

## ACTION ALERT AA 19-7: SELF-DETERMINATION FOR WEST PAPUA

*As Quakers we seek a world without war. We seek a sustainable and just community. We have a vision of an Australia that upholds human rights and builds peace internationally, with particular focus on our region. In our approach to government we will promote the importance of dialogue, of listening and of seeking that of God in every person. We aim to work for justice and to take away the occasion for war.*

September 2019

*This Alert follows recent nonviolent demonstrations in West Papua for a vote on independence. It draws attention to an appeal for outside support for the people there in their struggle for self-determination after many years of Indonesian rule.*

### The Current Situation

Media reports have highlighted an outbreak of violence from Indonesian police and military forces, and from ultra-nationalist Indonesian militia, in response to large gatherings of West Papuans (especially young people) seeking action for self-determination. Jason MacLeod (QRM) has been linked with the work of *Pasifika* in West Papua, which has been working for a nonviolent way forward. Significant features of the current situation are:

- There was a racist attack on West Papuan students in Surabaya on 16 August. This is part of a longstanding pattern of institutional racism which is not discussed in Indonesia.
- Since mid-August 2019, many thousands of West Papuans have come onto the streets in large and small towns across the region, calling for an end to Indonesia's occupation of West Papua. They have assembled peacefully, raised the banned Morning Star flag, and not attacked Indonesians.
- In Papua New Guinea, East Timor and around the Pacific, people are showing solidarity in support of West Papuans.
- In response the Indonesian government has sent troops and shut down the internet, adversely affecting many government services.
- In an incident on 28 August at Deiyei, protesters who gathered outside the local government offices were called 'monkeys' police and military officers, leading to resistance and the death of 6 Papuan protesters by the security forces. Another Papuan was killed on the same day at a gathering in Jayapura, the capital of the region.

- The Governor of West Papua, Lukas Enembe, lamented that, after 74 years of Indonesian independence, West Papuans are treated like second rate citizens and the state still behaves like a coloniser. Significantly, he has requested that the Indonesian police not arrest Papuans for peacefully expressing a political opinion.
- Several activists have been arrested and detained, whilst others are in hiding.

The recent **South Pacific Islands Forum** communique highlighted the issue as follows:

*West Papua (Papua)*

*35. Leaders reaffirmed recognition of Indonesia's sovereignty over West Papua (Papua). Leaders acknowledged the reported escalation in violence and continued allegations of human rights abuses in West Papua (Papua) and agreed to re-emphasise and reinforce the Forum's position of raising its concerns over the violence.*

*36. Leaders called on all parties to protect and uphold the human rights of all residents and to work to address the root causes of the conflict by peaceful means. Further, Leaders agreed to maintain open and constructive dialogue with Indonesia on the issue of alleged human rights abuses and violations in West Papua (Papua).*

*37. Leaders welcomed the invitation by Indonesia for a mission to West Papua (Papua) by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and strongly encouraged both sides to finalise the timing of the visit and for an evidence-based, informed report on the situation be provided before the next Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting in 2020.*

## **Appeal for Action**

*Pasifika* has issued an appeal for immediate action along the following lines, and Friends can take up these points with their MPs and Senators:

1. Indonesian police and military combat troops should withdraw, and the government restore the internet so that the state is held accountable.
2. Governments (e.g. South Korea) should stop selling military equipment to Indonesia.
3. The Australian Government should stop training the Indonesian police at the Joint Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation, and seek the release of all West Papuan political prisoners by Indonesia.
4. The Lombok Treaty (2006) between Australia and Indonesia should be cancelled, given that it prevents Australia from 'undermining' Indonesia's stability (i.e. protesting at the way West Papuans are being treated).
5. There should be a visit to West Papua by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Canberra  
September 2019