

Human Rights Update West Papua – April 2018

covering January - March 2018

Summary

In the first quarter of 2018, the most significant observations are related to violations of the human right to health became significant in the high number of victims of epidemic outbreaks and malnutrition, which occurred in two remote regencies of Papua Province. The cases indicate a pattern of infectious diseases and malnutrition leading to preventable, considerable and chronic mortality in the Papuan population. Human rights defenders did not report of political mass arrests in relation to the restriction of the freedom of expression and freedom of assembly during the reporting period. The ICP did not receive information of political activists being charged with the treason articles 106 and 110 between January and March 2018, as it has been common practice among local law enforcement institutions throughout the past years. In past years all large political demonstrations on West Papuan self-determination usually happened in May and December. The fact that assaults on human rights defenders and obstruction of journalists' work still occur shows that the Indonesian government continues to control the reporting of critical information on West Papua through strict surveillance of media and activists in the region. The number of extra-judicial killings and victims of torture do not show significant deviations in comparison to previous quarterly reports, leading to the conclusion that there have been no visible improvements in the human rights situation in West Papua throughout the past three months.

Number of Victims 2018	Q1
Extra-judicial executions or killings	1
Torture / Ill-treatment	12
Assaults against / obstruction of journalists	1
Violations of right to health (deaths)	98
Violations of right to health (affected)	550
Violations against HRD	1
Political arrests	1
Treason charges (106 & 110 KUHP)	0
Violations of the right to fair and impartial trial	1

During this period, Papuan human rights defenders reported two cases in which malnutrition and the outbreak of measles had affected hundreds of people in the regencies of Asmat and Pegunungan Bintang because local health agencies did not take notice of the health crisis for months. In January, a Papuan activist and former political prisoner was temporarily arbitrarily arrested and interrogated at a domestic airport because he wore a pin of a political pro-impence symbol on his shirt. In the same month, a new case of torture was reported from the central highlands, after members of the military had allegedly found ammunition shells as they searched a group of highland Papuans travelling from Jayawijaya to Nduga regency. In February, BBC Journalist Rebecca Henschke, who was in the Asmat region to cover the health situation in the area, was forced to leave because she had twittered critical comments regarding the military's humanitarian aid program. Also in February, an indigenous Papuan woman of the Kamoro tribe was killed by police officers trying to chase after an escapee who was then arrested because he allegedly stole mineral concentrate from a Freeport storage facility in Timika. In March, the panel of judges at a military court in Jayapura sentenced the military officer who had killed a Papuan man and severely injured two of his tribesmen at the Poumako Port in Timika to only eight months imprisonment. Also in March in Tolikara regency, police officers ill-treated a patient with mental disorders at the local public hospital.

Read what [UN mechanisms observe and recommend](#) regarding human rights in West Papua.

The information in this report is collected by local human rights defenders. As human rights defenders face hostile working conditions and legal aid services are lacking in remote areas, this compilation of cases cannot be regarded as complete.

Epidemic outbreaks and malnutrition in the regencies Asmat and Pegunungan Bintang reveal government failures



Papuan children in the central highlands

Multiple Indonesian news outlets reported of cases revealing the ongoing health crisis in West Papua. It is mainly the indigenous population, particularly children under the age of five, as well as the elderly and pregnant women that carry the burden of these stresses. The cases are not events in itself but must be regarded as driven by a chronic and worsening food security and sovereignty situation which leaves the Papuan people vulnerable to malnutrition. This leads consecutively to a weaker immune system and an increased risk of mortality due to preventable infectious diseases such as Measles, Pertussis, Pneumonia, Malaria, Acute Watery Diarrhea and other food- and waterborne infectious pathogens.

At least 73 villagers died in the Asmat regency due to malnutrition and a measles outbreak between September 2017 and January 2018. The large majority of the affected population are indigenous Papuan children below the age of five. Out of the more than 550 people infected, at least 175 had to be hospitalized. Even though the first warnings and reports of low immunisation coverage and malnutrition reached the Health Ministry in September 2017, the central, provincial or local government did not take affirmative actions before January 2018, leading to a high number of deaths and the quick spreading of measles among the malnourished indigenous population in Asmat regency.

A similar pattern of cases was reported from Pdam Village in the Okbab district of Pegunungan Bintang Regency of the central Papuan highlands. According to data compiled by a health survey team, 25 villagers died between October and December 2017 due to measles, diarrhea and malnutrition, 23 of them children under the age of five. The health agency became aware of the situation after a group of university students from Okbab had gathered data about the growing number of deaths among children in Pdam Village.

[Read more case details](#)

Army officers insult Filep Karma during interrogation at Cengkayang Airport



Papuan activist and former political prisoner Filep Karma

According to the news website of media outlet KBR, the former political prisoner and Papuan pro-independence activist Filep Karma was intercepted by five Air Force officers (AURI) at the Soekarno-Hatta Airport in Cengkayang on 3 January 2018. The officers stopped Filep Karma because he was wearing a pin showing the image of a morning star flag - a symbol of cultural identity which is also used by the Papuan independence movement. He was interrogated for almost two hours, during which one army member insulted Filep Karma, calling him a monkey. Subsequently, Filep was brought to the nearby police station of Cengkayang airport, where police officers attempted to issue a police investigation report (BAP) that would lead to prosecution. Civil liberty defender, Uchok Sigit Prayogi, assisted Filep Karma at the police station and the police did not finalize the BAP due to the lack of legal grounds for a prosecution. Filep Karma was released at 12.30 am.

[Read more case details](#)

Security force members torture a group of Papuans in the highlands

The local news outlet 'Suara Papua' reported another case of torture in the central highlands of West Papua in early January. According to 'Suara Papua', a group of 30 indigenous Papuans consisting of men women and children were intercepted by military members at Kilo seven in Napua District on 3 January 2018 at 3:00 am as



One of the victims showing the bruises on his back

they were driving by car to their village in Nduga regency. The driver had called members of KODIM 1702 Jayawijaya, because he suspected some people in the group were carrying ammunition to the Nduga regency. Military officers questioned all the group members including women and children until 5.00 am while beating them with empty hands and rifle butts. As the military allegedly found eight ammunition shells, the entire group was arrested and brought to the Jayawijaya district police station in Wamena. Women and children were released after seven hours around 4 pm, while the men remained in detention. The police officers isolated three students from the group and interrogated them separately. All students were tortured during the interrogation. At least eleven detainees sustained injuries after the torture. As the victims went to the emergency unit of Jayawijaya General Hospital after their release, military members allegedly followed and intimidated them in order to prevent the injured group members from seeking medical treatment.

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BBC journalist had to leave West Papua because her tweets “hurt the feelings of the Indonesian military”

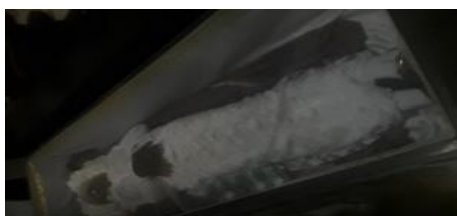
The journalist Rebecca Henschke and her camera team were forced to leave West Papua in early February for allegedly offending members of the military on her Twitter account. Henschke was in the Asmat region to cover the health situation in the area. A measles epidemic and associated malnutrition had caused the deaths of at least 73 indigenous villagers, mostly children. Rebecca Henschke posted a picture of shipped goods at the port on Twitter and commented “these are the humanitarian supplies for the extremely malnourished children in Papua - instant noodles, sweetened soft drinks and biscuits”. The military issued a complaint stating that the journalist had hurt the feelings of soldiers who intended to help the people in the Asmat Regency. They also claimed that Henschke’s photo shows deliveries to local shops, not the humanitarian supplies. The journalist and her camera team were not allowed to continue their work and had to leave West Papua.



Picture of BBC journalist Rebecca Henschke

[Read more case details](#)

Police officers cause death of indigenous woman in Timika



Picture of the coffin, taken at Emakulata Emakeparo’s burial ceremony

The Papuan news outlets ‘Tabloid Jubi’ and ‘Suara Papua’ have reported the killing of 55-years-old Emakulata Kolaka Emakeparo, an indigenous Papuan woman of the Kamoro tribe. The incident occurred on 3 February 2018 around 10 pm, as Emakulata Emakeparo and her husband were crossing the river in a small canoe near the Amamare cargo dock in search for drinking water. An autopsy showed that the death was caused by a head shot. The vice chief of the Papuan regional police (POLDA Papua) Yakobus Marjuki stated in a public interview that the death was caused by a ricochet during a conflict escalation between police officers and local villagers.

Twenty minutes before the incident, mobile brigade officers had arrested three Papuan men who allegedly stole mineral concentrate at the Amamare cargo dock in the Mimika Timur Jauh District. One of the men

jumped into the water in an attempt to escape the arrest and shouted for help. As Emakulata Emakeparo and her husband heard the cries for help, they tried to get closer. Emakulata Emakeparo was using a flashlight to guide the way because it was already dark. A few moments later the husband realized that Emakulata Emakeparo was already shot and unconscious. The attempt to admit her to a local clinic at the port site came too late.

[Read more case details](#)

Disappointment over court ruling in Poumako case – military court sentences perpetrator to eight months

The Human Rights Lawyers Association for Papua (PAHAM Papua) published a press release on the 20 March in which the lawyers expressed their disappointment over the court ruling in the Poumako case. The trial was processed at the III-19 Military Court in Jayapura. Chief Brigadier Yusuf Salasar was sentenced to eight months imprisonment. The military officer had killed Theodorus Cekatem at the Poumako Port in Timika on 9 August 2017 during a dispute over customary fishing grounds between an indigenous local fisherfolk and migrant fishers.



Panel of judges at the III-19 Military Court in Jayapura

PAHAM Papua assessed the court ruling as disproportionately low. The defendant was charged with the articles 351 (2), (3), which sets a maximum penalty of five, respectively seven years imprisonment. PAHAM Papua considers the low sentence as an attempt by the military law enforcement to protect the perpetrator. Multiple shortcomings in the investigation and law enforcement process strongly support the assessment. The investigation took more than six months, before the case was finally submitted to the military court. In contrast to common practice, the case was not processed at a military court in Timika, but transferred to the distant city of Jayapura which made it difficult for the victim's family and the witnesses to attend the trial. Moreover, the military prosecutor had not directly invited the witnesses to the court hearings.

[Read more case details](#)

Police officer beats Papuan man at public hospital in Karibaga, Tolikara Regency



Yuten Gurik being transferred to Jayapura

The Papuan media outlet 'Suara Papua' has documented another case of torture which occurred on 14 March 2018 in the public hospital of Karubaga Town, in the Papuan regency of Tolikara. A member of the police mobile brigade (Brimob) allegedly tortured Yuten Gurik, a Papuan suffering a mental disorder characterized by uncontrolled emotional outbursts. Around 12.00 pm, Yuten Gurik sustained an emotional outburst in front of the church congregation building Yerusalem Karubaga. Thereupon, family members brought him to Karubaga General Hospital. Shortly thereafter, a mobile brigade police officer entered the hospital and saw Yuten Gurik shouting. The officers perceived his behavior as a disturbance of public order and handcuffed him. As Yuten loudly protested against the handcuffs, the police officer repeatedly struck him with a rubber baton. Yuten Gurik sustained severe bruises on his back and buttocks as a result of the torture and was transferred to a mental health facility in Jayapura

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About the ICP: The International Coalition for Papua (ICP) of faith-based and civil society organisations works to address the serious human rights situation in West Papua and supports a peaceful solution to the conflict there. The Coalition together with its partners supports advocacy work and networking at the international level for Papua as a land of peace and documents human rights violations in the region in cooperation with local sources. The ICP recognises all human rights and their fulfilment through active participation of civil society. Therefore, the Coalition sees the need to support partners striving for the recognition of basic human rights and seeking peaceful solutions to the implementation of the right to self-determination. The Coalition supports all human rights including the freedom to express political opinions peacefully, the right to self-determination and the critical role of human rights defenders in a peaceful transformation of the ongoing conflict.

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