



Issue: The Papua-conflict

Forum: Peacebuilding Committee

Position: Student Officer

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Introduction

The Papua-conflict is a continuous clash between the Indonesian Government and parts of the indigenous populations of West Papua in the Indonesian regions of Papua and West Papua on the island of New Guinea; in which the Indonesian government has been accused of conducting a genocidal campaign against the indigenous inhabitants. West Papuans demand a vote of independence for the region. Acts of violence increase as guerillas attack military forces which have displaced some of the Papuan locals forcing them to flee into the jungle. However Indonesia has granted the UN office of human rights commissioner into West Papua. There is a lack of recognition of Papua's contribution and service to Indonesia as well as lack of government spending to improve infrastructure in the region as healthcare and education are beyond poor.

Definition of Key Terms

Guerilla

A member of a small independent group taking part in irregular fighting, typically against larger regular forces.



Indigenous

Native to a particular place/ are descendants of those who inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time when population groups cultures.

Genocidal

The term genocide has the meaning of deliberately and systematically exterminating a racial; political or cultural group.

Religion

Religion is the belief and worship of a person or a god above all humans, it is a particular system of faith and worship. Depending on which religions the system may differ.

General Overview

The region of Papua is located North from Australia, encompassing the western half of New Papua Guinea making it Indonesia's easternmost province. The whole of the Papua



region as well as Papua New Guinea was colonised by the Netherlands in 1901. However the withdrawal of the Dutch colonial administration from Papua in 1962, has led to the Free Papua Movement, an activist Papuan-independence organisation. The organisation has led a low-level guerilla war against the Indonesian state, focusing on the Indonesian military and police; as well as engaging in the kidnapping of both non-Papuan Indonesian settlers and foreigners. West Papuans have conducted various protests and ceremonies raising their flag for independence or federation with Papua New Guinea and accused the Indonesian government of indiscriminate violence and of smothering their opportunity of freedom.

Many West Papuans have been slaughtered by the Indonesian military since 1969 and the Indonesian administration style has been compared to that of a police state, suppressing freedom of political association and political expression. As well as a UN-supervised sham referendum was held, and just over a thousand hand-picked representatives were bribed and threatened into

voting in favor of the Indonesian rule. Since then a police force has shackled the west region, suppressing independence violently leading to the fact that raising the Papuan national flag can imprison one up to 15 years. Even though all international media and NGOs have been strictly banned from the territory for several years, many of the observers state an estimate of over a hundred thousand native Papuans have been killed since the 1960s which represent at least 10% of the population. There have been frequent reports of inhumane killings, moreover, one study recently stated that torture is one of the reglementations of the government in the provinces.

Most of West Papuans strongly desire independence from Indonesia, the pro-Indonesian ambassador declared that the majority of the West Papua (85-90%) are in favour of a free Papua cause. An investigative reporter, Paul Kingsnorth, who traveled there in the early 2000s, described the independence campaign as a “broad-based social movement, which almost everyone in West Papua if you get them alone, will admit to belonging.”

Furthermore, the Indonesian state is strongly terrified of the possibility of international exposure and have therefore taken heavy measures to prevent it. Alongside with prohibiting absolute all international media from West Papua, Indonesia runs counter-intelligence operation to neutralise and suppress the international independence movement closely observing the campaigners based in Australia and elsewhere. Some of the leaked military documents have expressed strong discontent over the success, activists propagating the

issue of severe human rights violations in Papua. In addition, the Indonesian Government has ensured that exiled Papuan Representatives have been banished from regional pacific organizations.

Another important fact to note, Britain in the west have supported Indonesia in the past decades. As Britain's historical alliance with Indonesia proved that Indonesia was suffering ruthless terror it decided to support Indonesian rule over West Papua. Britain was also one of Indonesia's main arms supplier until the late 90s further strengthening the alliance between the two countries. Many officials have publicly stated that they fully support Indonesia's territorial issues.

Major Parties Involved

Indonesian National Armed Forces

The Indonesian military forces including Army, Navy and Air Forces, in this case responsible for controlling and occupying the region of Papua.

Indonesian National Police

The Indonesian National Police is the national police force of Indonesia and in this case is responsible for occupying and overseeing the local civilians of Papua.

West Papua Revolutionary Army

The West Papua National Liberation Army central command in the Papuan Highlands has made a fresh declaration of war against Indonesian military. The Liberation Army is the armed wing of the Free West Papua Movement.



Netherlands

The Netherlands colonized the region in the early 1900s and in Dec 1949 at the end of the Indonesian national revolution the Netherlands agreed to recognise Indonesian sovereignty over the former dutch colonies. And In 1962 the dutch agreed to relinquish the territory for UN administration.

England

England has had an alliance with Indonesia since the late 1940s after WWII as they were their arms dealer. England fully supports Indonesia and their beliefs.

Timeline of Key Events

1901- The whole of the Papua region including Papua New Guinea became colonised by the Dutch, the main reason for this was the Netherlands wanted to expand control over the British and German in the east.

1947 July 20th - Major Dutch military offensive to resolve differences by force.

1961- Withdrawal of the Dutch Colonial administration in the Papua region led to the Free Papua movement which was an activist group which fought for independence from Indonesia.

1969- West Papuans continue to be slaughtered by the Indonesian military as Indonesian authorities become more harsh and controlling over the Papuan population.

2001- Ethnic violence in Kalimantan as indigenous Dayaks force out Madurese transmigrants. Mass political demonstrations by Wahid's supporters and opponents. IMF stops further loans citing lack of progress in tackling corruption

2010- West Papuan revolution army attack Indonesian military forces resulting in a minimum of 100 deaths.

December 2018- Nduga massacre, a mass killing of construction workers killing at least 19, Indonesian authorities blamed Papuan armed separatists for the murders. West Papua Liberation Army acknowledged responsibility for the massacre.

Previous attempts to resolve the issue

There have been no previous attempts to resolve this ongoing issue.

Possible Solutions

Regarding the West Papua conflict with Indonesia, a strategy to ensure security and the safety of the West Papuan population, should be carefully thought out due to the political and economic interests in Papua. However, if the government goes overboard in restoring security via a military operation, Indonesia will be deemed inconsistent in its commitment to Papua's development, especially if the security is ensured at the expense of human rights principles.

The conflicting interests between the government and people of Papua have created a deep sense of distrust between the two. This distrust between the government and people of Papua intensifies one-sided claim either by Indonesian nationalists or pro-independence activists. The government of Indonesia should balance their state security approach with human security, the safety and wellbeing of the people indirectly involved in the conflict must be a priority irrespective of their race or ethnicity between indigenous people or migrants. The government should also build paths for dialogue and negotiation towards reconciliation in the long run. As well as creating space for dialogue to prevent growing distrust between the public and the authorities.

The government must be proactive and work together with the Indonesian military forces. With all this set in place, it should restore peace in West Papua, all this being done in a non-violent manner.

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