

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

Index: ASA 21/022/2014  
29 August 2014

## Indonesia: End attacks on freedom of expression in Papua

Indonesian authorities must end attacks on freedom of expression in the country's Papuan region, Amnesty International said. Recent attacks highlight the repressive environment faced by political activists and journalists in the area and the ongoing impunity for human rights violations by security forces there.

On 26 August 2014, political activist **Martinus Yohame** was found dead, in a sack, floating near the Nana islands in Sorong, West Papua province, with injuries reportedly including a gunshot wound to his chest. Martinus, the leader of the Sorong branch of the West Papua National Committee (*Komite Nasional Papua Barat*, KNPB), a pro-independence movement in Papua, had gone missing on 20 August.

Martinus' disappearance occurred at the same time as another political activist was arbitrarily detained ahead of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's planned visit to West Papua province for a sailing event on 23 August. The KNPB had reportedly planned to organize protests in Sorong around the President's visit and raise the pro-independence "Morning Star" flag of Papua.

In another case in the same province, on 8 August police arrested and allegedly tortured or ill-treated two students in Manokwari district for painting pro-independence graffiti including calls for an independence referendum for Papua. The pair, **Robert Yelemaken**, a 16-year old high school student, and **Oni Wea**, a 21-year old university student, were also KNPB activists. They were hit on the head and face with a rifle butt and kicked by the police. Both were forced to roll in a drain filled with dirty water and to drink paint. They were then taken to the Manokwari District Police Station where the beatings allegedly continued.

Robert Yelemaken has since been released, but Oni Wea is facing charges of 'incitement' under Article 160 of Indonesia's Criminal Code.

Two French journalists arrested by police on 6 August in Wamena, Papua province, remain in detention for immigration violations. **Thomas Dandois** and **Valentine Bourrat** were reportedly making a documentary on the separatist movement in the Papuan region. Their arrests highlight the ongoing restrictions faced by international journalists, human rights organizations and other observers to access the provinces of Papua and West Papua.

**Areki Wanimbo**, the Head of the Lani Besar Tribal Council (*Dewan Adat*), who had met the two journalists, was also arrested by police on the same day and accused of supporting separatist activities. He has since been charged with "rebellion" under Articles 106 and 110 of the Criminal Code (crimes against the security of the state). These provisions have been arbitrarily used to imprison dozens of individuals in Papua for their peaceful political activism, some for as long as 20 years.

Amnesty International has long called for free and unimpeded access to the Papuan region for international journalists and human rights organizations and welcomes pledges by President-elect Joko Widodo in June 2014 that he would open up the region if elected.

The rights to freedom expression, opinion and peaceful assembly are guaranteed under Indonesia's Constitution and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Indonesia is a party.

Amnesty International is calling for the Indonesian authorities to repeal or else amend laws that restrict the right to freedom of expression, including Articles 106 and 110 of the Criminal Code, to comply with international human rights law and standards.

The organization takes no position whatsoever on the political status of any province of Indonesia, including calls for independence. However, the organization believes that the right to freedom of expression includes the right to peacefully advocate referendums, independence or other political solutions.

The attacks on freedom of expression must end, and all prisoners of conscience – those, like university student Oni Wea, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression – must be immediately and unconditionally released.

Further, the authorities must carry out prompt, thorough, competent, and impartial investigations into the killing of Martinus Yohame and all allegations of torture and ill-treatment. Perpetrators of these crimes must be brought to justice in fair trials without recourse to the death penalty, and victims and their families should be provided with reparation.