

# WEST PAPUA

## AN URGENT APPEAL FOR ACTION

On 15 August 1962, the Indonesian and Dutch Governments signed the New York Agreement which saw the Dutch hand over its colonial control of West Papua to the Indonesian Government. The United Nations gave its support to this agreement on the condition that the Indonesians held a vote by West Papuans on integration into the Indonesian Republic. Indonesian troops occupied West Papua on 1 May 1963. They met resistance from Papuans and used violence in an attempt to quell this opposition. In 1969, the Indonesian authorities held a so-called act of free choice, but only 1022 selected Papuans were gathered in various towns, surrounded by armed soldiers, and effectively forced to vote for integration into the Republic of Indonesia.

The people of West Papua have continued to show their opposition to Indonesian occupation and have paid a high price. Tens of thousands of Papuans have lost their lives struggling for freedom. Many have been put in jail for simple acts like raising the Morning Star flag, a symbol of Papuan freedom, or participating in public demonstrations. It's still happening today.

While Indonesian soldiers, police and intelligence operatives have been beating, torturing and killing Papuans, large numbers of Indonesians have been migrating to West Papua. The influx has been so great that it is now believed that Indigenous Papuans are a minority in their own land. The migrants are dominating the economy and bringing their own culture, language and religion. Papuans are becoming more and more marginalised in every way in the land which has been theirs forever. Most of us know little about this because the Indonesian Government effectively prevents international journalists and human rights defenders from freely accessing West Papua.

### WHAT IS THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THIS INJUSTICE?

Successive Australian Governments have preferred to foster trade and security relationships with the Indonesian Government and mostly downplayed the seriousness of the situation in West Papua. In fact, we believe Australia provides training and funding through the Australian Federal Police and the Australian Defence Force to military and police units believed responsible for many extra-judicial killings of peaceful political activists. One of the most notorious of these units is the police counter-insurgency unit, Detachment 88.



## WHAT IS BEING DONE TO CHALLENGE THIS INJUSTICE?

The Catholic Justice & Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Brisbane has been developing close relationships with Indigenous Papuans in the Church and community in West Papua. Our latest findings on the situation in West Papua were published in a report, *We Will Lose Everything*, which has gained significant attention throughout the South Pacific.

The Commission has been working with leaders of the West Papuan people and with the West Papuan solidarity movement in countries throughout the South Pacific to gain support for the call of West Papuan leaders for international action on gross human rights violations in West Papua and for a new opportunity for the people of West Papua to have a free and fair vote on their future.

We have also lobbied both the Australian Government and regional and international forums for action to end the violence and injustice in West Papua.

With limited funds, the Commission has assisted political prisoners with medical and other forms of support, helped to fund training of public interest lawyers in West Papua and given support to a number of programs to help Papuans struggling to survive brutal repression and marginalisation.



Image: Baxter Torie

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Learn more about the situation in West Papua by reading our report *We Will Lose Everything* at our blog [www.cjpcbrisbane.wordpress.com](http://www.cjpcbrisbane.wordpress.com)
- Get more information from various internet sources:

Free West Papua Campaign [www.freewestpapua.org](http://www.freewestpapua.org)

The Biak Massacre Tribunal [www.biak-tribunal.org](http://www.biak-tribunal.org)

East Timor & Indonesia Action Network [www.etan.org](http://www.etan.org)

The West Papua Project

[www.sydney.edu.au/arts/peace\\_conflict/practice/west\\_papua\\_project.shtml](http://www.sydney.edu.au/arts/peace_conflict/practice/west_papua_project.shtml)

The International Coalition for Papua [www.humanrightspapua.org](http://www.humanrightspapua.org)

- Include the people of West Papua in your prayers
- Invite the Commission to organise a presentation on the situation in West Papua
- Ring, write or visit your local federal member and State Senators. Tell them you support justice and peace in West Papua. Ask them to stop funding and training Detachment 88. Ask them to pressure the Indonesian government to provide access to independent foreign media, to release all political prisoners and to support an independent and international human rights fact finding mission



Image: Baxter Torie

- Keep in touch with developments in West Papua by following our Facebook page on West Papua, Morning Star Rising [www.facebook.com/MorningStarRising](http://www.facebook.com/MorningStarRising)

- Donate money to the Commission's West Papua Fund to enable us to continue our support of the struggle for justice in West Papua. You can either send donations to CJPC Brisbane, GPO Box 282, Brisbane QLD 4001 or you can electronically transfer funds to our account:

Account Name: West Papua Fund

Bank Name: CBA, 240 Queen Street, Brisbane Q 4000.

BSB: 064786

ACC No. 520846001

## HELP TO STOP THE VIOLENCE AND REPRESSION IN WEST PAPUA BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

For further information, please contact the Catholic Justice & Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Brisbane on +61 7 3324 3441 or by e-mailing Peter Arndt on [arndtp@bne.catholic.net.au](mailto:arndtp@bne.catholic.net.au)