



News and Views  
on the Pacific Islands  
published by  
Pacific Peoples' Partnership

October 2001

Vol. 55, No. 2

*Special Issue*

# WEST PAPUA

# SURVIVAL

OR

# ELIMINATION?

Tok  
Blona  
Pasifik



# CONTENTS

## TOK TOK

Why West Papua Matters Today .....	1-2
West Papua's National Awakening .....	3-5
West Papua Just Won't Go Away .....	6-8
Biodiversity and Forest Conservation in Irian Jaya .....	9-11
Freeport and the Environment .....	12-13
The John Rumbiak Interview .....	14, 15, 18, 19
Herstory: Tales of Women from West Papua .....	20-22
Survival or Elimination? .....	23-25
<i>Liberation movements and indigenous rights in West Papua</i>	
A Life Story Like No Other: Jacob Rumbiak ...	26-27
Human Rights, Militarism and Regionalism in Indonesia .....	29-31
Resource List .....	32

### Front Cover Photo:

Young boy on father's shoulders decorated for a feast – Asmat, West Papua.

*Photo acknowledgement withheld at photographer's request.*

### Back Cover: Main Photo

Gathering of family in front of house – Asmat, West Papua

*Photo acknowledgement withheld at photographer's request.*

### Back Cover: Portrait Photos

*Rob Huibers*



Recycled and chlorine free papers are used in the production of Tok Blong Pasifik

## ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

**Tok Blong Pasifik** is a phrase in Pidgin, a language used in parts of the Pacific. A rough equivalent would be "News from the Pacific". **Tok Blong Pasifik** (ISSN: 1196-8206) is published by the Pacific Peoples Partnership (PPP). Our aim is to promote awareness of development, social justice, environment and other issues of importance to Pacific Islanders. Through the magazine, we hope to provide readers with a window on the Pacific that will foster understanding and promote support for Pacific Island peoples. PPP gratefully acknowledges support for this publication from the Canadian International Development Agency.

### For further information contact:

PPP, 1921 Fernwood Road,  
Victoria, British Columbia, V8T 2Y6, Canada  
TEL: (250) 381-4131 FAX: (250) 388-5258  
E-mail: sppf@sppf.org Website: www.sppf.org

GUEST EDITORS: David Webster and Leslie Butt

MAGAZINE COMMITTEE: Nikil Regenvanu,  
Linda Pennells, Arlene Wells, Peter Fairley,  
Alison Gardiner, Elaine Monds, Rita Parikh

### LAYOUT & PRINTING:

Hillside Printing, Victoria, BC Canada  
www.hillsideprinting.com

Canadian Publications Mail Product Sales Agreement  
No. 0881058

## EDITORIAL POLICY

We welcome contributions to **Tok Blong Pasifik** and readers' comments. A priority is placed upon contributions from Pacific Islanders and others living in the Islands. As an issues focused magazine, **Tok Blong Pasifik** often includes material that is contentious. Views expressed are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of PPP or financial supporters of the magazine. We reserve the right to edit material.

## SUBSCRIBE TODAY

Annual subscription rates for **Tok Blong Pasifik** are as follows:

CANADA	Student	\$15
	Individual	\$25
	Organisation	\$40
PACIFIC ISLANDS	Individual	US\$10
	Organisation	US\$15
OTHER	Student	US\$15
	Individual	US\$25
	Organisation	US\$40

Out of Canada subscribers please remit funds in cheques drawn on a US bank or international bank draft only.

# TOK TOK

## Why West Papua Matters Today

by Leslie Butt and David Webster

Across the world today, many political and social movements deserve our attention and support. In the Asia-Pacific region alone, a small score of groups struggle against ongoing forms of colonialism. As guest editors of this issue, however, we have honed in on the work of one particular people and their story of one particular colonial struggle: the case of West Papua. West Papua is at a critical point in its history, and we urge you to explore this issue for the insights offered on past events and current efforts by the Papuan scholars, Papuan activists and international activists and scholars whose voices fill these pages.

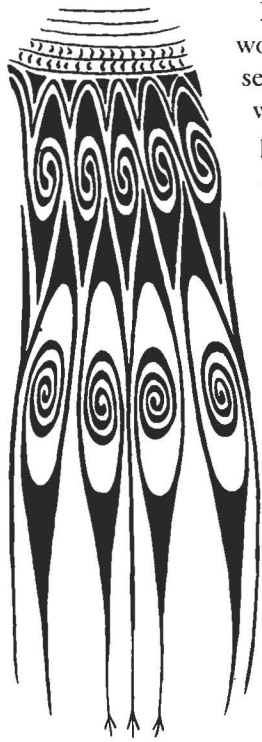
Many of you will be familiar with what happened in East Timor over the past two and a half decades. The illegal annexation by Indonesia of a nation on the cusp of self-determination, the violent military occupation of the land, and the courageous struggle of supporters internally and internationally, all contributed to East Timor's slow move towards independence. But as many of you no doubt also know, there are other cases within Indonesia where territories have been colonized and West Papua is the best known of these but where there has as yet been no legal, binding decisions made at an international level to investigate and possibly end colonization of these territories.

For us, West Papuan claims of Indonesian colonization have merit because of clear cultural and historical precedents. First, West Papua's 253 indigenous groups are ethnically and linguistically distinct from most other Indonesians. Papuans are Melanesians, and have more in common culturally with their neighbours to the east, in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, than they do with their Malay-Indonesian rulers to the west. Second, West Papua was on its own path to self-determination when it was derailed by an Indonesian takeover in the 1960s. When Indonesia gained independence from the Dutch in 1949, West Papua remained as the Dutch East Indies' last colony. ■



Funeral Grief

Photograph by Rob Huibers



Even though Papuan leaders worked throughout the 1950s for self-determination, their efforts were scuttled by international politicians who, in a series of feints and sleights of hand, allowed West Papua to be handed over to Indonesia in 1962-3. In 1969, West Papuans were offered what appeared to be an “out” through a proposed vote allowing them to choose between Indonesian rule and independence. But this 1969 “Act of Free Choice,” better known nowadays as the “Act of No Choice,” was no fair vote. It was less an expression of Papuan self-determination than window dressing that allowed the United Nations to ratify


Indonesian possession of West Papua. The Indonesian president soon renamed the province Irian Jaya. But for Papuans (and a growing number of Indonesians, including the country’s new president), the name West Papua, or Papua, has long been the name they use to describe their land.

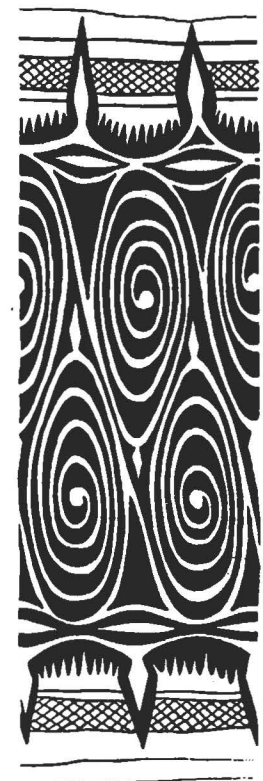
As guest editors, we come to this project with backgrounds in the history and anthropology of West Papua. However, our aim is to turn this issue over to those who have been critically involved in environmental issues, human rights documentation, historical analyses, and political and international activism. We have asked Octavianus Mote, a journalist who has lobbied within Indonesia, to outline the history of West Papua. Viktor Kaisiepo, a Papuan refugee and indigenous rights activist, describes the nature of the political movements that have grown in response to half a century of Indonesian colonization. And John Saltford, a historian, fleshes out these accounts with a detailed description of the UN’s cynical role in the flawed 1969 “Act of Free Choice.”

Other pressing issues that also demand Papuan energy and commitment include human rights abuses and environmental threats. John Rumbiak is one of West Papua’s best known human rights activists. He speaks here on how much of a challenge it has been to organize a safe and effective system of documentation for recording human rights abuses in West Papua. Tamsin Kaneen and Kate Fibiger, in their study of

Papuan women and the military, provide ample evidence of the need for more people like John Rumbiak who can go to work documenting the seemingly systematic abuse of rights. Denise Leith and John Tabak describe the complex ecological systems of West Papua, and the specific threats to them posed by Freeport McMoRan. Freeport operates the world’s largest gold mine, at the center of the mountain range that spans the length of the island. The “mountain of gold” that is the Grasberg mining concession has created, as Leith documents, conditions for an ecological disaster of mammoth proportions.

West Papuan political activism does not exist in a vacuum. Carmel Budiardjo’s analysis here draws on her four decades of experience to show that West Papua still remains subject to the vagaries of Indonesian politics. Indonesian elites reject the very thought of Papuan “separatism,” but Papuans are equally distrustful of Indonesian offers of “autonomy.” Jacob Rumbiak’s (no relation to John) immensely entertaining life story, which we profile here, shows both to what extent Indonesian policy can shape Papuan lives, and why Papuans might react with feelings of mistrust to Indonesian offers of help.

There is a great deal of creative energy at play in contemporary Papua, and we have represented only a small portion of it here. There are scores of passionate actors whose names are not at all known. There are Papuans in remote areas training to be human rights monitors, for instance, or volunteers at newly-founded organizations in countries across the world who lobby for West Papuan rights. We are thankful to Pacific Peoples Partnership, in particular to Catherine Sparks-Ngege, Beth Lischeron and Rita Parikh, for helping to bring this issue of Tok Blong Pasifik to print. If readers take one thing away with them from this issue, we hope it will be an appreciation of just how committed volunteers worldwide are in their support of West Papuans’ complex and fascinating land. 



# West Papua's National Awakening

by Octavianus Mote

West Papuans are today courageously struggling, in a peaceful and open fashion, for their independence after 38 years living in fear under Indonesian occupation. The Indonesian and overseas mass media say this new awakening stems from disappointment with the lack of *development* delivered by the Indonesian government. The entire Indonesian media speaks with a single voice, incorrectly attributing the call for freedom to the injustices of *development*.

Papuan nationalism is also dismissed by those who understand the social situation of West Papua. Sympathetic outsiders usually see the West Papuan people as not being ready for independence, their nationalist movement as immature, and still mired in backward cargo cultism or other fatalistic religious beliefs. They also claim there is no unity and integrity of the Papuan people.

Indonesian social scientists write in the same vein, giving only superficial consideration to Papuan nationalism. They refuse to admit there is a Papuan nationalism that pre-dates Indonesian nationalism. In the context of overall Indonesian history, they assign virtually no importance to Papuans at all. In the standard *National History (Sejarah Nasional Indonesia)*, for example, West Papua receives the least coverage of any province.

To really understand the thread of Papuans' aspirations, however, it is necessary to look to the historical background of the integration of West Papua into Indonesia through the 1962 New York Agreement, mediated by the United Nations and planned by the United States.

## A glance back at the history of nationalism

There have been three types of nationalism in Papuan history: tribal, Papuan and Indonesian. Tribal nationalism is the oldest, going back as far as the existence of the tribe, and is simply the desire of every indigenous group to live free of

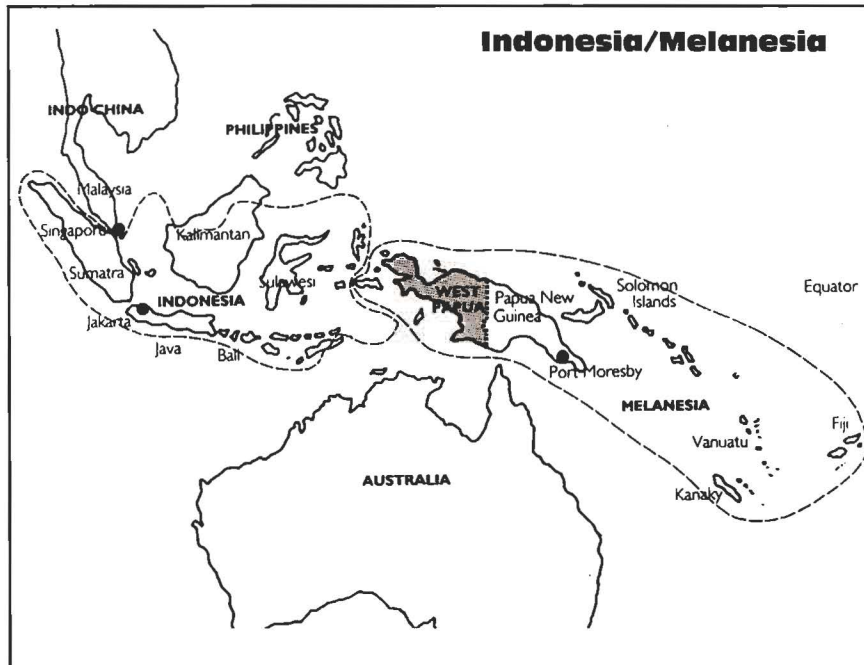
interference from other peoples. This general desire is shared by every indigenous nation everywhere, irrespective of its level of cultural development. There are examples of movements like this in West Papua. The Wage Bage movement for instance, led by an intellectual of the Mee tribe named Zakeus Pakege, promoted a synthesis of Christian values and tradition. The Koreroi movement, a military resistance to the Dutch and Japanese in the 1940s, introduced the idea of the Morning Star, the emblem on the modern Papuan national flag.

These movements eventually faded and dissolved into a sense of Papuan one-ness. The feeling of Papuan unity was fostered at Christian residential schools that brought Papuans

of different backgrounds together. The churches gathered children from various backgrounds not to establish a Papuan political cadre but to gain mission workers. However, the seed had been planted. It flowered as Papuans were treated differently from outsiders, whether Dutch or Indonesian. Papuan ethnic identity was seen as different from Indonesian identity, and still more so from the Dutch. When missionaries sent a few Papuan boys to study religion in Maluku and Java in the 1940s, these young men already felt

different from Indonesians, even though both groups were still ruled by the Dutch.

Formal Papuan nationalism bloomed after the Second World War. When the Dutch realized they were being forced out of the area and would have to grant Indonesia independence, they began to prepare a West Papuan elite that would seek independence. This period saw the formation of Papuan organizations and political parties, crowned by the first Papua-wide democratic elections. In the international arena, Papuans were involved in preparations for independence along with the political elites from other South Pacific countries. December 1, 1961 was a critical date in Papuan history. Several political symbols were inaugurated: the Morning Star as the national flag of the Papuan people, the anthem Hai Tanahku Papua (O Papua, my homeland), and the name West Papua for the country.





As Papuan nationalism was consolidating, so too was Indonesian nationalism. Even though only a few Papuans sided with Indonesian nationalism, West Papua became part of Indonesia. This unlikely event occurred because the Netherlands surrendered West Papua to Indonesia in the New York Agreement of 15 Aug. 1962, without ever consulting the Papuan people. Indonesia took over formally on 1 May 1963, and immediately started trying to sweep the land clean of Papuan nationalism.

The Dutch surrendered West Papua under heavy pressure from the US government, under John F. Kennedy's administration. Although the reason given was ostensibly to avoid the loss of human life, there were more complex reasons involved. For America, only the struggle with communism mattered. Indonesia, a leader of the Third World, had to be kept out of the Eastern bloc. West Papua was seen as the price: a reward to Indonesia for not collaborating with communists. It was as if there had been no 1961 Papuan vote, no declared Papuan aspirations, no West Papuan anthem and no Papuan flag. When asked why the US would not back Papuan self-determination, Kennedy said, "those Papuans of yours are some 700,000 and living in the Stone Age."

To camouflage the decision, the New York Agreement promised self-determination by means of an Act of Free Choice to be held in 1969. But Western states had already decided to surrender West Papua to Indonesian rule, out of

their own self-interest. Even the handful of Papuans who had fought for Indonesia soon realized its system of rule was worse than Dutch rule; but they had no power. Western states, which stole the most basic human rights of the West Papuan people, still defend Indonesian rule over West Papua, with full knowledge that in doing so they are allowing Indonesia to wipe out an entire nation, the West Papuan people. All of the countries that support Indonesian rule in West Papua are united in stealing the natural wealth of the country and condoning the slaughter of its people.

## A New Awakening

Despite enormous pressure, the West Papuan nation has kept the flame of its desire for freedom burning. There have been two main types of struggle. One is guerrilla warfare in the bush, and the other is international diplomacy outside the country. Fueling both of these is the awareness among Papuans that they and their land have been colonized since 1963.

In the area of guerrilla warfare, the independence struggle started on 26 July 1965 in the Manokwari district, under the leadership of 75-year old Johan Ariks. Similar sorts of resistance quickly spread to a decentralized resistance movement in 12 of the 13 districts of West Papua, although today it is active in only five districts in the interior and along the border with Papua New Guinea. Early leaders came from the Cenderawasih Bay culture area, but they now come from all areas: the koteka-wearing highlanders; the lake-dwellers of the Jayapura area; even from places firmly controlled by the Indonesian army like Sorong and the Yapen and Waropen islands. The most important thing about these movements is not their military strength, but that they exist. The movements are a symbol that West Papuans do not accept their colonization and that they are committed to struggling for their freedom.

At the same time, exiled Papuans have been campaigning on the international level. They include leaders who fled along with the Dutch in 1962, former guerrilla leaders who have been given political asylum in countries like Sweden, and Papuan exiles based in the South Pacific. These last have been able to gain support for Papuan independence from regional governments like Vanuatu and Nauru. They also have popular support in Papua New Guinea, linked to West Papua by ties of kinship and close historical connections. But even though Papua New Guinea's 1970s independence movements were prompted by nationalist movements in West Papua, Papua New Guinea's government is dominated by Australia and bows down to Indonesian wishes. Consequently, it has refused to support West Papuan independence.

The patterns I have summarized here were shattered over a two-year period, from the middle of 1998 to the middle of 2000. Now the call for independence is based in a common experience of suffering. It is no longer a hidden wish, but has burst into the open. Following the fall of the New Order military regime led by Suharto, the movement has grown. Its power shook the State Palace itself when 100 representatives of the Papuan nation traveled to Jakarta to make their aspirations clear in a peaceful, open, and democratic way to the new President of Indonesia, B.J. Habibie. The whole Papuan nation had united and cast off the ropes of fear that had entangled them for so long. From mountain to coast, from north and south, whether Protestant, Catholic or even Muslim, whether illiterate villager or educated city-dweller - all united and shouted a single word: merdeka! or freedom.

1999 and 2000 were years of political victory which saw a Papuan leadership take strong direction. Two successive Papuan National Congresses established the Presidium

Dewan Papua (Papuan Council Presidium) and, in turn, set two paths to territorial independence. The first was correcting the false history that was spread by Indonesia. The second was beginning an international political campaign. The two mutually supportive campaigns would help to kick-start the independence struggle for the return and consolidation of basic rights of the Papuan people and nation. PDP tried to persuade the Indonesian government to initiate a historical study. They challenged the government through this study to determine whether or not Papua was part of Indonesia. If history demonstrated Papua was part of Indonesia, they said, Papuan people would be willing to abandon their demand for independence that they had cherished for more than 50 years. And if the study found the reverse, West Papuan independence after 38 years of colonisation would have to follow.

Meanwhile at the world level, the PDP asked the states and institutions which played a role in stealing the political rights of the Papuan nation and handing them to Indonesia to acknowledge that West Papua had been a sovereign state since December 1961. They called for UN-led peace talks that could lead to a referendum on sovereignty for the West Papuan nation.

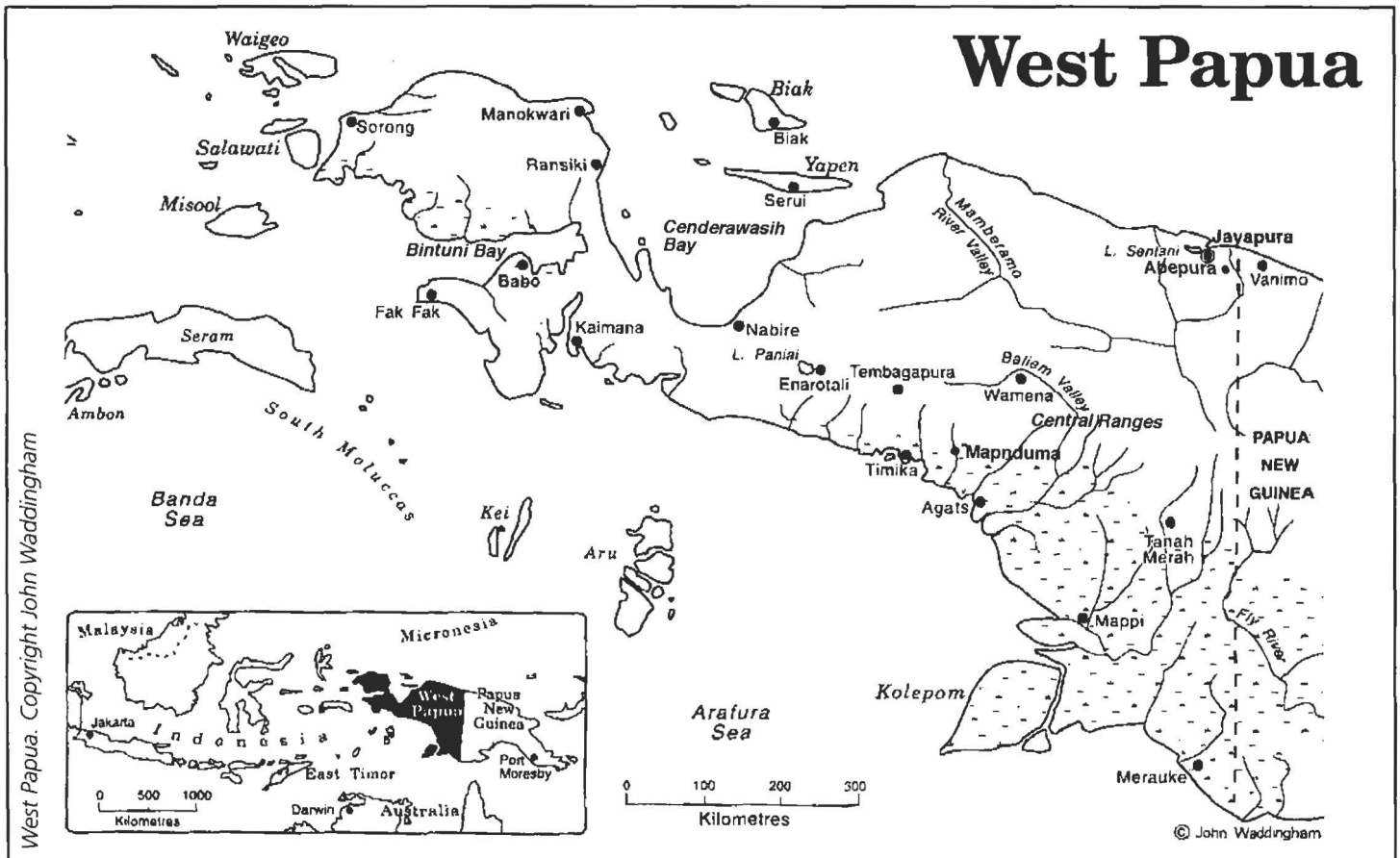
In the framework of the accelerating campaign for independence, the two Papuan Congresses resolved to consolidate the various movements under a single banner. This was crucial, since the main weakness of the independence movement had been its lack of unity. This has not been only because of the objective conditions of the Papuan nation (consisting of 253 indigenous nations, of Protestant, Catholic,

Muslim and animist religions, of different levels of education, and so on). It is also rooted in the heterogeneity of the individual movements, each with their own history. In other words, what was needed was a struggle in which the various movements sacrificed their own demands for primacy and gathered in a united movement under PDP leadership.

It is hard to predict full success for all the Congress resolutions. What is certain is that the generation that suffered through the transfer from Dutch to Indonesian colonial rule should be able to bear witness to the sins of the UN, the United States, and the Netherlands. There has to be peaceful dialogue for the restoration of West Papuan sovereignty, that leads, at the very least, to a referendum. The older generation's experiences can be a lesson to those who were born and grew up under Indonesian rule, teaching younger West Papuans to be resolute in their struggle for freedom.

In the eyes of the world powers who stole their basic rights, the Papuan nation is weak and powerless. But this nation possesses a clear conviction that it has asserted repeatedly to the Western states: the conviction that truth will win and that God will side with those who are weak and powerless. Faith, which is weak in the West, has become a weapon in the peaceful struggle of the West Papuan people. 🙏

*Octavianus Mote is a West Papuan journalist, currently on leave as a visiting fellow in the Southeast Asia Program at Cornell University. He is writing a book on the history of West Papuan nationalism.*



# West Papua Just Won't Go Away

by John Saltford

In June of 2000, the Papuan Congress ended its historic session with a resolution that rejected Indonesian sovereignty and called for an act of Papuan self-determination to take place under the auspices of the United Nations.

In the months leading up to the Congress there was much optimism that, after 37 years of brutal Indonesian rule, the Papuan people would at last have some say in their own political future. Indonesia's President Wahid had met frequently with Papuan nationalist leaders, the display of Papuan Morning Star flags was finally permitted, and the territory was to be officially re-named Papua, replacing the Indonesian-imposed title of Irian Jaya.

Since the Congress however, more police and troops have been dispatched to West Papua in a security clamp-down that has led to even more arrests, and greater tor-

ture and killings of Papuans. The flag is effectively banned and the government still refers to West Papua as Irian Jaya.

At the same time, the authorities are preventing journalists from visiting the territory, and accurate reports are difficult to come by. In December however, the Swiss journalist Oswald Iten was imprisoned for trying to report on a Papuan demonstration. While in prison, he witnessed six policemen savagely beating up approximately 35 Papuan students at Jayapura Police station. One student, Johny Karrunggu (aged 18) died soon afterwards from his injuries. A second, Orry Doronggi (aged 17) was beaten to death as Iten watched helplessly from his cell. Deported soon afterwards, Iten wrote an account of the beatings which was published in several international papers, including the *Sydney Morning Herald*.



Photograph by Leslie Butt



With most of the Congress leadership now in prison and Wahid replaced as president by the more nationalist Megawati Sukarnoputri, there is little prospect of further constructive dialogue between the two sides. Meanwhile, OPM (Free Papua Movement) activity seems to be on the increase with new kidnappings and attacks on Indonesian troops.

As a *Jakarta Post* editorial in December commented: "By suppressing the freedom aspirations of the Papuans, the government may have turned back the clock on the march to democracy not only in Irian Jaya, but also in the rest of the country."

Desperate calls for freedom and images of Papuan tribesmen confronting Indonesian troops inevitably raise the question: Why is an Asian country controlling half the island of New Guinea? The answer to this lies not in the dubious merit of Jakarta's claim to the territory, but rather in the Cold War politics of Southeast Asia during the 1960s.

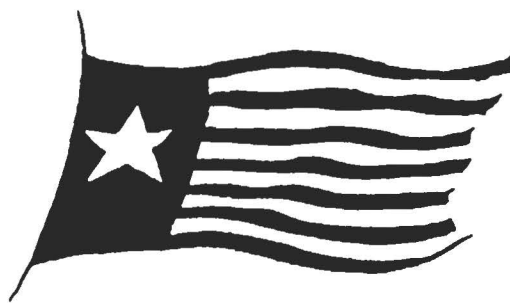
### The Roots of the Political Problem

When the Netherlands pulled out of Indonesia in 1949 they remained in West Papua on the grounds that the Melanesian Papuans had little in common with the Asian Indonesians. Instead, the Dutch slowly began to prepare the country for independence, initially in conjunction with Australia which controlled the eastern half of the island. But while Australian New Guinea became the independent state of Papua New Guinea in 1975, West Papuans were to endure a very different fate.

Outraged at the idea of an independent West Papua, Indonesian President Sukarno turned to the Soviets for arms and threatened to invade the Dutch colony. In 1962, under pressure from the US, who wished to appease Sukarno and keep him away from Moscow, the Dutch gave in. They agreed to sign a treaty with Jakarta handing West Papua over to a temporary UN administration, but only on the condition that self-determination would take place, "in accordance with international practice," within six years.

The UN pulled out seven months later without any consultation with the Papuans, handing them over to Indonesia. As one senior UN official commented at the time, "that there will ultimately be quite serious resistance to the Indonesians is, I think certain; therefore from the point of view of expediency it behooves the UN to depart as soon as the Indonesians are in fact thick enough on the ground."

When a small UN team returned in 1968 to help Indonesia (under its new President, General Suharto) prepare for the promised act of self-determination, the Papuans had already experienced five years of Jakarta's rule. As one visiting American diplomat noted, the Indonesians had "tried everything from bombing to shelling and mortaring, but a continuous state of semi-rebellion persists."



## The Morning Star

The Biak islanders sing an epic song of a wood carver named Manarmakeri. Manarmakeri means both "scabby old man" and "old man of the Star." One day, a spirit voice spoke to him from a flat stone in his food garden, telling him he was like a flower ready to begin a long journey. After his encounter with the voice, Manarmakeri neglected his health and developed a skin disease. He was shunned, becoming an outsider. He journeyed to another island and began to live by distilling palm wine.

One night he discovered his wine had been stolen. Hiding the next night, he discovered the thief was Sampari, the Morning Star; he held him tight until dawn. Fearful of being caught in daylight, Sampari offered Manarmakeri the secrets of the Morning Star to share with his people. But Manarmakeri refused to keep the secrets for his tribe alone, and sought as well the gift of peace and renewal for all people. To this Sampari agreed.

Sampari gave Manarmakeri a manes fruit, telling him to throw it at the breasts of a young woman when he arrived home. The Old Man did, and young Insokari soon became pregnant. No one knew who the father was until Insokari's son recognized Manarmakeri. Manarmakeri performed many miracles. He drew a canoe in the sand that became real. He burnt his old skin, stood in fire and was renewed as a young man. Seeing his new skin was too light, he stepped back into the fire. This time, his skin was the right shade. He showed the way of the Biak to all the people of Papua - the way of renewal and peace that was the secret of the Morning Star. It is for this reason that the Morning Star was chosen to be placed upon the flag of West Papua, where it shines to this day.

- Adopted from Nonie Sharp, *The Morning Star* in Papua Barat, as told by Markus Kaisiepo, an elder of Biak.



Aware of its deep unpopularity, Jakarta declared in January 1969 that a referendum was impractical because the people were too "primitive". Instead, they selected 1,026 Papuans to act as representatives for the whole population. Rather than protest, the UN chose to cooperate. As a consequence, in July and August 1969, the hand-picked Papuans were paraded in front of a selection of international diplomats, UN officials and journalists who looked on while these "representatives" unanimously declared their love for Indonesia and their desire to join the Republic.

Despite the fact that the whole process bore no relation whatsoever to an act of self-determination, there was little international interest. Writing in 1968 one British official commented, "I cannot imagine the US, Japanese, Dutch, or Australian governments putting at risk their economic and political relations with Indonesia on a matter of principle involving a relatively small number of very primitive peoples,".

Another British diplomat in New York reported, "the great majority of United Nations members want to see this question cleared out of the way with the minimum of fuss as soon as possible...the [UN] Secretariat, whose influence could be important, appear only too anxious to get shot of the problem as quickly and smoothly as possible,".

In London, a Foreign Office briefing paper noted, "Privately, however, we recognize that the people of West [Papua] have no desire to be ruled by the Indonesians who are of an alien (Javanese) race, and that the process of consultation did not allow a genuinely free choice to be made,".

With no one prepared to object, the UN General Assembly simply voted in November 1969 to take note of the Papuan vote and with that the UN washed its hands of the whole business. No Pacific island states yet had the opportunity to vote at the UN.

Thirty years on, despite the best efforts of Indonesia and the international community, the issue of West Papuan self-determination has not gone away. Jakarta has spent decades attempting to subdue the Papuans by violence and by colonising their land by hundreds of thousands of Indonesian settlers. But with East Timor free, and Indonesian instability continuing, many Papuans are convinced that their declaration of independence will soon become more than a symbolic gesture. ☹

---

*John Saltford recently completed a PhD. at Hull University (England) on the UN and West Papua during the 1960s, and works at Public Records Office in London. The views expressed here are his own.*

# INSIDE Indonesia

East Timor/humanrights/politics/society/development/environment/women  
education/activism/Islam/internet/aid/elections/economy/reviews/cartoons

## What does the future look like?

I want to subscribe to  
Inside Indonesia magazine:  
4 issues per year for A\$30  
[Australia]; A\$40 [Asia-Pacific];  
A\$45 [Rest of world]



The most informative  
source on issues  
ideas and culture  
on contemporary  
Indonesia  
widely read  
inside and out

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

My cheque/money order for A\$..... is enclosed

Please charge A\$..... to my  Bankcard  Mastercard  Visa

Card no \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date \_\_\_\_\_

PO Box 1326, Collingwood, Vic. 3066, Australia.

Tel: +613 9419 4504; Fax: +613 9419 4774

Email: [admin@insideindonesia.org](mailto:admin@insideindonesia.org)

Website: [www.insideindonesia.org](http://www.insideindonesia.org)

INSIDE  
Indonesia

# Biodiversity and Forest Conservation In Irian Jaya

by John Tabak

New Guinea is the second largest island on the planet, exceeded in size only by ice-covered Greenland. The world's highest island, New Guinea is topographically diverse and geologically complex. Geological youth is indicated by ungraded rivers, V-shaped valleys, waterfalls, cliffs, and frequent land slippage. The island is highly mountainous, with two-thirds of the land area more than 300 metres above sea level, and 14 percent higher than 1,500 metres. The Central Ranges run

unbroken across most of the island, with few passes lower than 1,500 metres. In several regions, the cordillera broadens into a series of parallel ranges



separated by high, flat, intermontane valleys. South of the cordillera are vast swamp forests with snaking rivers, and bays with extensive mangroves. The best-known of these is Bintuni Bay, now threatened by both woodchipping and gas extraction development. Large wetland areas also occur on the north side of the cordillera, especially the Mamberano valley, which is also targeted for large-scale development.

New Guinea has a warm and humid climate, although mountains capture much of the rainfall and cause considerable variation from site to site. The lowland rainforest is structurally and taxonomically complex, usually with high species richness. A typical hectare sample would show dozens of families of trees, with mahoganies, nutmegs, dipterocarps, laurels, figs, and many other less well-known species. Canopy height reaches 40 metres or higher, and vertical structure is complex.

Higher up, the variables of slope, drainage and natural succession brought on by landslides produce a mosaic of vegetation types: "Castanopsis acuminatissima" oaks, towering "Araucaria" podocarps and many others. The lower montane forests are species-rich, although less



Rainforest, Aibondini, Yapen.

Photograph by John Tabak

diverse than the lowland and lower hill forests. Above 2,000 metres the forest is often heavily mossed, with high humidity promoting luxuriant growth on all surfaces. Above 2,700 metres the forest is reduced in stature, is species-poor, and shows much mossing. At altitudes varying from 3700-4,200 metres, one encounters the timberline, where alpine shrubbery and grassland begin.

Most of the plants in the habitats just mentioned reputedly have closest affinities to Southeast Asia. In contrast, the vertebrate fauna (birds, mammals) is distinctly Australian. There is a notable break separating the fauna of Southeast Asia from that in New Guinea and Australia. The break, which occurs west of the Papuan region, sometimes called Wallace's Line after the great naturalist and contemporary of Charles Darwin, runs between the continental shelf islands of Indonesia and Malaysia and the islands east of Bali.

This break dates from the Pleistocene glacial periods, when the islands of Java, Sumatra, Borneo, and others formed a peninsula, "Sundaland", attached to the Asian mainland. In turn Australia and New Guinea then formed a single land mass. The Sunda islands share with Asia species of monkeys, squirrels, deer, cats, civets, pheasants, woodpeckers, trogons, and bulbuls. Apart from introduced deer, all are absent from New Guinea, presumably because they failed to spread across the deep-water barrier. Pigs are the only large placental mammal to have extended beyond the Moluccas, and even they did not reach Australia on their own.

New Guinea is instead home to wallabies, possums, many other less familiar marsupials, birds of paradise, bowerbirds, and cassowaries, which are in turn lacking in the Asian fauna but shared with Australia. To a casual observer, mammals are altogether absent and birds dominate the land. The parrot family is well developed - the lorries subfamily alone comprises some 50-odd species. Cockatoos are another prominent group not reaching mainland Southeast Asia. Since climate changes have left Australia largely without rainforest, New Guinea may be considered the present centre of distribution for many old Australian rainforest forms such as cassowaries, megapodes, fruit-pigeons, lorries, and fantails, among others.

## Plundering the Forest

The tropical forests of Irian Jaya (West Papua) and adjoining Papua New Guinea represent the third greatest remaining rainforest on the planet, after Amazonia and the Congo Region. Rainforests contain enormous biodiversity, but are everywhere in peril. The eastward march of Indonesia's \$9-billion-a-year logging industry represents the major threat to West Papua's forests and the people who depend upon them. Mainland Southeast Asia and Western Indonesia have already lost much of their forest cover, and with it much of their ecological integrity.

During the 32-year Suharto era, Indonesia lost at least 40 million hectares of forests, equivalent to the combined size of Germany and the Netherlands. Vast tracts of forest were granted as timber concessions to Suharto's family and cronies, and to government projects which placed *development* ahead of conservation. In the 1990s, oil palm and timber plantations replaced additional millions of hectares of forest. Today, in spite of international commitments, illegal logging accounts for half of Indonesia's annual timber production. Not even flagship national parks such as Tanjung Puting or Gunung Leuser have been spared. Current Indonesian forest policies have provided powerful legal incentives for cut-and-run resource extraction. They have failed to create effective mechanisms for enforcing even minimum standards of forest resource stewardship.▶



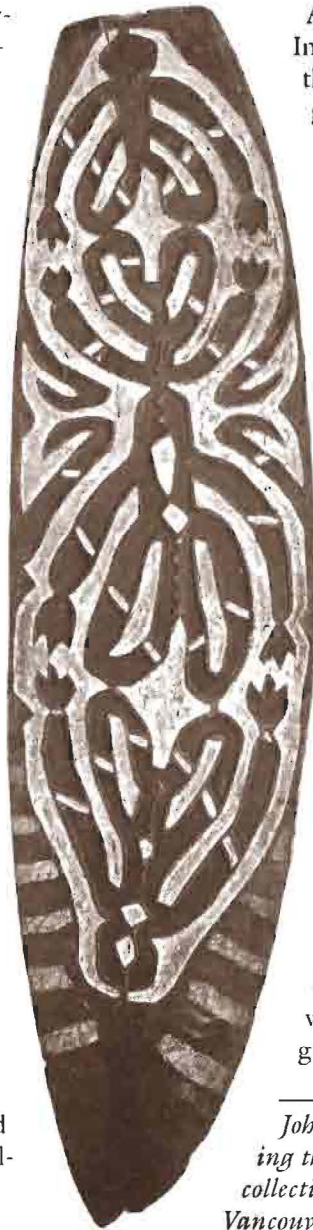
Logs waiting to be processed in Biak.

Photograph by John Tabak.

One result of this phenomenon has been devastating forest fires. The most severe, in 1997-1998, led to the loss of close to 10 million hectares of forest. The smoke shrouded many towns in darkness and exposed 20 million people across Southeast Asia to harmful smoke-borne pollutants for months. Many of these fires were deliberately set by plantation owners who were taking advantage of the dry season to clear the forests and plant export crops like palm oil. The problem was worsened by a drought induced by the periodic El Nino climatic phenomenon, which was particularly severe that year. Scientists predict that El Nino will reoccur within the next few years, increasing the chances for even more fires.

Timber exports from West Papua have soared since the 1970s, but logging has been slowed by the territory's relative remoteness and lack of roads. The main modes of transportation, other than pedestrian, are by air or by water along the coast and rivers. Bulldozers are barged to concession sites and push their way into the forest where loggers drag the fallen logs to shore and load them onto barges. These are tugged to sawmills in places like Sorong and Biak, where they are processed into plywood and lumber, unless they are shipped out of the region.

Saving the Papuan natural environment depends on finding a solution to deforestation in Indonesia. Indigenous people throughout the archipelago see their lands as threatened by logging, oil-palm plantations and other forms of development. Often deforestation is carried out by transmigrants from Java who are unfamiliar with the local environment.



A recent report by the World Wide Fund for Nature-Indonesia and Telepak Indonesia Foundation examined the systematic plunder and destruction of Indonesia's great rainforests and concluded that the solution lies in the major restructuring of relationships between the state, the private sector, and the millions of forest-dependent peoples. Key recommendations include:

- A moratorium on new concessions for palm oil, timber and other plantations until a national inventory of permanent forest estate is completed;
- Strengthening rules and penalties against clearing plantations with fire;
- A five-year moratorium on the transmigration program and re-examining the objectives and methods of this massive resettlement program;
- Legal protection of forest ownership and use by indigenous peoples and assisting them to manage the forests sustainably;
- Legal protection of all remaining forested areas in Indonesia;
- Effective mechanisms for independent citizen monitoring of trends and threats related to forest lands and resources.

The key question is whether government forest policy will lead and smooth the way for these changes, or will be dragged along by popular action-which is likely to turn increasingly violent-at the grassroots. 🗣️

*John Tabak has travelled extensively in Indonesia including the Moluccas and Papua as an ecotourist, and keeps a collection of breeding Papuan lorries (parrots) at his home in Vancouver.*

## TOK BLONG PASIFIK SUBSCRIPTION FORM

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TEL: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTRY: \_\_\_\_\_ AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual subscription rates are as follows: Canada - students \$15, individual \$25, organisation \$40. Pacific Islands-- individual US\$10, organisation US\$15. Other countries - students US\$15, individual US\$25, organisation US\$40. Send to: PPP (subscriptions), 1921 Fernwood Road, Victoria, BC, V8T 2Y6, Canada.

# Freeport and the Environment

by Denise Leith

Freeport McMoRan, a U.S. multinational mining company, operates a gold and copper mine in West Papua. Their Grasberg mine holds the largest gold deposit in the world, and it is also the fourth biggest producer of copper worldwide (1999 figures). The mine extracts ore from concessions in the highlands mountain ranges and ships it down a pipeline to the coast. The mine's overall environmental impact has long been of concern. Here Denise Leith describes the implications of two of the mine's most destructive practices.

With the 1991 signing of the agreement to mine Grasberg, Freeport's second mining concession, the company made a half-hearted commitment to set up its first environmental department. However, growing environmental activism and increasing environmental damage together pushed Freeport to develop a more full-fledged policy. By 1995 Freeport had completed the construction of a \$3 million environmental laboratory and had an annual environmental budget of over \$17 million. In 1997 Freeport also commissioned the first biodiversity study of the area. The company continues today to work toward protecting and categorizing much of the flora and fauna within its concession and in the adjacent Lorentz National Park. But despite these measures, the company is facing two major environmental problems of its own making: tailings and overburden.

Tailings are the residue of the finely ground ore from which precious metals have been extracted. Ninety-seven per cent of all ore processed ends up as tailings. Because Freeport's extraction process does not use dangerous chemicals, and because of the instability of the region, the company does not have a traditional tailings dam near the mine. As a result, Freeport is today depositing over 230,000 tonnes per day of tailings directly into the local river system from the mill site, at an elevation of approximately 3000 metres. The relatively flat topography of the lowlands then slows the river's flow, with the bulk of the waste ore emptying into what essentially has become an enormous open tailings dam near the town of Timika.

To prevent the tailings from spreading across the lowlands Freeport has constructed two levees-35 and 50 kilometres long-through which the tailings river can meander. These levees are expected to rise up to 25 metres in height in some places to contain sediment from a predicted 3 billion tonnes of ore by 2021. Over the life of the mine, the tailings will smother around 370 square kilometres of land. However, not all tailings are contained within the levees. Currently the residue of the tailings, around 5-10 per cent, move into the estuary system or flow down to the Arafura Sea. This percentage is expected to rise to approximately 33 per cent of tailings over time.

Last year an Indonesian Institute of Sciences study of the seabed reported that a natural underwater depression was full of sediment, and stretched approximately 100 kilometres out from the shore. It appeared to contain heavy metals. What percentage of this sedimentation was part of a natural phenomenon or caused by the mine was



Freeport mining trucks.

Photograph by Rob Huibers.

not detailed. However, given company predictions that sediment deposits will rise substantially over the coming years, the potential for an ecological disaster within the marine and estuary environment is of extreme concern.

Despite numerous reports by indigenous people of illnesses attributed to the river, Freeport insists that the tailings are not toxic. The company refers to its own tests and to abundant vegetation growth as evidence that tailings are benign. While the company concedes that about 200 tonnes of copper are lost to the tailings each day, it argues that the mix of limestone at the source and naturally occurring in the river bed neutralizes this copper. The issue of elevated copper levels in the river has been flagged by a number of sources, including a 1993 internal company memo, which noted that levels of dissolved copper concentrations “exceed(ed) fish toxicity levels from time to time.” The company also commissioned two ‘independent’ environmental audits, one in 1996 and a second in 1999. Both audits expressed concern with Freeport’s monitoring process, and suggested that copper levels may have been much higher than company studies indicated. Given the controversy over this issue it is unfortunate that at least one of the ‘independent’ auditors chose to accept the results from Freeport’s laboratory, rather than collect and analyse its own samples.

However, the greatest long-term threat to the environment is arguably not from tailings but from the overburden. Overburden is rock not processed but moved aside during the mining process in order to reach the metal bearing ore. By 2001 the company was dumping approximately 520,000 tonnes of overburden daily into the surrounding alpine valleys and lakes. At current rates around 3 - 4 billion tonnes of overburden will be dumped by the end of the mine’s life.

The overburden currently being produced from Grasberg is naturally high in copper content and low in the buffering agent limestone. Even though limestone is supposed to be mixed with the overburden the proportions have not always been measured correctly. As a result, almost all overburden mined to date generates acid, with a high capacity to leach copper. To address these concerns Freeport says that it has a plan to eventually cover the overburden with about 100 metres of non-acid producing rock. However, the company does not appear to fully understand the dynamics of the water table in the alpine region.

There is a great deal of uncertainty about the seepage of overburden within the karst system<sup>(i)</sup> underlying the dumps. Under the acid-producing rock, water traverses limestone in myriad underground connections that comprise a vast honeycomb network. At the same time copper, aluminum, and iron precipitates have been accumulating on the bottom of



Freeport survey workers.

Photography by Rob Huibers

Lake Wanagon, Freeport’s primary dumping site. While it is accepted that in a short time this lake will no longer exist, what is not commonly known is that, because of overburden dumping, a series of beautiful lakes in the highlands have disappeared since Freeport started mining Grasberg. The unique Fairy Lakes to the northwest of Grasberg may also disappear if the overburden sites rise too high. How all those little lakes and sinkholes in the alpine region are inter-connected is not fully understood. However, with strong interdependencies between the land surface and the underground water system, any change to ground water from the overburden will obviously have ramifications deep within, and throughout, the mountain range.

Today the company is spending over \$40 million annually on environmental programs in its mining concession. Independent scientists have applauded Freeport’s efforts to protect and categorize the biodiversity of the region. Yet despite the company’s expressed good intentions, what cannot be reversed are the monumental changes to the landscape that are a direct result of mining activities. When Freeport departs, the landscape-above and below the surface-will not only be altered irreversibly, but the effects will be felt for at least another hundred years. 🏔️

- (i) A karst system is underground rock made up of predominantly calcium carbonate which is leached by water creating cavernous holes underground.

---

*Denise Leith has spent five years researching Freeport McMoRan, and has visited the mining concession twice.*

# The John Rumbiak Interview

John Rumbiak is a Papuan activist who is internationally renowned for his advocacy work on human rights issues in West Papua. John is currently the Program Supervisor of ELS-HAM, a non-profit human rights organization dedicated to documenting and preventing human rights violations. John was interviewed by one of the guest editors in March 2001, while he was in Victoria on the first leg of a Canada-wide tour. After his trip to Canada, John toured Germany and presented at the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, Switzerland, where he promoted greater awareness and action to prevent human rights violations in Indonesia and West Papua.

**Leslie Butt:** *John, can you tell us what ELS-HAM stands for, how your organization was founded, and what its main objectives are?*

**John:** ELS-HAM is an Indonesian acronym. In English it stands for Institute for Human Rights Study and Advocacy. ELS-HAM was founded by individuals from Catholic and Protestant churches, including community leaders, academics, and NGO activists. It was officially registered in May 1998 but it was first established in 1996 when it was called Irian Working Group for Justice and Peace. Why we did call it that? During Suharto's time, during his authoritarian government system, it was very difficult to establish a human rights organization. So we had to have a group that, you know, sounded a bit "church-ish."

**Leslie:** *Right, safer.*

**John:** Safer. It consisted of a loose network established by these different representatives. But a few days before the fall of Suharto in 1998 we officially registered it with the notary.

The goal of ELS-HAM itself, like other human rights organizations in the world, is to promote and protect human rights in West Papua. But in West Papua we have three major goals we would like to achieve through ELS-HAM. One is working towards demilitarization of West Papua. Secondly, we work to challenge the international community on the legal and political grounds of the question of the right to self-determination of the Papuans, going back to the whole process of how West Papua was annexed as a part of Indonesia, back in the 1960s. Third, we work to educate the people, what we call people's empowerment, through human

rights and democracy. We try to cultivate the culture of human rights and democracy in the people in West Papua. These are the three major objectives that we have underway right now.

**Leslie:** *One of ELS-HAM's activities since the fall of Suharto has been to produce systematic, detailed reports of specific human rights abuses. How do you get that information? And how have you come to see that it is a really effective strategy for getting strong public support internationally for what you do?*

**John:** A lot of gross human rights violations have happened for many years, in the 30 years since integration, but during the time of Suharto it was difficult to document and publicly announce or publicize reports. 1994 and 1995 were important years. During that time I was working for the first big NGO (non-governmental organization) in West Papua called YPMD, the Irian Jaya Community Development Foundation. I was coordinating the indigenous people's desk. I was doing a lot of research regarding indigenous people's rights, land rights issues, and more. This took me to the highlands of West Papua where a US mining company called Freeport McMoRan Copper and Gold operated a mine. This company, legally speaking, had signed a contract in April 1967 that allowed the Indonesian government to deploy military to protect the company. In addition, the Indonesian government considered this mining company a vital project, which means it is one of the number one taxpayers, and employs ten to fifteen thousand employees. For those reasons the government protects it with very highly militarized methods.

As a result of that, the indigenous peoples living around the mine, the Amungme in the mountains and the Kamoro tribe in the lowland areas, both their lifestyles have been changed. I ended up doing a land rights study around the mine and I discovered, back in October 1994, the atrocities that the Indonesian military protecting the company had committed on the local people. I then decided to research this. One project was land rights issues, the other project was investigating human rights violations. This report was then published by the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA). It was published in March 1995 without my name on it. That was the policy at the time because if I had put my name on it I might have been killed. Because of that report, I was almost fired by the YPMD directors at the time because they didn't like the report. They thought that it was very dangerous for my organization. But I said, well I cannot. I was down with the communities and I know what is going on and I have got to do something, that's all.

**Leslie:** *Was this the first systematic attempt to publish an indigenous account of Indonesian assault and atrocities? What was the effect?*

**John:** That was the very first time something was documented. It was the decision of the witnesses who told the stories to me in 1994. I asked them, well I've finished the report, what do you want to do with the report? And they said, don't mention anything about us telling you the story. We don't



want you to get killed. All we want is the international community to get to know what is going on here with this company. So we sent it down to ACFOA in Australia.

We also produced a film called *Arrows Against the Wind*. Some of the friends involved in the film had connections with other non-governmental organizations internationally. We published the report and made the film, and then observers, including diplomats, began to come in. BBC Jakarta-based correspondents visited the mine. The US ambassador also came, the Australian ambassador also visited the mine because there was a lot of pressure and publicity in Australia.

Also, in 1994 for the first time the Indonesian government established the National Human Rights Commission. I thought there was a window for us there. There were a number of individuals and some organizations from West Papua and Jakarta. I was from YPMD at that time, but there was Legal Aid Jayapura, an Indonesia NGO Forum called INFID (International Forum for Indonesian Development), WALHI, which is Friends of the Earth Indonesia, and ELSAM which is Institute for Policy Study based in Jakarta.

We tried to develop internal strategies. After discussing it with the people, the strategy that we set out was to evacuate the Amungme and Kamoro victims to Jayapura. We put them in a Catholic complex, and trained them. These trainings are aimed at rebuilding self-confidence since the people are psychologically really down with the whole human rights problems that they are facing. Give them knowledge of the laws protecting their rights, that there are laws in this country, even at the international level. There are possibilities. There are networks, there are organizations dealing with these issues that they have to be aware of and use to fight for their rights.

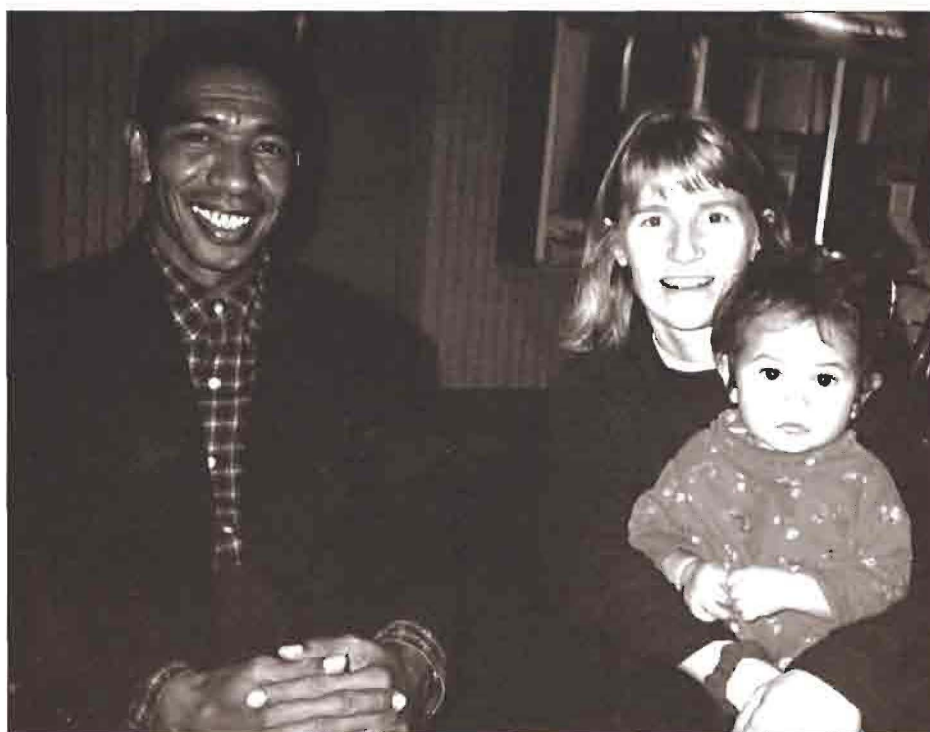
**Leslie:** *Has international collaboration come about because of this report?*

**John:** Yes. Absolutely. Through training, we organized people to go back, together with me, and do deep investigation on the cases. We did put the documents together and handed them over to the Catholic mission. Meanwhile the NGOs in

Jakarta are promoting this issue on a national level, and pushing this legitimate body, KOMNAS-HAM, the National Human Rights Commission, to officially verify this report. Then we sent the more detailed report to the Cardinal of the Catholic headquarters in Jakarta, which was then leaked to the NGOs. Big publicity followed, and we began to link up with Human Rights Watch in New York, and Amnesty International, ACFOA, and TAPOL, and many others at the international level. Those organizations support us at the international level and have put pressure on the Indonesian government to come and verify this report.

**Leslie:** *Did the government come and verify the report? And did they agree with it?*

**John:** The report was officially released on 15 Aug 1995 by the Bishop; and a team from KOMNAS-HAM flew in to Timika and verified the report. Of course the students in West



*John Rumbiak visits with old friend and PPP Board Member, Catherine Sparks-Ngege and her daughter Kireni, on the first leg of his cross Canada tour.*

Papua, the Papuan students in different towns in Indonesia, in Bali or in Denpasar, in Jakarta, also in Manado, they all knew. The ones in Jayapura occupied the parliament buildings. That was the first time the people in West Papua had a feeling that there is some freedom, that the embryo of freedom is coming.

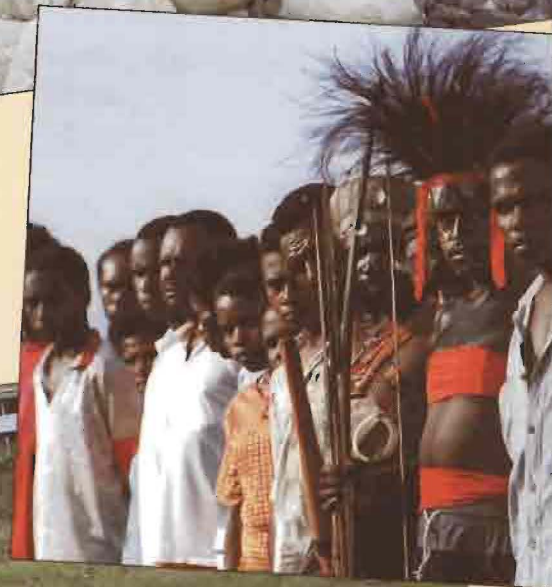
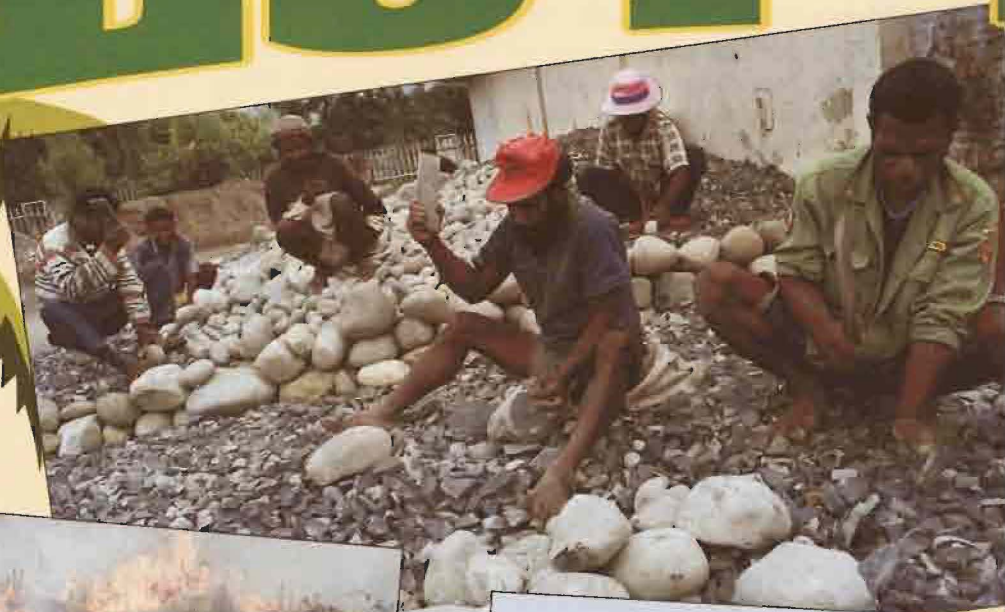
**Leslie:** *What are ELS-HAM's strategies in the present for main-*

*taining high levels of awareness and support?*

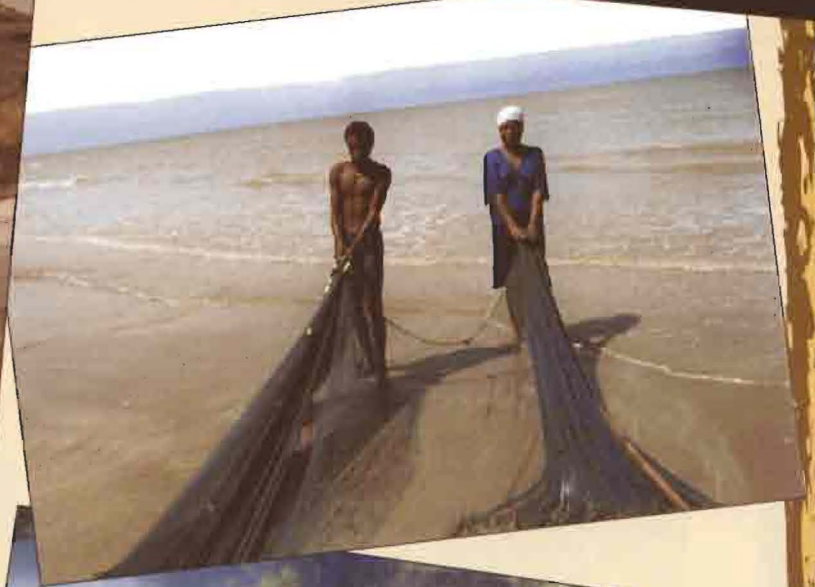
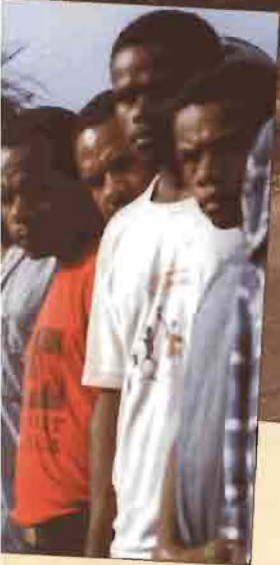
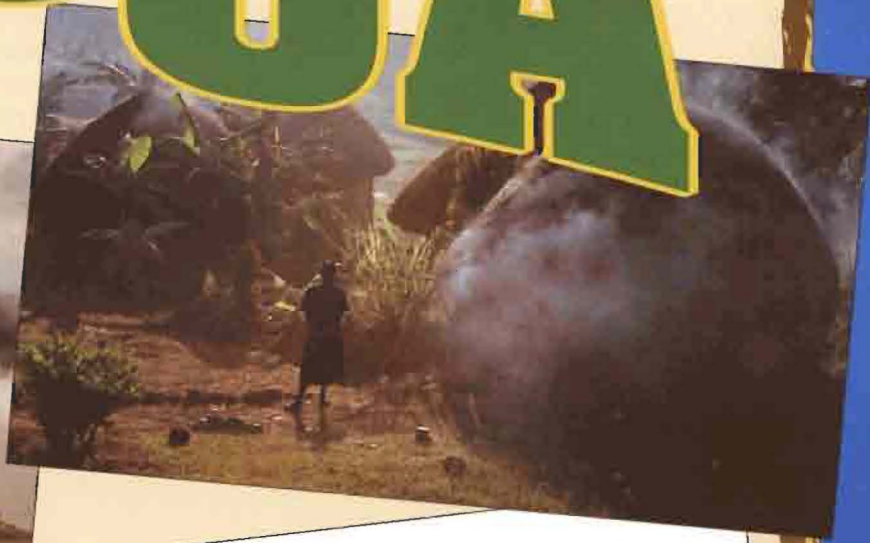
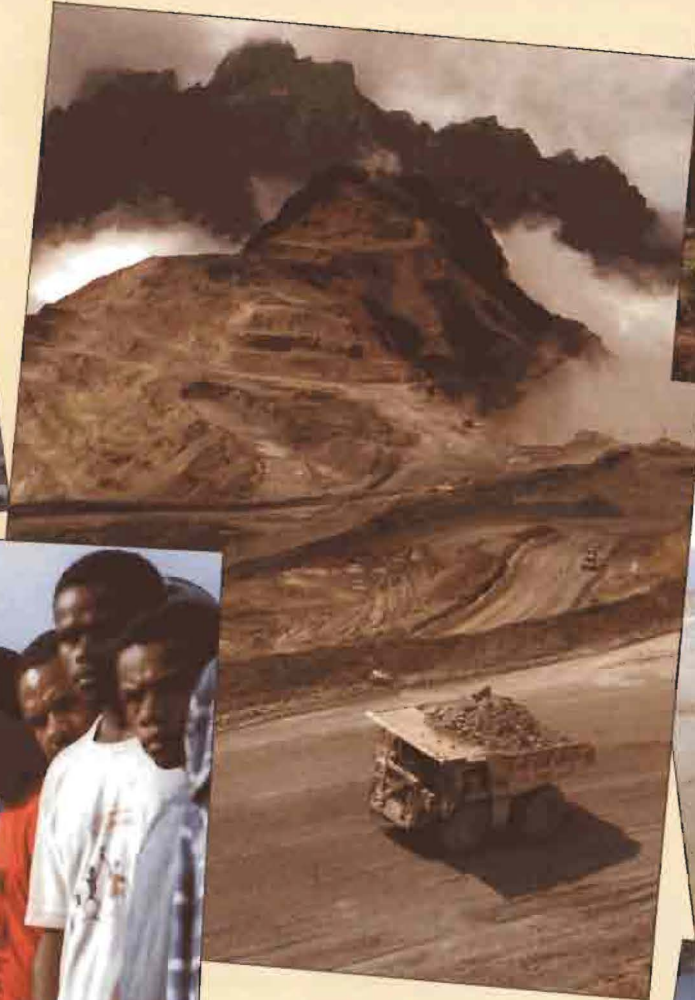
**John:** Well, we still use this kind of strategy, especially in the military-controlled areas. The details are very important. You can't go for advocacy work unless you have very accurate information about what is going on. That's the first thing. The second thing is, let the advocacy belong to the people. You don't own it, you're just helping them. They are the ones who are going to be affected once you do a campaign and everything. So get them strong, and give them training, and organize also at the grassroots level.

*Cont'd on page 18 ►*

# WEST



# PAPUA



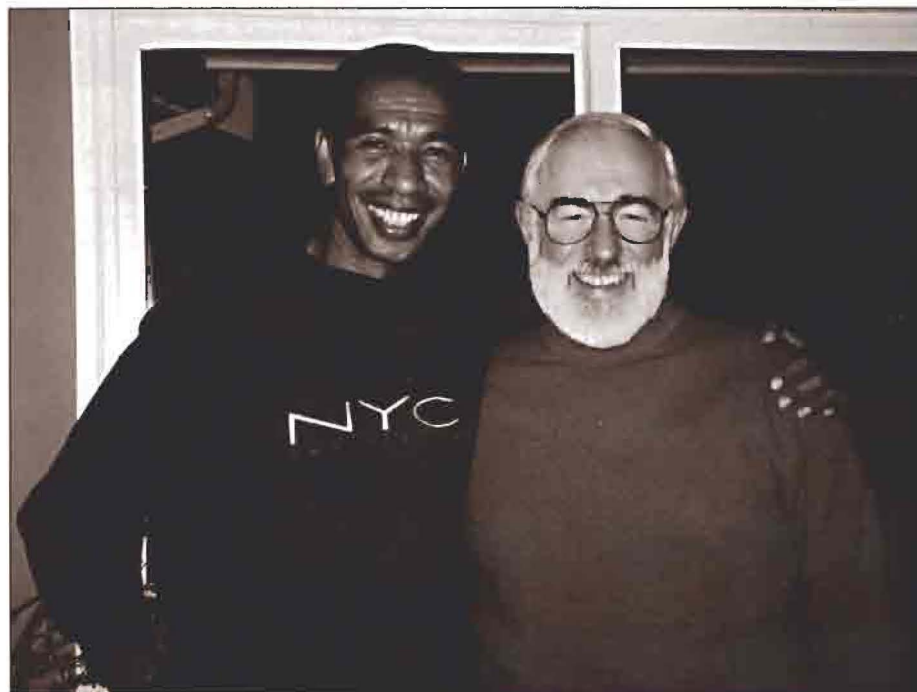
Freelance photographer Rob Huibers (born 1952, in Utrecht, The Netherlands) publishes in newspapers and magazines in northwestern Europe and North America. In his work he tries to express his sympathy for people who live under oppression, but he also loves to photograph landscapes. In recent years, he has visited Afghanistan, Haiti and West Papua and spent six months in a Dutch hospital to make a photo documentary called *"For My Own Good"*, in which the hospital is seen from the patient's point of view. In the 1980s, Huibers taught photojournalism at the Dutch School of Journalism.

**Leslie:** *We've seen the evidence of your work at so many different levels in the last five or six years. West Papuans are organizing in many different areas. What about the independence movement? Do you see your work in ELS-HAM as having a major role to play in the growth of the West Papua independence movement in the last couple of years?*

**John:** At ELS-HAM, we respect the political rights of any individual, but as an institution we don't take any position at all on the political status of West Papua. However, based on our analysis of the Act of Free Choice, I'd like to stress that the so-called Act of Free Choice, which happened in 1969, and the agreement handing West Papua over to Indonesia, signed between the Indonesian government and the Dutch government under the supervision of the United Nations back on 15 August 1962, were both violations of human rights.

**Leslie:** *Have you interviewed people who were involved in the so-called Act of Free Choice in 1969?*

**John:** Yes, yes. We collected all the information, we took their pictures, they signed statements, we recorded their accounts, we filmed them. This is what we found. The agreement itself guaranteed freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and vote. But, what we found in interviewing these people, of the 1026 people involved in the Act of Free Choice, we found they were intimidated, and they were forced to memorize to choose Indonesia. Indonesia, yes; West Papua, no. That was it, it was not democratic at all. They were put in camps and guarded by Indonesian soldiers and this really violated international laws. Our position now is to challenge the international community on the legal and political grounds of the annexation of West Papua itself. We ask the international community to clarify this situation. But, it's a long road to walk.



PPP Board Member Jim Boutilier and John Rumbiak.

**Leslie:** *When you document massacres in Sorong, in Merauke, in Wamena, in Abepura, in Sentani, you're giving Papuans some knowledge about the unacceptability of what is going on. Whether some Papuans choose to turn that into a cry for "merdeka" (freedom) may be out of your control, but they're not unrelated. I'm inclined to stress a stronger connection than you might between politics and human rights.*

**John:** Our point is that we want to campaign and educate people that taking up arms sacrifices human rights. Whatever the political status, we have got to really guarantee that the rights of everybody will be respected. And that is why we are fighting against militarism in West Papua, and that is why we are fighting against Satgas Papua (militia) ideology also. That is why ELS-HAM talks about independence. We want to make clear to the political activists that the values that they are fighting for, and the enemy they are fighting against, are two different things. This has to be very clear otherwise the Papuans are going to repeat the same problems. We learn from our colonial masters. Look at the Indonesians. Three hundred and fifty years learning from the Dutch. They colonize their own people. That is what is going on.

The other thing I like to point out to the political activists is that when they are talking about the struggle of West Papuans and the future of West Papua they have to be aware that they are not only talking about the indigenous people. It is true that in West Papua, the first nations are made up of two hundred and fifty tribal groups but they also have to recognize that for thirty-eight years assimilation has been going on. A new generation lives in West Papua. I could call it the second culture or something like that. There are non-Papuans that culturally are already involved and part of West Papua and they have the right to be there. So when you consider that, you want to think about a political platform that could be inclusive, that could attract everyone, that everyone could be a part of.

**Leslie:** *Are you suggesting that the Freedom movement within Papua is having troubles because it's too narrow-minded, too focused on one of those groups?*

**John:** Yes. Absolutely.

**Leslie:** *Can you tell me a little bit about where you are going after you leave Canada? What are you aiming for at the United Nations?*

**John:** As part of our whole strategy of attracting international community sympathy and interest in the West Papuan case, especially in the human rights area, the United Nations Human Rights Commission has become our regular lobbying forum. We now work closely with other human rights groups around the world, especially Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and



the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Human Rights. The UN forum is important because there are mechanisms that you can use to pressure the Indonesian government. Through lobbying, briefing, and educating the people, especially the experts at the United Nations on human rights committees, we can pressure them to use their mandate to intervene, to call on the Indonesian government. Special Rapporteurs can conduct visitations and investigations based on the complaints you submit to them. It's not easy, because Indonesian government representatives at the UN also lobby. They have a very good network, because of the economic ties that they have with other countries.

We have to really understand the system and the politics within the United Nations. I think the UN is a legitimate body that you can always use. The values of human rights are becoming a part of everyone's thinking. It's possible to produce very good reports to use to influence others. So we have been participating at the United Nations Human Rights Commission for the last three years, every year. In 1998 we managed to convince the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, as well as the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women to investigate West Papuan cases. They both came to Indonesia and did a report on West Papua. We sent victims, the women who were raped by the Indonesian military, and they met with Rhadika Coomaraswamy, the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women. In addition, in 1999, some prisoners, ex-prisoners, and political prisoners met with the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

**Leslie:** *And what are you hoping to accomplish this year?*

**John:** This year, we have a big delegation from Indonesia, that will work with Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and other human rights organization to try to ... it's going to be very difficult ... but we will try to get through a resolution to condemn the Indonesian government on various human right violations that have happened, especially in Aceh, in West Papua, and in Maluku. We want to pressure the United Nations to call on the Indonesian government to investigate these various human rights violations. Second, Indonesian NGOs want to try to raise the issue of a culture of impunity which is very strong in Indonesia. So many human rights violations in Indonesia, but none of these get prosecuted. Last, we want to revisit the recommendations from the Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions, especially on the lack of independence of the judiciary system in Indonesia. Interventions from the executive level are very high, and there is no independent judiciary system at all.

But I am also lobbying on West Papua issues. ELS-HAM is very concerned about extrajudicial killings and torture, the absence of freedom of expression, and prisoners of conscience. Many activists are now being detained without any legal evidence at all, like the five political activists in Wamena accused of masterminding the October 2000 incident in Wamena, where 31 people were killed. We legally analyzed this, and we can't find any evidence to show they were involved in plan-

ning what happened in Wamena. There are also seventeen people who are detained at present without any cause. We are calling on the United Nations, and especially the Special Rapporteur on Torture, Extrajudicial Killing, and Freedom of Expression, and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, to explore the possibility of coming to West Papua to investigate these cases.

The second issue that I would like to address at the U.N. and to the international community is to make them aware that the fundamental cause of problems, and the cause of the continuation of the gross human rights violations in West Papua, is because of the historical annexing of West Papua as part of Indonesia. The people in West Papua continue to challenge the political and legal grounds of the annexation of West Papua. The international community, if they're concerned about human rights in West Papua, has got to pressure the Indonesian government to sit with representatives from West Papua, and with those involved in the "Act of Free Choice." They have to sit and resolve this problem peacefully. No bullets. We don't want bullets. We don't want fifteen thousand troops sent to West Papua. We can do this through talk. 🇮🇩





**CUSO is looking for  
Canadians with skills and  
experience in agriculture, forestry,  
fisheries, environment, and community  
activism to work in volunteer programmes  
in some thirty countries world-wide.  
Standard contracts: 2 years, plus language  
training, basic cost of living and benefits.**

**Since 1961, more than 12,000 Canadians have  
gone overseas to work with CUSO's partners.  
CUSO supports alliances for global social justice.  
We work with people striving for freedom,  
self-determination, gender and racial  
equality and cultural survival.**

**If the time is not right for you to commit  
to an overseas posting, you may want  
to volunteer your time, energy  
and expertise on a  
local committee.**



**Check our web site at [www.cuso.org](http://www.cuso.org)  
for current postings and information on how to apply  
or call 1-888-434-CUSO (2876)  
for the office nearest you.**

# Herstory: Tales of Women from West Papua

by Tamsin Kaneen and Kate Fibiger

In this paper, the authors combine their interests in gender and human rights to look at the impact of the Indonesian military on the lives of West Papuan women. In particular they look at how the security forces used rape as an instrument of torture and intimidation. The authors use a narrative style to illustrate the oppression of women in West Papua in the hopes these accounts will speak more closely to readers. While the narrator is fictitious, all of the events described here actually occurred, and have been documented in ELS-HAM's Rape and Other Human Rights Abuses by the Indonesian Military in Irian Jaya (West Papua)<sup>1</sup>.

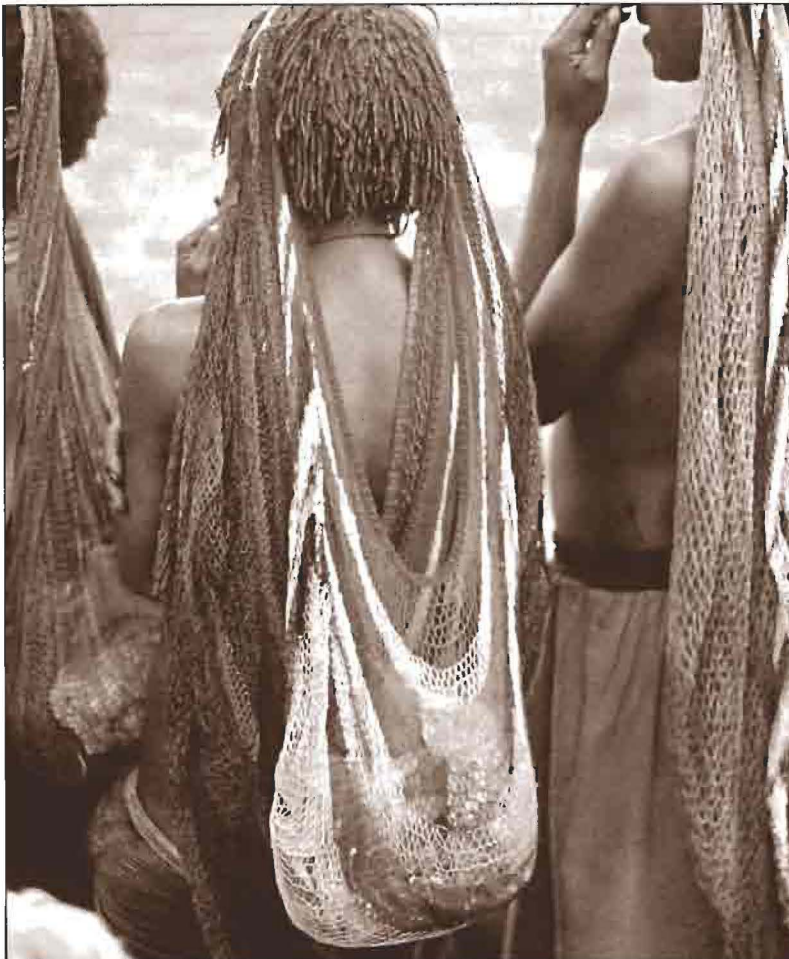
**M**y name is... actually, the danger involved in disclosing my name is too great. I am a West Papuan woman living in the village of Mapnduma, located in the south central highlands of the province. The Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) have occupied my town and others nearby since 1995. Here in West Papua, the Armed Forces have employed rape, sexual torture and sexual slavery as methods of oppression tailored for women; our bodies have become "sites of war", a phrase coined by writer/researcher Saraswati Sunindyo. There is no justice for these heinous crimes, and they continue today, largely unreported.

The military's primary mission in West Papua is to ensure the continued stability of Indonesia's economy and national unity. Since the fall of Suharto in 1998, the Indonesian government has made largely unsuccessful attempts to make reforms within the military, but in West Papua, little has changed.

In 1996, the Indonesian government tried to address the increasing human rights violations against West Papuans by TNI soldiers. The military created a handbook with ten principles that must be implemented by each soldier and unit within the province. All soldiers were ordered to carry and abide by it at all times. This handbook, as you will see, has proven to be quite ineffective. I've chosen to illustrate the military violence against West Papuan women through some of the principles listed in the "Military Human Rights Manual in West Papua," because it shows the extent to which this reign of terror ignores international human rights standards.

## **Principle: *Respect the spirit of the UN Declaration on Human Rights***

First and foremost, the military units are supposed to adhere to the concepts and practices of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Judging from their behavior, I would surmise that they have never heard of this Declaration, let alone put it into practice. For example, TNI soldiers entered the village of Kenyam-I in the Mapnduma area and made it their local base for an operation against sovereignty activists (the OPM, or Free Papua Movement). While they were there, soldiers perpetrated numerous abuses against villagers: killings, torture, rape, intimidation, destruction of goods and property, and restricting access to foodstuffs and other vital supplies. Essentially the entire village was held captive. Anyone who has ever read the UN Declaration of Human Rights knows that these practices mock the intention of the document. ●



Photograph by Leslie Butt

**Principle:** *Whenever a crime or abuse of human rights occurs, report it to the correct authority.*

Since only one murder of a West Papuan by an Indonesian soldier has been brought to court since 1998, and not one rape case has been successfully prosecuted, it is obvious that this principle is largely ignored.

**Principle:** *Respect individual integrity and human dignity*

a) *Respect of individual integrity includes acts and behavior that:*

- 1) *Do not commit torture*
- 2) *Do not treat a person with cruelty or punish them in inhumane ways*
- 3) *Do not abuse and restrict the following individual rights:*

- a. *Freedom of thought, conviction, and religion/belief*
  - b. *Freedom to express or convey an opinion and freedom of information*
  - c. *Freedom of association*
- 4) *Give rights in the legal process as follows:*
    - a. *The right to an explanation about the accusation*
    - b. *The right to know the reason for an arrest and detention*
    - c. *A fair (impartial) trial in court.*

Do not commit torture or cruel punishment? But these are the ways of the military. Basic freedom and the right to a just legal process, these are luxuries that are not granted to the people of my community. Here is the story of two elderly friends of mine:

In October 1994, Indonesian soldiers from the Paniai Battalion 752, stationed in the town of Timika, detained and tortured Mary and Esther, along with three male Amungme civilians. At midnight on October 9, 1994, five soldiers forcibly entered Mary's home. One soldier lifted the mosquito net around her bed with the tip of his rifle and ordered her to come with them. Mary, Esther, and the three men were first taken to a shipping container provided to the military by the mining company Freeport McMoRan, who also provided the vehicles to transport the prisoners. The shipping container was being used as a detention facility, and because it was already full, the prisoners were taken to a police station. Mary and Esther were held in a toilet room that was flooded with water containing human feces. The three men arrested with them were held in a dry room.

During their month-long detention, Mary and Esther were repeatedly interrogated and tortured by soldiers. Esther and the soldiers did not share a common language; in their efforts to force her to speak, the soldiers prodded her with the muzzles of their weapons and placed a heavy iron weight on her head for an hour. They then placed the weight on her shoulders for another hour, before forcing her to hold the weight in her arms for yet another hour. According to Esther, "They

put a paper on the table and accused me of being second in command of the OPM (Free Papua Movement). They told me I should confess. They put a gun in my mouth to force me to give them information, but I couldn't understand them. Then they put a rope around my neck and tried to hang me, but I didn't say anything. So they got a piece of tire and hit me on the back of the neck. They tied the tire around my legs and forced me to kneel. I fell unconscious." According to Mary, "When they brought Esther back, she could not speak. She kept shaking and crying. They put the gun against her breast to force her to talk and then they fondled her breast to find out whether she was afraid or not."

The experiences of women in their own homes can be equally as terrifying and horrific as in the detention facility. Here is another story of a Papuan woman, my sister:

TNI soldiers occupied the house of my sister Elizabeth, who is 25 years old, in Mapnduma village. During the occupation, the soldiers persistently asked Elizabeth to give them her daughter, who was approximately 11 or 12 years old. Elizabeth refused their demands each time and sought to protect her daughter by hiding her in the pigsty. One day when they asked her again she refused, the soldiers beat her, tore her clothes and raped her as she held her baby. Soldiers stood by and took photos as my sister was continually raped.

**Principle:** *Never be involved with, or give opportunity to, murder, rape, torture, or the use of excessive force.*

Upon hearing the following three stories of assault against women, a part of me was changed forever. It is amazing how ugly and destructive human beings can be to one another.

Rachel, 23 years old, was coming from her garden in Kuid village when she encountered seven members of the TNI unit 751. In accordance with cultural prescriptions of female deference to males, she moved aside to let the soldiers pass. The seven military soldiers grabbed Rachel and raped her. Four hours later, she was found weak and unconscious and was taken back to the village by her father. ●





Military personnel raped Amelia after forcing her to stay with them in a house in Mapnduma. Following this incident, the soldiers intimidated Amelia, used her as a maid, and raped her repeatedly for the duration of the military's occupation of the village.

According to Grace and her mother, a member of the TNI Unit 751 lured Grace with candy to an army checkpoint, where she was raped and sodomized. She was unconscious when her mother found her. Grace was three years old at the time.

**Principle: *Never be involved with, or give opportunity to unnecessary destruction of property.***

According to Ruth, 50 years old, after the Mapnduma hostages were released, the military continued to demand the villager's pigs, chickens and other goods without payment. When Ruth was not able to meet

the demands of the soldiers, they raped her.

After I read over this manual, and realized that soldiers were not just violating Indonesia's criminal code but also their military code of conduct, I made the naive assumption that justice could somehow be brought to the women in my community. I couldn't have been more wrong. The act of rape is prosecutable as a criminal offence under Indonesian Law. However, in order to prosecute a rapist, the victim is required to produce physical evidence from a doctor's examination as proof, as well as provide a witness to the rape.

After bearing witness to these stories, hopefully you will have a clearer understanding why West Papuans do not stop demanding basic human rights. Whereas you will be putting this paper down to carry on in your just and free world, I will be returning to my village, living in constant fear. We are not victims who need to be rescued. We are living, breathing women who fight with every step to carry out our hope for a safe existence for ourselves and for our children. 🙏

---

*Tamsin Kaneen and Kate Fibiger are undergraduate students in the Department of Pacific and Asian Studies, at the University of Victoria.*

<sup>1</sup>This is a joint publication of ELS-HAM and the Robert F.Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights. It is available at [www.rfkmemorial.org/center/vaw\\_report.htm](http://www.rfkmemorial.org/center/vaw_report.htm)

Yosepha Alomang, a respected community leader and spokesperson for the Amungme and Kamoro indigenous peoples of West Papua, is one of eight environmental heroes to be awarded the 2001 Goldman Environmental Prize. Mama Yosepha, as she is known to all, has faced arrest and torture for her efforts to protect the indigenous peoples of the Freeport mining concession area and their lands, but continues to work tirelessly for ecological and social justice.

The Amungme and Kamoro have lived sustainably for thousands of years; yet just three decades of encroachment by the Freeport gold and copper mining operation has threatened the very survival of their culture through the alteration of the landscape (including the leveling of a sacred mountaintop) and the pollution of local rivers. Protests by local people have been met with vicious suppression by the Indonesian armed forces. In 1994, Alomang was tortured by Indonesian soldiers for allegedly giving food to Papuan fighters resisting Indonesian sovereignty and Freeport's seizure of their lands. She was locked in a room for a week, knee-deep with water and human waste, without food or drink. Altogether she was held, tortured and interrogated for six weeks.

Under local and international pressure, Freeport eventually agreed in 1996 to contribute one per cent of its profits to tribal organizations, but had to create its own organizations when indigenous leaders rejected Freeport's continued environmentally-destructive practices. Mama Yosepha is one many local people who have brought the issue of Freeport to the attention of the provincial and Indonesian governments and to worldwide attention, while insisting upon non-violence. She has shared her strength with all of the indigenous people of West Papua. She recently created HAMAK (Human Rights Against Violence), a women's group dedicated to projects related to human rights, environmentalism, traditional culture and collective action.



# Survival or Elimination?

## Liberation movements and indigenous rights in West Papua

by Viktor Kaisiepo

Despite 38 years of traumatic experiences under Indonesian political colonization, military occupation and economic exploitation, most West Papuans are now engaged in a psychological struggle for self-determination. They are trying to liberate themselves from their own fears, and to realize their hopes and aspirations for self-development and self-determination for a better future for themselves, their children, and future generations.

West Papuans are fighting for self-determination on two levels: a liberation movement, as seen in the OPM (Organisasi Papua Merdeka or Free Papua Movement); and through an indigenous movement, reflected in the Papuan Presidium Council. Both struggles take place in Papua, within Indonesia, and at the international level. However, they are very different, and if we are to understand the aspirations of the Papuan people, we need to understand the difference between these two approaches.

### Liberation Movements: the OPM

The main objective of a liberation movement is the liberation of the individual (or group) on the basis of universal rights to human dignity. Liberation movements have used uprisings, demonstrations, strikes, civil disobedience and other instruments to achieve the goal of liberation. Another type of protest and resistance uses force as a means to achieve radical social and political changes. For the past five decades this phenomenon has been at the core of settlement disputes over territories, resources and control of power. Almost all parts of the globe have been affected by liberation struggles of groups to free themselves from the control of foreign states or multinational corporations.

The political struggle for a fair, just and peaceful society has brought many peoples and nations to organize and mobilize against any development that will jeopardize their basic human rights. A set of rights has become well established: housing, clean water, education, information, settlement, labour and also security, dignity, self-esteem, participation in gatherings and freedom of expression. These are minimum standards guaranteed an individual within a society. Individuals can then promote, protect, and enjoy their right to (self-)

development in accordance with their societal, cultural, economic, geographical and demographic realities. In many cases, the best way to achieve these rights is to overthrow the national government and/or ruling institutions and to establish a new system of governance.

### Indigenous Movements: The Papuan Presidium Council

Since the so-called “discovery” of the Americas and subsequently the subjugation of the world’s indigenous peoples by the “conquerors,” millions of indigenous peoples have been murdered in the name of Civilization, Christianity and Progress. After more than five centuries the global community cannot any longer deny and ignore the continuous sufferings and aspirations of the world’s 330 million indigenous people. Indigenous peoples have entered the international arena, calling for recognition of past and present wrongdoing.

The collective rights of indigenous peoples have been developed over the past 18 years within the United Nations. There are 45 UN articles embodying the principle of self-determination of indigenous peoples as distinct nations and peoples prior to foreign occupation, domination, exploitation and oppression. ●



Family funeral.

Photograph by Rob Huibers



Maro cloth painting.

© Jac Hoogerbrugge

Indigenous peoples' objective is to regain control and ownership of their land and culture, and to be able to plan their future in accordance with their culture, land and traditions. In principle they do not wish to expand outside their own territory or to necessarily secede from the political entity in which they have found themselves.

### Challenges to these Movements

Both liberation and indigenous movements claim their rights against those of the nation-state within which they reside, a nation-state that is usually not of their choice nor of their making. Guided by internationally accepted human and indigenous rights and laws, they collectively seek to enhance their role within civil society. However, the lack of transparency and good governance within many nation-states has forced liberation and indigenous movements to look for ways and means to combat discriminatory national laws and structures.

For indigenous peoples the main objective is the restoration and recognition of their rights by national governments and inter-governmental organizations like the United Nations, the European Union, the Organization of Asian States, and the Pacific Islands Forum. The centuries-old patterns of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, exclusion, denial and humiliation imposed on indigenous peoples should be put to an end. The acceptance of indigenous peoples by the UN family—a new partnership—has progressed slowly but decisively in a positive manner. The UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and, in particular, Article Three on Self-Determination, shakes the position of the nation-state's

“sovereignty,” a fact that has seriously frustrated the process of adopting the UNDDRIP in its present form without any delay.

Indigenous peoples are today confronted with a new danger: indirect distant marginalization through globalization. Globalization is the newest act of colonization. With globalization, one can say that 500 years after Columbus, the wave of economic colonialism has entered into the lives of indigenous peoples and society at large. For example, the global hunt for and control over (human and) natural resources for multinational industries is again depriving indigenous peoples of intellectual property rights and compensation.

A means to combat the negative impacts of globalization can be found in Article Three of the UNDDRIP, which stipulates the right to self-determination. Indigenous peoples are calling on this principle to be adopted and recognized by the international community as a minimum guarantee for their survival and the revitalization of their social cultural and economic life. They have global allies in the movement against globalization and in support for self-determination: minorities, unions, workers, farmers, women, youth, the disabled and other actors within civil society.

### A Free West Papua

Recent developments in Indonesia have encouraged the aspirations of West Papuans. The OPM is the umbrella (armed) liberation movement resisting the Indonesian presence. The OPM will not accept any dialogue or negotiations and has fought for political independence since 1965. It hopes to force the Indonesians to leave West Papua.

However, since 1985 an indigenous movement in West Papua has also gained strength. West Papuans, since 1985, have been engaged in the UNDDRIP deliberations. Through this process the 253 distinct Papuan nations and peoples have also become part of the international solidarity of indigenous peoples' global campaign for recognition of their inherent rights. The present policy of the Indonesian government, within the legal format of the UNDDRIP, offers opportunities for the West Papuans to call for their right to self-determination. And yet, despite the continuous call by the Papuan Council Presidium (Presidium Dewan Papua, PDP) for a dialogue with Indonesian presidents, the central government has not responded in an open and democratic manner to this request.

The PDP has chosen the path of dialogue to avoid further violence. The recent buildup of Indonesian military presence and the clashes between OPM freedom fighters and the Indonesian army and police have not contributed to a violence-free environment as advocated by the Presidium. Guided by the mandate given to the PDP from the Second Papuan Congress in June 2000, it is clear that the Presidium has a major role to play in the present and future political process of West Papua. Another important factor is the role some West Papuans play in the Indonesian government, such as the governor of the province, Drs. Jaap Salossa.

With the globalization of the economy, and the challenges it presents, it is clear that West Papuans cannot fight only for political independence in the OPM liberation movement style, or they will continue to be exploited by foreign capital and interests. It is hoped that the indigenous peoples of West Papua will create an opportunity to freely, openly, and in accordance with their traditions, redefine and re-instate their identity as West Papuans as indigenous nations and peoples. It is also envisaged that, through this process of de-decolonization, all West Papuans will be able to determine for themselves their true native name and identity as a people.

This story is still being written. The movement for Papuan self-determination is gaining support by groups such as the Pacific Islands Forum, Pacific Rim non-governmental organizations, a growing number of Pacific governments such as Nauru and Vanuatu, and Pacific society at large.

To an independent and free West Papua . . . 

*Viktor Kaisiepo was born in Korido, Biak (West Papua) and now lives in the Netherlands. He has been active for many years in a wide range of indigenous rights campaigns, and is the European representative of the Papuan Presidium Council.*



## Papua as a Pacific issue

For many years the West Papuan cause had virtually no international support. In recent years, this has begun to change with substantial support building within the South Pacific region for West Papuan self-determination and human rights. As far back as the 1950s, West Papuan nationalists made common cause with leaders of other island colonies from the Cook Islands to Fiji. None of these islands were members of the United Nations when it

approved the Indonesian annexation in 1969. Since then, however, several states in the Pacific Islands Forum have begun to raise their voice.

Vanuatu has backed the Papuan cause since its own independence, on the grounds of Melanesian solidarity. In 2000, it was joined by Nauru and Tuvalu. Nauru was especially active at the UN. Then-president Bernard Dowiyogo told the UN Millennium Summit, "it was through the assistance of the United Nations some thirty-five years ago that the people of Nauru secured the support of the international community for a vote on self-determination." He praised the UN for its role in East Timor's long walk to independence, but added that "our Melanesian brothers and sisters in West Papua are still striving to break the imposition of colonial domination and foreign control, following the so-called act of free choice in 1969. It is imperative that West Papua be given the rightful opportunity of a democratic referendum of its

indigenous peoples, to exercise at last their right of self-determination. The United Nations cannot stand by and witness the destruction of the people of West Papua, where already more than half a million have been lost to human rights abuses. We must not in this area witness another catastrophe as occurred in East Timor. Nauru would therefore support a UN resolution that permits the people of West Papua the choice of self-determination."

The UN has not passed a resolution, but the annual Pacific Islands forum which brings together heads of state of the small island nations, did in 2000, calling for a dialogue between the Indonesian government and Papuan leaders. Still, despite the fact that its 2001 forum was hosted by a new Nauruan president, Rene Harris, West Papuans were barred from the table as a result of Australian pressure.

The issue of West Papua, however, shows no signs of vanishing from the regional agenda. Despite the absence, the Forum still mentioned West Papua, welcoming Indonesia's offer of special autonomy (the details of which are still unclear). West Papuans welcomed the addition of Indonesia as a Forum dialogue partner this year. Papua New Guinea, the other half of the island, has consistently shied away from criticism of Indonesia. Outside the government, however, PNG support for the rights of West Papuans has grown.

Significantly, there is also increased support among grassroots people in PNG as a result of the actions of the critical literacy (popular education) movement. For example, West Papuan refugees formed the West Papuan Youth Action Team after awareness workshops sponsored by LICDAT (a Manus Province affiliate of the national Melanesian Trust).



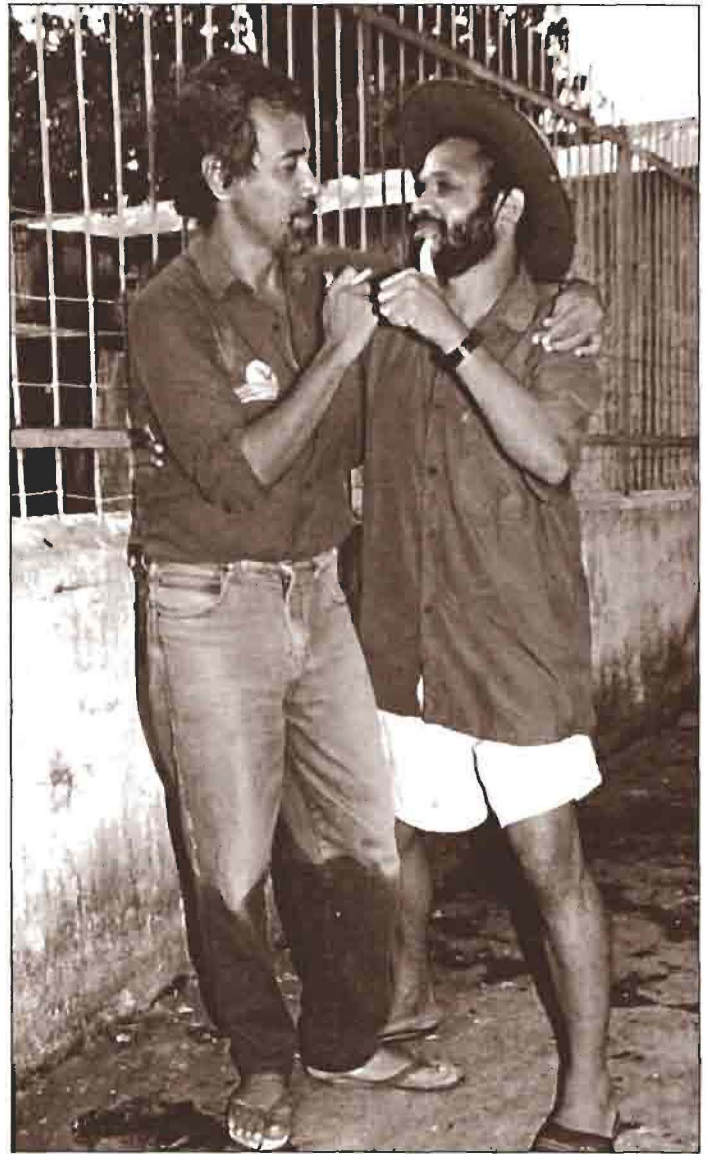
# A Life Story Like No Other: Jacob Rumbiak

Although the majority of Papuans continue to live in West Papua, there are many younger Papuans, mostly men, who have traveled, studied and participated in a range of experiences outside of the province. One of the better known members of the international West Papuan diaspora is Jacob Rumbiak. A teacher, soccer player, political activist, political prisoner, and at present, a refugee in Australia, Jacob Rumbiak's travels and experiences tell a tale of a life lived in the ebb and flow of West Papuan politics over the past four decades.

Jacob Rumbiak was born in 1958 to a Christian father in the Sorong district. Jacob's father was actively involved in supporting the 1950s move towards independence. By the time Rumbiak was three, however, Indonesian troops had begun to move in to West Papua, and Rumbiak's family fled to the mountains to escape the military. Jacob was on the move in the jungle throughout his childhood. By the time he was 11, he had already self-identified as a guerrilla who would fight Indonesian soldiers.

However, in 1977, as part of a government policy to promote conformity to Indonesian styles of rule, certain educational opportunities were offered to youth such as Jacob. These "opportunities" were successful in moving potential dissidents out of the province. They were also aimed at building support for the Indonesian state through gentle persuasion. Rumbiak took the opportunity offered him, and went to Java, where he studied high school and then went on to study geography and mathematics at Bandung University. Not only was Jacob a strong student and, eventually, a teacher known for his oratorical skills, but he was also a first-class soccer player. Jacob played for the national soccer team. In 1984, it was his left foot that scored the winning goal for Indonesia in the Asia Championship Cup.

By 1987, Jacob was back in West Papua, where he used his now well-honed oratorical and organizational skills to promote separatist sentiments. By 1989, Jacob had organized several rallies and was placed on a list of national leaders who were considered a threat by the army. Along with several others on the army list, he sought refuge in the Papua New Guinea consulate. After fifteen days, Rumbiak was removed from the Embassy. He was then arrested, tortured, and sentenced to jail for 17 years.



*Xanana Gusmão from East Timor, and Jacob Rumbiak from West Papua, celebrating "Suharto-down" day in Cipinang Prison, Jakarta, 21 May, 1999.*

He was held in many jails throughout Indonesia during a nine-year period, in both the worst and the best conditions available. For two years, Rumbiak was imprisoned by himself at Tangerang prison in West Java, where the terrible food he received was hoisted by chain to his stone cell at the top of a thirty-foot tower. He couldn't walk, and had huge ulcers on his legs that were chronically infected. Although the Red Cross tried to intercede on his behalf, only after two years was he able to go to what Rumbiak calls "a first class Javanese jail".

There he shared prison space with Xanana Gusmão, the East Timorese leader. For years, political prisoners from remote parts of Indonesia had been housed in this jail, so they could grow their own vegetables and food. Xanana Gusmão appointed Jacob chief gardener. He grew a luxuriant garden using Papuan techniques, and also raised rabbits and fish. ●

"We changed the jail's dry and suffocating atmosphere into a pleasant and peaceful environment," Rumbiak wrote in the forward to Gusmão's autobiography.

Able to live peacefully in this jail, he regained his health and strength. In 1998, when Suharto stepped down, Jacob was taken out of prison and placed under house arrest in Jakarta. Nonetheless, Jacob left three times. The last of these trips was to East Timor. He flew to Dili to help the East Timorese campaign for their 1999 referendum. Following the referendum, Rumbiak snuck out of East Timor by pretending to the guards that he spoke no Indonesian and was from Papua New Guinea. Miraculously, the soldiers believed him. He left East Timor to go to Darwin to testify on behalf of East Timorese, and has been in Australia ever since.

Granted a "protection visa" by the Australian department of Immigration, Jacob immediately began lobbying for awareness about West Papua within Australia. Jacob has been effective in promoting solidarity there. In the fall of 2000, Jacob struck a memorandum of understanding with members of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, a large umbrella organization for many of Australia's biggest unions. In this memorandum, the unions express solidarity with the aspirations of the West Papuan people, and seek the means to achieve a peaceful resolution of the self-determination process that was aborted by the international community in 1962. 🇮🇩

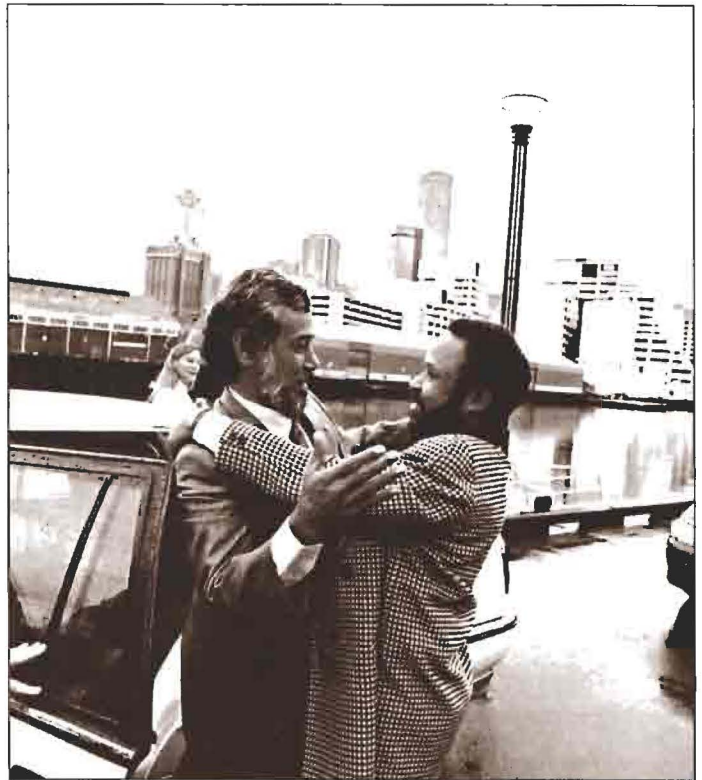
---

*Jacob Rumbiak's life history is drawn from an interview conducted by Drew Penland in December 2000, from an article by Tom Hyland in *The Age*, September 1, 2000, and from a dissertation in progress by Louise Byrne, Monash University, Australia.*

Dr. Rumbiak was a United Nations observer in East Timor for the new nation's historic referendum in 1999.

On 30 August, militias and Indonesia's special Territorial Troops attacked the car he was travelling in. Two East Timorese companions were killed, a third was injured, the car was burned.

Eight days later, on 7 September, Dr. Rumbiak was evacuated from Baucau to Darwin (Australia) on a RAAF Hercules with East Timor's Catholic Prelate, Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo.



*Xanana Gusmão and Jacob Rumbiak, Melbourne, 5 May 2000; launch of Xanana's autobiography "Resistir é Vencer!". The reunion featured on ABC-TV, 7.30 REPORT. Photograph by Ross Bird*



*"In Cipinang, a first class Javanese jail, we were determined to erase and to end the oppression and colonialism in our countries because we believe they debase the dignity of humankind, and undermine the power of justice and the laws of God."*

Jacob Rumbiak, Foreword, *"Resistir é Vencer! To Resist is to Win. The Autobiography of Xanana Gusmão"*, Sarah Niner (ed), Aurora Books, Melbourne, 2000.





# Pacific Peoples' Partnership

PPP was founded in 1975 and has developed into Canada's principal organization working with Pacific Island peoples. PPP is devoted to international education and advocacy on issues of concern for the South Pacific region including:

- \* poverty and community development
- \* human rights and Indigenous cultural survival
- \* sovereignty and decolonization
- \* peace and militarization
- \* environmental stewardship and advocacy
- \* women's empowerment

PPP is dedicated to educating Canadians and strengthening advocacy efforts concerning social justice, environmental and development issues in the Pacific. We also support grassroots organizations in the Islands that focus on a range of development challenges from establishing primary health care and literacy training in Papua New Guinea, to supporting people with disabilities in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, and to seeding community-based environmental resource management and conservation efforts in Fiji.

Our work is sustained by the commitment of members and donors across North America and the Pacific. Please help us continue to support the innovative work of our counterparts overseas as they strive to realize their own vision of social and economic development and change, and to create communities rooted in peace and social justice.

## PPP DONATION FORM

**YES,** I WOULD LOVE TO SUPPORT PACIFIC PEOPLES' PARTNERSHIP

\_\_\_ \$35    \_\_\_ \$50    \_\_\_ \$100    \_\_\_ \$250    \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please address cheque or money order to: **Pacific Peoples' Partnership**  
1921 Fernwood Road  
Victoria B.C. V8T 2Y6

**Thank you!!!**

# Human Rights, Militarism and Regionalism in Indonesia

*By Carmel Budiardjo*

This article is an edited transcript of Ms Budiardjo's talk at the first international solidarity conference on West Papua, held in the Netherlands in October 2000. Since it was written, President Abdurrahman Wahid has been ousted in a political power play by Indonesia's Supreme Consultative Assembly and replaced by his deputy, Megawati Sukarnoputri. It is possible that under Wahid, as Budiardjo describes, West Papuan independence may have been closer than ever before. However the change in government is seen as ominous by many Papuans.

The situation in Indonesia is extremely complex and bewildering and very, very troubling. The political direction in Indonesia is going in a very unfavourable direction for pro-democracy people in Indonesia, for reformers and for people trying to push issues like West Papua and Aceh.

Just a few words first of all about the man who is now the Indonesian President. Gus Dur, as we call President Abdurrahman Wahid, is at heart a reformer. He is a man who has been known for many years as an NGO activist pushing very hard for the idea of reform, a man who believes strongly in harmony, in avoiding conflict between ethnic groups in Indonesia, and in particular between religious groups. He is from one of the main Muslim organizations but he has always espoused a policy of close cooperation between Muslims and Christians. He has a very tolerant attitude on questions of relations between different religious communities, which is very exceptional in the Indonesian situation. So from that point of view he is an exceptional man. He believes also very strongly in reconciliation.

However, he has a very unstable hold on power. Although he actually represents the biggest Muslim organization, his political party has quite a small number of seats in parliament, the DPR and in the MPR (People's Consultative Assembly, the top law-making body, which also elects the president). I won't go into details, but the people who decided to push

him forward are not really his best friends, they are more like his best enemies. So you have a situation where he was pushed forward into the presidency by people who are now stabbing him in the back. That of course weakens him considerably.

Gus Dur took power in a country that is facing many difficulties and all these problems have tended to get worse since he became president in October 1999. In the first place, the

Indonesian state machine, the institutions of the state, are extremely corrupt. They are corrupt in terms of money-this has always been very deep-rooted in Indonesia and has got steadily worse under Suharto. The institutions are also very heavily impregnated by the Suharto New Order and there has really been no move in favour of cleansing them of New Order elements or of this corruption. In particular the judiciary is very corrupt and this is a big problem because one of the essential demands of many of Indonesians is for justice for many of the crimes that were committed during the three decades of the Suharto regime. So Gus Dur presides over a very corrupt New Order-infused state apparatus.

The economic situation which Gus Dur inherited two years after the financial crisis struck Indonesia is still in very poor shape. Many of



*Photograph by Leslie Butt*

the banks are bankrupt. The economy has a huge foreign debt. The prospects for solving these problems are bleak. Many of the corporations that were heavily indebted have been bailed out by the government, increasing the level of debt of the Indonesian state. Poverty is widespread. Close to 40 per cent of the population live in poverty, and 38 million people are unemployed.

## A Militarized State

Of course the primary problem in Indonesia is the military, and this is where we need to look a bit more closely. One of Gus Dur's primary objectives was to try to restrain the military and promote reformist elements within it. He made some progress during the first few months of his presidency in promoting reform elements to senior military positions; but his position within the military is getting much weaker. These reformist elements have now been removed and there is a buildup of an anti-reform movement. It's a movement that is out of Wahid's control.

As president, Gus Dur is also the supreme commander of the armed forces while Vice-President Megawati Sukarnoputri officially plays no role in the military. But Megawati, unlike Gus Dur, has very close military links. She has army people in her party in very senior positions. She actually became the chairwoman of the Indonesian Democratic Party largely because she was pushed there by certain people in the army. Her military ties are very unhealthy and undercut Gus Dur's efforts to rein them in. The military are using her against him to promote their anti-reform movement.

The army is now very discredited. It came out of the Suharto era with a terrible record. Starting under Suharto's successor B.J. Habibie, there have been many reforms. We now have a free press in Indonesia. Trade unions have been allowed to form. There was been a groundswell of criticism over the way the military behaved during the Suharto regime, and calls for justice, for the perpetrators to be put on trial, to be held to account for the killings in 1965, the killings in East Timor, the killings in Aceh that happened in particular since 1989, a terrible incident in Jakarta where hundreds of Muslims were killed in 1984. All of these cases have now come out into the open and people are demanding justice. Of course virtually all the people who perpetrated these crimes are military personnel. Many of the senior generals, going up to Suharto himself, should be brought to justice for the things that happened during the Suharto dictatorship, including what happened in West Papua.

At the same time, as I said, the judiciary in Indonesia is very corrupt. Certain decisions have been taken that may make it impossible to hold human rights violators accountable. The MPR adopted a constitutional amendment making it impossible to try people for past crimes. That is, it excluded the principle of retroactivity. This was clearly done at the behest of the armed forces. This was clearly done under pressure from the military to protect their own people - that is, to protect the impunity that they enjoyed throughout the Suharto dictatorship. What people want is for these military men to be tried for crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The second thing is that the military are pursuing a policy of creating disorders. There is a widely held view that the terrible conflict in Maluku has been deliberately created by the military. Military forces who are operating in Maluku are quite clearly partisan, taking sides in the fighting that is now going on between Christians and Muslims. These religious militias are a continuation of the army's policy in East Timor.

One of the most important aspects of the military policy in East Timor was to build militia forces. The intention in creating militia forces was to foster a situation of civil war in East Timor. They never succeeded in doing that, but the militia created terrible havoc with military support. They drove hundreds of thousands of East Timorese over to West Timor, and we still have a very serious situation over in West Timor. It is important to bear in mind that there is a sense of revenge

within the military against the Timorese, because they lost this territory in a way that was very humiliating for the Indonesian army. This now reflects in the way they look at other situations like West Papua where they are facing an armed resistance as well. There is a great sense of "we lost East Timor and we are not going to lose anything else".

## The Indonesian Empire

The Indonesian army is also highly committed to what we call in Indonesia the NKRI (negara kesatuan Republik Indonesia), the unitary republic of Indonesia. They promote this idea very strongly. The army are not the only ones to do this; many in the Indonesian civilian elite also believe very strongly in the political ideology of the NKRI. For the Indonesian armed forces the NKRI is not simply an ideology, it is the reason for their existence. The theory goes that to keep Indonesia together, the army has to play a role. So NKRI gives the justification for the continued existence of the military. The principle is very strongly impregnated in the minds of the Indonesian military. ●



Copyright: Suara Papua



I'd like to look now briefly at the question of what people call separatism, or the independence struggles in West Papua and Aceh in particular. Indonesia is essentially an empire created by the Dutch, bringing together a huge number of islands that previously did not see themselves as part of one great nation. There is a very strong sentiment in Indonesia that the struggle against Dutch colonialism was the basis for this state to be kept together as one unitary state. Any territories or any people who want to break away, to become separatist or to get their own independence, are regarded as dangerous to the continuity and the existence of the Indonesian Republic. Of course East Timor created a big problem here. East Timor was in a different category because it was never part of the Dutch East Indies and therefore nobody could justifiably argue that this was inherited from the Dutch, because it wasn't.

The Indonesian state now faces the problem of areas that want to break away. The primary areas are Papua and Aceh and also Riau and possibly some areas in Kalimantan as well. So how does the Indonesian state, or the political elite (and here I would include the Indonesian armed forces and the civilian elite) confront this problem of separatism? As I said there is a strong sense that having lost one territory, East Timor, they are unwilling to lose any more territories. There is a strong feeling in the international community as well that doesn't favour the idea of Indonesia breaking up.

Let us look for a moment at how the political elite and the army are actually tackling this problem. My starting point would again be Gus Dur. Fundamentally he also does not want the Indonesian state to break up. He is in his heart of hearts as nationalist as anyone else. But at the same time because he is a very tolerant man who would prefer to solve problems by dialogue and avoid violence and also try to avoid giving the army a basis for their operations. He has tried to pursue a more conciliatory policy towards the separatists. He has tried to pursue dialogue.

Gus Dur went to Jayapura, the capital of West Papua, on December 31, 1999 and made conciliatory gestures towards the West Papuans-not necessarily going all the way and saying: "All right, if you want to be independent that's OK by me". But I think he is trying a different method. His policy is not endorsed by Megawati. It is quite clear that she does not pursue a conciliatory policy. Her views are very much in conflict with his. Although she says nothing publicly, privately we know that to be the case.

Gus Dur made it quite clear that he didn't see any problem if West Papuan people unfurled their flags; he saw this as a legitimate expression of peaceful protest that could go ahead but others in his government were not so keen. That policy was allowed until the MPR session in August 2000. Since then there has been a reversal of policy. This has had very serious repercussions for the Papuan people, because they were behaving in accordance with what Gus Dur was saying, which was: "OK, you can raise your flags". Now the military come in all guns blazing. Flag-raising has become illegal. This will create a huge problem in the near future, possibly armed conflict, certainly a great number of human rights violations.

In East Timor the policy of the Indonesian army was to create a civil war situation. They never succeeded in East Timor and I think this is because of the wisdom of the strategy that the East Timorese resistance movement pursued throughout the whole period of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor. The military is obviously trying to pursue the same policy in West Papua, that is, to create a civil war situation. The West Papuan resistance movement needs to avoid getting trapped into such a situation. ☹

*Carmel Budiardjo is founder of TAPOL, the Indonesian human rights campaign and a past winner of the Right Livelihood Award. Her book *Surviving Indonesia's Gulag* chronicles her years as a political prisoner of the Suharto regime.*

## Koteka! Size is Not a Sign of Status.

The penis gourd – or koteka – is a dried out, hollow gourd which men slip over their penis to cover their genitals. Outside of urban centres, the gourd is standard male attire found throughout the highlands. It is an unusual clothing form that has come to symbolize West Papua in many parts of the world.

Did you know that men from the Papuan highlands do not choose their penis gourds on the basis of size or other seeming signs of prestige? On the contrary, men choose gourds similar to those worn by other men in their cultural group. Yali men, for example, favour a long, thin gourd. This shape helps hold up the multiple rattan hoops Yali men like to wear around their waist. The gourd keeps the hoops from slipping on the south end, and a string tied around the waist and onto the gourd manages to hold everything in place. The hoops give Yali men a hefty girth. When fully decked out, some men are almost as wide as they are high!

In contrast, some eastern highlanders like to wear a large, thick gourd, almost half a metre long in some cases. They tie the gourd close to their chest with a thick red band of cloth. Apparently, some of these gourds are so capacious that travelers on long highland treks will often store items such as cigarettes and money in them. It's as safe and dry a place as any. Men in the Baliem valley, on the other hand, prefer a simple medium sized gourd held in place by a thin string tied around the waist.

A gourd is a piece of clothing. Without it, men consider themselves naked. Just as people look to facial and bodily decorations to establish a stranger's tribal identity, so too do those in the know look to penis gourds. But a sign of status or prowess within the tribe-never! As with cigars, sometimes a gourd is just a gourd.

# RESOURCES ON WEST PAPUA

## BOOKS

- Anti-Slavery Society. *West Papua: Plunder in Paradise* (London, 1990).
- Ballard, Chris. Annual Reports on Irian Jaya/West Papua, In *The Journal of the Contemporary Pacific*.
- Beehler, B. et al. *Birds of New Guinea* (Princeton University Press, 1986).
- Budiardjo, Carmel and Liem Seoi Liong. *West Papua: The Obliteration of a People* (London, 1988).
- Defert, Gabriel, *L'Indonésie et la Nouvelle-Guinée Occidentale: Maintien des Frontières Coloniales ou Respect des Identités Commaunitaires* (Paris/Montreal, 1996).
- May, R.J., ed. *Between Two Nations: The Indonesian-Papua New Guinea Border and West Papuan Nationalism* (Bathurst:Robert Brown, 1986).
- Mitton, R.F. *The Lost World of Irian Jaya* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1983).
- Monbiot, George. *Poisoned Arrows* (London, 1989).
- Muller, K. *Indonesian New Guinea: Irian Jaya* (Berkeley: Periplus, 1990).
- Osborne, Robin. *Indonesia's Secret War: The Guerilla Struggle in Irian Jaya* (Sydney, 1985).
- Petocz, R.G. *Conservation and Development in Irian Jaya: A Strategy for Resource Conservation* (Leiden: E.J. Brill)
- Poulgrain, G. *The Politics of El Dorado: From West New Guinea to Irian Jaya* (London: Hurst Publishers, 1998).
- Sharp, Nonie. *The Morning Star in Papua Barat* (North Carleton Australia, 1994).
- Start, Daniel. *The Open Cage: The Ordeal of the Irian Jaya Hostages* (London, 1997).

## VIDEOS

- *Arrows Against the Wind.*
- *Human Rights, Corporate Wrongs.*
- *Irian Jaya: Stripping the Frontier.*
- *Papua Merdeka.*

## WEB PAGES

### Amnesty International.

<http://www.amnesty.org>

### Australia West Papua Association, West Papua Information Kit.

<http://utexas.edu/users/cline/papua>

### Canadian Action for Indonesia & East Timor.

<http://interlog.com/~cafiet>

### Down to Earth.

<http://www.gn.apc.org/dte>

### Human Rights Watch.

<http://www.hrw>

### Irja.org home page & Kabar-irian newslst.

<http://www.irja.org>

### International Action for West Papua.

<http://www.koteka.net>

### Online Papua Mouthpiece.

<http://www.westpapua.net>

### Photos by Rob Huibers.

<http://www.photo.nl/Indexpapua.html>

### Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center.

<http://www.rfkmemorial.org/center/index.htm>

### TAPOL.

<http://www.gn.apc.org/tapol>

### West Papua Action.

<http://westpapuaaction.buz.org>

# Pacific Peoples' Partnership



Pacific Peoples' Partnership is celebrating its 26th year of working with Pacific Island peoples' to support their efforts to create lasting solutions to the realities of poverty and injustice in their communities and across the region.

Our work is sustained by the commitment of members and donors across North America and the Pacific. Please help us continue to support the innovative work of our counterparts overseas as they strive to realize their own vision of social and economic development and change, and to create communities rooted in peace and social justice.

**YES,** I WOULD LOVE TO SUPPORT PACIFIC PEOPLES' PARTNERSHIP

\_\_\_ \$35    \_\_\_ \$50    \_\_\_ \$100    \_\_\_ \$250    \_\_\_ Other

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please address cheque or money order to: **Pacific Peoples' Partnership**  
1921 Fernwood Road  
Victoria B.C. V8T 2Y6

**Thank you!!!**

