles.

In reality, however, the movement for freedom is overwhelmingly nonviolent. What the Indonesian Government doesn't want the world to know is how deep Papuan resentment of, and dissent from Indonesian rule goes. Jakarta will, of course, deny that access to West Papua is closed for foreign media. Such a policy position runs counter to Indonesia's desire to project itself as a vibrant democracy. Technically, the bureaucrats are correct. West Papua is open to foreigners including journalists; one only needs to apply for permission. But West Papua is not Bali. It is a police state at the neglected eastern periphery of a sprawling archipelago. According to Andreas Harsono from Human Rights Watch, obtaining coveted permission requires approval from no less than 18 separate government agencies. Navigating this maze can take months. More often than not, permission is not granted. In theory, Papua is not closed to foreign media; in practice, it is. Simply look at what happened to two French journalists in August 2014. They were arrested while interviewing Papuans about the political situation in the region, along with some of their Papuan interviewees, detained, tried, convicted of immigration offences, jailed for a total of two and a half months and deported.

Despite what had happened to the French journalists a few months earlier, when a senior West Papuan journalist told us that foreigners no longer needed a Surat Jalan to travel around West Papua, we were intrigued. With a new reform minded president in power, Joko "Jokowi" Widodo, could this be the beginning of opening up foreign access to West Papua, including journalists?

For two weeks, we visited the north coast, highlands and the Birds Head region of the land of Papua. It was not without incident.

## VISITING BIAK

In Biak, we met with a community of survivors of State violence, survivors from the 1960s when the Indonesian military forcibly annexed West Papua as well as survivors from the 1998 Biak Massacre. Our group was taken to a meeting house used by customary leaders where we experienced a traditional welcome. After a meal of taro, sweet potato, fish and greens we gathered in a circle, opened with prayer and song and began to share stories. If

we pilgrims close our eyes, we can still hear the children singing “We are crying now, but the sun will set and the dawn will herald a new day”.



Children in Biak

Massacre survivors recounted stories of the most horrifying and humiliating violence perpetrated by Indonesian security forces during the 1998 massacre. We also heard how survivors who refuse to stop their calls for justice are deprived of access to employment and pensions. They also told us how other members of the community label them as trouble makers and accuse them of attracting the unwanted attention of the security forces in the local community.

Only a short while after our dialogue began, the meeting house was raided by police, Immigration officials and intelligence officers. We learned much later that it was almost certain that one of our drivers had informed officials of our meeting. Officials intended to arrest all of us foreigners and to interrogate us immediately. However, our Papuan colleagues intervened courageously and negotiated an agreement which saw some of us hand over our passports immediately and commit to reporting to Immigration headquarters later that day voluntarily. After several hours of study of the conditions of our visas, I went with six other pilgrims to Immigration headquarters for two hours of questioning. The purpose of the questioning was to ascertain whether any of us were journalists. Finding no evidence of this, we were released without charge.

The next morning, the Immigration chief returned to our hotel and continued to harass our Papuan host. It was only after the telephone intervention of her MP uncle and my telephone complaint on behalf of the pilgrims, that the harassment ended. Although we spent the rest of our brief stay in Biak in peace, we came away with a valuable insight into the daily experience of repression in a police state with which Papuans live.

To underline this point, in May this year, we learned that the chief who welcomed us to Biak was arrested, along with others, for peacefully demonstrating their support for the ULMP's bid for membership of the MSG. He is still in detention awaiting trial.

## **VISITING JAYAPURA/PORT NUMBAY**

Before and after Biak, we based ourselves in Jayapura (victorious city in Indonesian), the capital of West Papua, also known as Port Numbay by West Papuans. There we had an opportunity to meet with Catholic peace, justice and human rights defenders, with student activists and resistance leaders. Our Catholic colleagues spoke movingly of the way they are accompanying political prisoners, seeking to make visible humanising values, and their hopes that the Church will stand in defence of Gospel values in what is a very difficult and delicate situation.

Among many Papuan Catholics, there is great concern that none of the five Bishops in West Papua speaks out about security forces violence and repression. To date, none of the Bishops have uttered one public expression of concern over the killing of four teenagers in Paniai District last December. None of the Bishops is a Melanesian Papuan; all are Indonesians. In addition, all churches in West Papua receive significant funding from the Indonesian Government. Rightly or wrongly, some Papuan Catholics feel that the Government money is buying silence. While we do not know what Church



leaders say to the Government privately, their consistent failure to challenge repeated and systematic violence by Indonesian security forces and the prohibition on free political expression distresses and angers many Papuan Catholics.

Our meeting with students and nonviolent resistors was also very powerful. We met with representatives from GempaR (Student movement for the Papuan People), KNPB (West Papua

National Committee), WPNA (West Papua National Authority), NFRWP (National Federal Republic of West Papua), and Garda-Papua (Papuan Democracy Movement). These young people spoke clearly and personally of how the occupation affected them and their aspirations for a free West Papua. Members of KNPB shared that between January 2012 and January 2015, twenty-nine KNPB activists, committed to nonviolent resistance, have been summarily executed by the Indonesian State. The main perpetrators in these extra-judicial killings are members of Detachment 88, a counter-terrorist group trained and armed by the United States and Australian Governments.

I cannot help but be deeply moved by the courage of these young people. Knowing that security forces and intelligence officials are constantly monitoring activity closely in the city and knowing that informants are in the streets, in taxis and in hotels and guest houses everywhere, they take great risks in their work as activists; and they took a great risk to come and meet with us.

## **VISITING PANIAI**

25 Biak was not the only place we experienced the repressive presence of the State security apparatus. We also travelled to Paniai in the remote Papuan highlands. After the 8 December killings, the situation was extremely tense. Fear was hardly concealed within the community we visited.

Paniai, much more than Biak, felt like the frontier of the Indonesian State. On the six hour drive up to the highlands, we passed

countless artisanal gold miners set up in tents on the red mud beside the road.

At the 100km mark, we passed through a military roadblock. A bored soldier illegally collected a 100,000 rupiah 'entry fee' per car as his colleagues played volleyball in the field behind the post. The military controls the trade of gold out of Paniai.

Adjacent to the military post was a mural depicting paratroopers and other scenes of war. What would 'mama' sitting in the front seat of the car think about that mural? She had lived through the sixties when

villages in Paniai were bombed and strafed by machine guns, sometimes using US supplied OV-10 Bronco bombers, C-130 transport aircraft and M 16 automatic weapons. During those years, Indonesian paratroopers were dropped in their hundreds. The Indonesian soldiers thought they were liberating the Papuans from the Dutch. For Papuans, White Dutch colonialism was simply replaced with Brown Indonesian colonialism. Their country was handed over from one group of outsiders to another.

The sign above the military post boldly declared 'warriors protect the people'. It is not clear what 'people' the words referred to. The mothers of the children shot dead last December certainly did not



feel protected. Underneath were the words 'bravery, honesty and responsibility'. Amongst those who work for the Indonesian State, particularly the security forces, these qualities are in short supply. We all sank lower into our seats hoping that the black glass really was impenetrable to his gaze

When we arrived in our host village at night, we were greeted by the chief and other village community members in traditional dress. They spoke of their concerns about the poor access of their children to education, the inadequate standard of community health care facilities and the access of their young to pornography and alcohol brought into the community by the military. Over the next four days, we continued to hear people talk about the difficulties they face and the intimidation to which leaders are subjected at the hands of Indonesian authorities.

Prior to our arrival in the village, a toilet and shower block had been constructed with funding which we had provided. With the Government's plans to seal the road passing through the village, the new facility, apart from providing us pampered Westerners with some comfort, was seen by the village as an improvement which would make an overnight stay by travellers more attractive.

While in Wadouw, the Mee language word for the highlands, we had the opportunity to attend two church services. The first church service was at a Kingmi Church seminar where we were the invited guests of Rev Dr Benny Giay. The church was packed, attended by approximately 600 people. People had gathered to speak about the recent killings of young people and children. Both anger and fear were palpably present in the room. There was also a search for nonviolent ways out. Reverend Giay, in particular, expressed great appreciation that we had travelled to Wadouw to stand with his congregation in their pain and suffering.

On Sunday, the following day, we attended a local Catholic Church for Mass. This was a deeply satisfying experience, not just for the Catholics on our team but for the Protestants too. It felt like Jesus was really present with us, and we with Him. We all noticed how the Catholic Church in Papua has embraced the principle of inculturation enthusiastically. Mee language was used in Mass to read the scripture and the priest's homily was translated into the local language. When the offering was

collected money

was not the only

thing that was

given. People

generously

offered the fruits

of their labour

and the

abundance of

their land. This

was presented in

a traditional way,

with dancing and

chanting led by

women in

traditional dress.

On the last day of  
our four days in  
Wadouw, a  
rumour circulated



through the village that the police had heard a group of foreigners were present in the village and that there was some kind of gathering. We were told the police were on their way to talk to us. Our group quickly huddled and, together with our hosts, talked through how we would respond. By this stage, there was a whiff of adrenaline amongst our team. Perhaps we were getting used to this? The police did not show up, but the rumour of their impending arrival provoked an intense discussion within the village community about fear, resistance and the limits of the Indonesian State. Everyone was permitted to speak and a range of views were canvassed. Our group sat on the dry bracken fern floor and kept quiet as the dialogue carried on in Mee language around us. The only thing our Indonesia/English speakers understood was Indonesian; words like 'fear', 'police' and 'army'.

Outside our makeshift shelter, the rain hammered down.

When the discussion was over we feasted on pork, sweet potatoes and fern soaked in pig's blood. The food had been cooked by stones heated red hot in the fire, then covered with leaves. The entire community participated - young people, men, women, and children. All had clear roles. When the food was over some of the women took off their tops. For the sake of modesty they covered their backs with a noken – woven string bags made from bark.

They then composed songs about our visit, chanting lyrics in the distinctive hypnotic style of the Mee people while they danced bare-breasted in flickering firelight. Fear was punctured by grace. Light streamed in through the holes, rendered visible as the smoke from the fire swirled around us. It was a magical night.



We gathered in the tent the following morning. Two pastors from the nearby Kingmi Church had travelled by scooter to be with us. Having heard rumours that the police were coming to question us, they came with notebooks in hand, to act as witnesses. Presentations were made, speeches delivered and prayers were said before we left the village. Not only did I gain a further insight into how traumatising it is to live in a security state, but I also learned much about my faith. The villagers are prone to all sorts of human weaknesses, just like us; but there is something about their incredibly deep faith in God and love for Jesus Christ which left a lasting impression on me. God is truly at the centre of their lives. In the midst of enormous daily struggles, I could sense the presence of the crucified Jesus, suffering with them, but, in their dignified refusal to bow down to oppression and their undying hope that they will find freedom, I also sensed the risen Christ inviting me to place my trust in God's love.

## VISITING MANSINAM

Our final visit in West Papua was to Mansinam, a small island off the coast of Manokwari. We were invited guests for the 5<sup>th</sup> of February festivities celebrating 160 years of the arrival of the Gospel to the Land of Papua. The army, navy, paramilitary police and regular police were all there. We even saw a man wearing a militia t-shirt filming the thousands of guests.

The entire surroundings may have been decked out in red and white, the colours of the Indonesian flag, but it felt like the decorations were more a desperate insistence by the Indonesian State than an embrace of a chosen present by the Papuans. The over the top nationalism and the overwhelming presence of the security forces certainly did not stop young people – migrants and Papuans alike – performing a powerful play about the reality of life in Papua. One scene portrayed an occupying army laying waste to terrified civilians, all played out to the sound track of an Iwan Fals (a popular Javanese singer-songwriter) pro-democracy tune.

As we hopped on the plane to fly from Jayapura to Bali, we reflected on our visit. The State still fears journalists and access to conflict areas remains closely monitored, but something is clearly changing in West



Papua. Closing off Papua to foreigners including journalists is undemocratic. It is also unsustainable. Practically, in an age of internet communication technology, the democratisation of electricity through solar power (even the village of Wadow had power), and growing transnational linkages between Papuans and the rest of the world, sealing off the territory is technically impossible.

But this is not the Indonesian Government's only problem. Members of our church delegation experienced less willingness – or perhaps less certainty – by the security forces to insist on special permission to visit Papua and more willingness by Papuans to challenge the State's authoritarianism.

The goal of open access has not been won, but the police state's tight control over West Papua is clearly breaking down.

## **GROWING SOLIDARITY**

The people of West Papua were not left behind when we returned home. Presentations aimed at raising awareness about the situation in West Papua and engaging people in churches and the wider community have been delivered in parishes, church groups and community organisations in Queensland and plans are afoot to share this story in other States.

Commitments have been made by both the National Council of Churches in Australia and Queensland Churches Together to raise greater awareness about the plight of the people of West Papua, to lobby the Australian Government about human rights in West Papua and to develop stronger relationships between churches in West Papua and Australia.

Efforts to brief the Australian Government and Federal Parliamentarians are also continuing.





Bonds with the political leaders of West Papua have also strengthened. In December 2014, an historic agreement was reached in Vanuatu between West Papuan leaders of all the major political groupings within and outside West Papua to form a united front called the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP). The ULMWP became the united voice of West Papuans on the international stage and the immediate goal to seek full membership of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), a regional forum bringing together the leaders of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and the FNLKS (the New Caledonian liberation movement).

In March 2015, a gathering of solidarity groups from around Australia and Oceania was convened to discuss with leaders of the ULMWP Secretariat what support could be given to their campaign within Melanesian countries. That gathering forged greater unity of purpose and action between many of the regional solidarity groups. Our efforts were focussed on raising funds to pay for the ULMWP's campaign in Melanesian countries, to develop resources (information packages, posters, stickers and videos) for the campaign in Melanesia and to provide support to local solidarity groups in the five Melanesian countries.

Indonesia was granted MSG observer status previously and lobbied member countries vigorously to both gain support for an upgrade in its status and for the rejection of the ULMWP bid. Its diplomacy involved offering significant financial inducements to member countries and, despite significant local grassroots support for the ULMWP membership bid, Prime Minister Peter O'Neill of Papua New Guinea and Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama of Fiji became close allies of the Indonesian position months out from the MSG Leaders Summit to be held in Honiara in the Solomon Islands in late June.

The Government of Vanuatu has been the strongest ally of the West Papuan cause within the MSG and the support of the FNLKS was assured. It was not clear, however, which way the Solomon Islands Government would jump.

Members of the ULMWP Secretariat paid regular visits to all five member countries, but particular attention was given to the Solomon Islands. Apart from high level discussions with Solomon Islands Government leaders, much work was put into building a strong local solidarity movement. The Pacific Conference of Churches and the Solomon Islands Christian Association both played an important part in transforming the local solidarity group from a handful of individual campaigners into Solomon Islands in Solidarity with West Papua, a strong network of churches, unions and civil society groups. The work of this solidarity group was an important complement to the substantial diplomatic work done by ULMWP Secretariat members. Their campaigning heightened awareness both within the Solomon Islands Government and in the community generally about the long running and violent repression of their Melanesian sisters and brothers in West Papua. It is clear evidence of how effective the Indonesian Government's policy of isolating West Papua and its repression of the people had been.

In the last two weeks of June, a number of us who had become key supporters and advisers to the ULMWP Secretariat joined the West Papuan leaders and the local solidarity group for the final push. Honiara was bedecked with Morning Star flags and pro-West Papuan stickers and posters. The local media was awash with coverage of the campaign. A large march through the main street of Honiara, public seminars and a concert provided a clear focus for the WP4MSG Campaign whose slogan was that the MSG should "bring West Papua back to the Melanesian family."



A week before the Leaders Summit, a number of key political figures from inside West Papua arrived in Honiara. Not only did they bring their collective history of being beaten, tortured and jailed because of their activism in the name of freedom, but they also arranged for the delivery of five copies of a petition in support of the ULMWP membership bid. Over 55,000 Papuans had signed the petition in the space of about 3 months. The Indonesian authorities attempted to stop it from getting out of West Papua, but the meticulous planning of the coordinating group had paid off. Sadly, over five hundred West Papuans who had come out publicly to demonstrate their support for the MSG bid were arrested and detained for their trouble. At least one Papuan was killed by security forces during the demonstrations. The petition was a powerful symbol of the suffering Papuans had endured over many years and it effectively countered attempts by PNG Prime Minister O'Neill and others to portray the ULMWP as a group which did not represent the wishes of the Melanesian people living inside West Papua.

Despite enormous pressure from the Indonesian Government, the Solomon Islands Government, listening to its people's strong support for West Papua, crafted a proposal which ensured that both Fiji's and Papua New Guinea's strong advocacy on behalf of Indonesia and the overwhelming grassroots sentiment of Melanesians across all five countries in support of West Papua could be embraced. The final leaders' communiqué announced that Indonesia would be granted associate membership and West Papua observer status. The decision was not what the ULMWP asked for, but the leadership embraced the decision as a significant step forward that would give it a place at the table of an international forum. The West Papuans took immediate advantage of their newly granted status when ULMWP Secretary-General, Octavianus Mote, stood at the summit table, before all the national leaders and the Indonesian representative, to deliver a harrowing account of the human rights abuses suffered by his people at the hands of Indonesian security forces for over fifty years and a passionate and hopeful enunciation of their hopes for the future.

While the MSG would not directly facilitate dialogue between the Indonesian Government and the ULMWP, Solomon Islands Prime Minister Sogavare said the decision had opened the door for such dialogue to happen.

The decision has enabled the ULMWP to launch a new wave of diplomacy, broadening the focus to all the countries of the Pacific, including Polynesian and Micronesian nations as well as Australia and New Zealand. The immediate focus is getting the Pacific Island Forum to investigate human rights abuses in West Papua, accept West Papua into its fold as the MSG had and bring the unresolved concerns of West Papuans to the forums of the United Nations.

## **AN IRREPRESSIBLE DREAM**

At one point in our meeting with leaders and massacre survivors in Biak, a man named Lorens came up to me to speak. He began by asking me "Please can you help us? I expected a request for assistance with education for the children or water sanitation or something equally practical, but his simple request both startled me and taught me what is deep in the hearts of the people of West Papua. He repeated his opening question and then said in a calm, but firm voice, "Can you help us to get our freedom?"

In one form or another, I heard Papuans from hardline activists to moderate church leaders express the same desire. They want self-determination to be on the table for discussion. They want their freedom.

Many of their learned and respected supporters from both the West and Indonesia counsel them that seeking freedom and independence is a waste of time, but like other people in the Pacific, West

Papuans passionately value their freedom and will struggle for it despite the enormous odds and forces stacked against them.

My time in West Papua and in the Solomon Islands opened my eyes to the indomitable spirit of independence which runs deep in the blood of First Peoples of the Pacific and their willingness to endure enormous oppression.

People of the Pacific are also willing to defend and maintain traditional cultural values. The Vanuatu Government recently released its development plan for 2016 – 2030. It begins with a listing of the traditional values which inform the plan. They are not principles which you would find in documents produced by the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund. The values include love and respect, help and generosity, truth and honesty.

The people of the Pacific have a deep faith in God and a proud history of independence. The irrepressible struggle for freedom by West Papuans is consistent with their identity as people of the Pacific. Those of us who seek to walk in solidarity with them need to understand their culture and history if we want to support them with genuine respect and free our attempts at solidarity from colonialist tendencies.

*I express my deep appreciation to my fellow pilgrims for their support and care during our pilgrimage to West Papua. I also thank our Papuan hosts who took great risks to help us to travel through their land. My gratitude is also given to the Sisters of St Joseph who helped to subsidise my participation in the pilgrimage. Thanks go to my Commission who have approved and supported my work in support of the cause of the people of West Papua. I also wish to thank my colleague and friend, Jason MacLeod, who gave me permission to use the report he prepared for the Quakers and the National Council of Churches in Australia as a basis for this report. Significant parts of this report are Jason's words.*

*Finally, I express my deepest gratitude to the leaders and the people of West Papua and of the countries of the Pacific. They have been so gracious to me and taught me so much. I have so much more to learn, but with their continued friendship, my understanding and insights will be greatly enriched.*

