



Armed Conflicts Report

Indonesia - West Papua (Irian Jaya) (1969 - first combat deaths)

Update January 2005

Summary

Type of Conflict

Parties to the Conflict

Status of the Fighting

Number of Deaths

Political Developments

Background

Arms Sources

Economic Factors

Summary:

2004 *Minor clashes between rival groups and sporadic low-intensity fighting between government forces and rebels continued in 2004 but fewer than 50 deaths can be attributed to the conflict since 2002. Plans to divide the province and Indonesian reluctance to enforce special autonomy for the Papua regions prolonged political tensions, however.*

2003 Sporadic fighting between rebel fighters and Indonesian security forces continued in 2003. In addition, protests over a government initiative to divide the province led to clashes between rival groups in August. Nevertheless, fighting intensity remained low, resulting in approximately 30 deaths.

2002 Tensions persisted as the Indonesia military and West Papuan police stepped up efforts against the separatist movement. Even so, there were fewer reported casualties than for 2001.

2001 Fighting between Indonesian government forces and rebels was reported throughout the province, with a major attack by the rebels in the Central Highlands region. In October, Indonesia's parliament passed a sweeping autonomy bill for Irian Jaya that would give the inhabitants of the province greater self-governance as well as the largest share of resource revenues. Many inhabitants, including the rebels, dismissed the bill and called for outright independence. The death toll for the year was down from 2000 but still there were dozens of reported deaths.

2000 The failure of talks at a six day congress in Jayapura and a government ban on raising the "Morning Star" independence flags resulted in an increase in clashes in dozens of towns and villages. There were reports that the Indonesian military moved thousands of troops into Papua and was supporting the establishment of "pro-Jakarta" militias, known as the Red and White Task Force. At least 100 people, mostly civilians, were killed in clashes between separatists and government forces this year.

1999 Flag-raising and demonstrations organized by pro-independence groups were met with violence by government security forces. Armed insurgents also committed killings and kidnappings, yet conflict casualties were relatively low and fewer than during 1998.

1998 Following the resignation of President Suharto in May, security forces shot civilians in response to some of the pro-independence demonstrations held across Irian Jaya. There were also reports of military attacks on villagers thought to be supporting rebels.

1999 Government military operations against separatists continued in 1997 and at least one clash between indigenous peoples and the security forces resulted in several deaths.

1996 A government forces' offensive on rebels holding foreign hostages, riots, and other incidents resulted in more conflict deaths in 1996. There also were persistent reports of arbitrary arrest, detention, and torture of civilians by the military.

1995 In the spring, Indonesian forces killed several civilians near the Freeport copper mine according to one report, and stepped up activity near the border following an October OPM rebel attack on an Indonesian consulate in Papua New Guinea.

Type of Conflict:

State formation

Parties to the Conflict:

Government:

1) Indonesian Armed Forces

President Suharto and the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI -- later the TNI), until 1998. Suharto was replaced by his Vice-President Habibie for a short term, Abdurrahman Wahid was elected President in October 1999, and Megawati Sukarnoputri was elected President in July of 2001. Independent media reports suggest 15,000 Indonesian armed forces members are stationed in West Papua.

Former Army General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, campaigning on economic and security issues, won a September 2004 election by a wide margin and is now the President of Indonesia

"Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono won by a huge margin, giving him a powerful mandate, which he has promised to use well." [BBC News, October 9, 2004]

2) Barisan Merah Putih

A paramilitary group created by the state to fight the Satgas Papua.

"Human Rights Watch expressed concern that a convicted human rights abuser in East Timor, Eurico Guterres, the former leader of the notorious Aitarak militia, recently announced that he now heads an organization with 18,000 members, 28 branch officers and the funds to fight separatists in Papua province... Guterres claims that his organization is registered with the Indonesian government." [*Indonesia : Military Must Control Conduct in Aceh - Human Rights Watch*, December 24, 2003]

"A human rights group says it has obtained documentary evidence linking the Indonesian military with East Timor-style militias in Papua province." [*The Washington Times*, March 3, 2002]

Rebels:

1) Free Papua Movement/ Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM). The OPM is the armed wing of the independence movement and the main leader is Kelly Kwalik. Attempts were made in 2002 to develop tighter ideological and operational links among leaders of the OPM.

"The [Free Papua] movement is said to comprise a loose grouping of tribesmen, armed mainly with spears, bows and arrows..." [*Associated Press*, September 4, 2003]

"Although distinct guerilla commanders still balk at creating a centralised province-wide military command, these disparate forces are aiming to adopt one 'concept and strategy.'" [*The Australian*, January 29, 2002]

"Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM)... has been conducting a sporadic guerrilla campaign since 1970 against Jakarta 's rule in Irian Jaya." [*Guardian Weekly*, October 29, 1995]

2) The Presidium of the Papuan Council, a generally peaceful coalition of pro-independence organizations. Presidium Chairman Theys Eluay was murdered in November 2001, allegedly by Indonesian security forces.

3) Satgas Papua, pro-independence militia.

Status of Fighting:

2004 Sporadic and low intensity fighting between government and rebel forces continued, but with few major incidents.

"Suspected rebels ambushed an army patrol Tuesday (17/8/04), sparking a two-hour clash..." [*Laksmiana.net*, August 18, 2004]

2003 Sporadic, low-level fighting continued between members of the Free Papua Movement and Indonesian security forces, with the most intense clashes occurring during government offensives undertaken in April and November. A controversial government proposal to divide the province led to violent protests in August, as supporters of the plan clashed with opponents in the town of Timika.

"Indonesian soldiers killed 10 separatist rebels including a local leader in a pre-dawn raid Wednesday in Papua province, the military said.... The dead included Yustinus Murib, a district leader of the Free Papua Movement, [a military spokesman] said.... On Sunday a workman was shot dead and three people, including a policeman, were wounded in an attack by suspected separatist rebels in Enarotali district." [*Agence France Presse*, November 5, 2003]

"Indonesia will deploy 2,000 additional troops in its easternmost province of Papua after recent anti-government protests left five people dead, its military commander said. Dozens more were injured by spears and arrows during violent protests last month in Timika..." [*Associated Press*, September 4, 2003]

"The clashes [in Timika] have pitted thousands of mostly Amungme hill tribesmen who oppose the establishment of a new province of Central Irian Jaya against hundreds of supporters of the plan." [*Agence France Presse*, August 27, 2003]

"The death in Indonesian military custody of a Papuan man, Yapenas Murib, needs an independent investigation, Human Rights Watch said today.... The death of Yapenas on April 15, 2003 was reported by local human rights groups." [*Indonesia : Death in Custody Increases Fear in Papua - Human Rights Watch*, April 17, 2003]

2002 Although clashes between separatist rebels and the Indonesian military remained sporadic and generally under-reported, the murder of three civilians, including two Americans, at the Freeport Mine attracted international attention to the independence struggle in West Papua. In response to the attack, which American and Australian sources later attributed to Indonesian special forces, the Indonesian military and West Papuan police increased efforts to eliminate key members of the independence movement, and continued to target civilians.

"There are reports today that Australian intelligence has linked Indonesia's military to an ambush at West Papua's Freeport mine two months ago. Two Americans and one Indonesian were shot and killed." [*Australian Broadcasting Association*, November 5, 2002]

"Tensions between Jakarta and Papua's independence movement have escalated following the weekend attack near the giant Freeport gold mine in Papua... There are concerns Jakarta will now crackdown further on the independence movement to try and prevent Papua from becoming 'another East Timor.'" [*Asia Pacific Radio*, September 9, 2002]

2001 Fighting between Indonesian army troops and separatist rebels continued throughout 2001. In October the rebels launched an offensive in the Central Highlands region, and briefly held the town of Ilaga. Other attacks were also reported in different parts of the province.

"Separatist rebels in Indonesia's Irian Jaya province have killed four members of an army special forces brigade in a clash near the border with Papua New Guinea." [*BBC*, February 4, 2001]

"The Indonesian authorities in Irian Jaya say six people, including five riot police, have been killed in the west of the province. The police were believed to have been guarding a logging company in an area known as the Birds Head peninsular when they were attacked." [*BBC*, June 13, 2001]

"Separatist rebels in the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya have launched an unprecedented attack, occupying a town in the Central Highlands region. Hundreds of guerillas armed with machetes and bows and arrows are reported to have attacked the town of Ilaga. According to senior military officials, one of the rebels was killed and at least one soldier injured." [*BBC*, October 1, 2001]

2000 The failure of talks at a six day congress in Jayapura and a government ban on raising the "Morning Star" independence flags resulted in an increase in bloody clashes in dozens of towns and villages. There were reports that the Indonesian military moved thousands of troops into Papua and was supporting the establishment of "pro-Jakarta" militias, known as the Red and White Task Force.

[Sources: *Associated Press*, 23 October 2000; *Pacific Island Report*, October 2000]

"The move (declaration of independence by tribal leaders at the six-day congress) enraged Jakarta and national political leaders demanded Wahid crush the independence movement. The President resisted, and instead met with separatist leaders to try to calm rising tensions. But the talks failed and violence erupted earlier this month." [*Associated Press*, 23 October 2000]

1999 Flag-raising and demonstrations organized by pro-independence groups were met with violence by government security forces. Armed insurgents also committed killings and kidnappings.

"Separatist flag-raising in July and September in the districts of Sorong and Jayapura claimed three lives and resulted in at least nineteen new political prisoners. Also in September, residents of Manokwari, suspecting that arriving ships carried provocateurs from Ambon and East Timor, began checking identity cards of disembarking passengers. In clashes on September 24, one man died and police shot another in the chest as they blocked crowds from entering the port area. The next day, crowds threw rocks at police, who responded with gunfire, wounding two other men. The Manokwari police chief was replaced three weeks later." [*Human Rights Watch World Report 2000*]

"Security forces also were responsible for numerous instances of indiscriminate shooting of civilians, torture, rape, beatings and other abuse, and arbitrary detention in Jakarta, Irian Jaya, Maluku, and elsewhere in the country.... In Irian Jaya armed insurgents also committed killings and kidnappings." [*Indonesia Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1999*, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US State Department, 2000]

1998 Following the resignation of President Suharto, a series of pro-independence demonstrations across Irian Jaya led to the shooting of demonstrators by security forces. There were also reports of military attacks on villagers thought to be supporting the OPM.

"In early July 1998 and again in October, a series of pro-independence demonstrations took place across Irian Jaya. The independence demonstrations, not all wholly peaceful, led to the shooting of demonstrators by security forces in the provincial capital, Jayapura, and in the district of Biak.... The death toll remains unclear in Biak." [Indonesia : Human Rights and Pro-Independence Actions in Irian Jaya," *Human Rights Watch* report, 1998]

"Reports from the region are suggesting that an ongoing military operation, following the Indonesian Armed Forces operation in liberating hostages in Mapnduma in 1997, is also one of the causes of the starvation. According to these reports local residents of communities, thought to be bases for the Free Papua Organisation (OPM), are being killed. Violent action, including mass murders and scorched earth tactics, are intimidating local villagers." [*Europe Pacific Solidarity Bulletin*, Volume 6, Number 2, 24 April 1998]

1997 Government military operations against separatists continued in 1997 and at least one clash between indigenous peoples and the security forces resulted in several deaths.

"In Irian Jaya, resentment among indigenous groups against government and private companies' policies that they viewed as heavyhanded and arbitrary remained. Real and perceived discrimination against native Irianese persisted. A clash between indigenous people and security forces occurred in the Timika Tembagapura area, the location of a foreign mining company, and resulted in several deaths.... The Government's closure of certain areas of the central highlands continued during 1997, due to the military's special operations against an indigenous separatist group that had taken and executed hostages in 1996." [*Indonesia Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997*, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US State Department, 1998]

1996 A government forces' offensive on rebels holding foreign hostages, riots, and other incidents resulted in more conflict deaths in 1996. There also were persistent reports of arbitrary arrest, detention, and torture of civilians by the military.

"Indonesian Special Forces have rescued six foreigners and three locals held hostage since 8 January in Irian Jaya province by separatist Free Papua Movement (OPM) rebels. Two hostages were killed by OPM guerrillas and eight rebels were killed in the fighting, the army said." [*Jane's Defence Weekly*, 29 May 1996, p.13]

"Human rights activists said the army sent in more than 500 soldiers from the Irian Jaya capital of Jayapura to quell the unrest which began last Friday. Two people were reported to have been killed but there was no independent confirmation of this. Tribesmen armed with stones and arrows attacked the mining company's facilities, causing extensive damage, they said. The New Orleans-based company, Freeport McMoRan, confirmed Tuesday the 'precautionary shutdown' of operations." ["Indonesia-environment: Riots Shut Down World's Largest Gold Mine," Pratap Chatterjee, *InterPress Service*, March 13, 1996]

"Security forces displayed improved discipline in responding to several incidents of unrest in Irian Jaya, where newly issued human rights guidelines were in effect, but brutality in handling unruly demonstrations in Pontianak and Ujung Pandang resulted in civilian deaths." [*Indonesia Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1996*, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US State Department, 1997]

1995 Some three dozen members of the West Papua Freedom Movement (OPM) ransacked and nearly burnt down the consulate in Vanimo in late October before retreating into the jungles along the border.

Number of Deaths:

Total: Estimates of the number of people who have died in the conflict since 1963 vary widely from as low of 5,000 to hundreds of thousands.

"Over the last 40 years, it's widely accepted that at least 100,000 West Papuans have been killed by Indonesia's armed forces. Privately, West Papuans will tell you that the toll is more like 800,000 — a shocking statistic given that the current indigenous population is not more than 1.5 million." [*Radio National Perspective*, May 6, 2002]

"Estimated Papuan deaths between 1963-69 vary widely. At the time, journalist Peter Hastings said from 2,000 to 3,000; Bonay, the former governor, alleged in 1981 that 30,000 were killed by Indonesia." [Robin Osborne, *Indonesia's Secret War*, Allen & Unwin, 1985, p.50]

In 1977, "according to OPM's count, several thousand people had lost their lives in the highlands uprisings. Indonesia claimed it was far less; about 900, one officer told Australian journalist Denis Reinhardt, who managed a brief visit." [*Indonesia's Secret War*, p.72]

2004 Less than 25 people were killed in sporadic clashes and in communal violence in the first nine months of the year.

"A group of suspected Free Papua Movement (OPM) rebels attacked on Tuesday 15 Indonesian Military (TNI) soldiers in Lima Jari subdistrict, Puncak Jaya regency, leaving one rebel dead and one soldier severely injured." [*Jakarta Post*, September 16, 2004]

"Suspected rebels ambushed an army patrol Tuesday (17/8/04), sparking a two-hour clash that left two of the attackers dead, state news agency Antara reported. One soldier was injured in the fighting, which coincided with ceremonies to mark Independence Day." [*Laksamana.net*, August 18, 2004]

"A police officer revealed on Thursday that one person had been killed and more than 10 people were injured after renewed violence broke out in Mimika on Tuesday." [*Jakarta Post*, July 16, 2004]

"Police here said on Sunday that they had shot dead a suspected separatist in the troubled province of Papua for allegedly trying to discourage people from voting in the legislative election on Monday, while a policeman and an activist were reportedly missing." [*Jakarta Post*, April 5, 2004]

"An official of the Free Papua Movement (OPM) was killed in a firefight between Army personnel and a group of rebels in Sarmi regency, highlighting fears that the elections could be delayed or even fail to take place in the country's easternmost province." [*Jakarta Post*, March 15, 2004]

2003 According to independent media reports, approximately 30 people were killed as a result of the conflict in 2003. While the majority were combatants, several civilians were also killed.

"According to Radio New Zealand, the [Papuan] student organization claims that more than 18 people have been killed in a military crackdown in the Wamena area following the theft of guns from an armory two months ago." [(*Kabar-Irian*) *Irian News*, June 3, 2003]

2002 While figures on the exact number of deaths were difficult to obtain, several media reports estimated that 25 people were killed this year, many of them civilians attacked by military and police forces.

"Indonesian troops in West Papua province have exchanged gunfire with an unidentified armed group close to where three people, including two American nationals, were killed on Saturday." [*BBC News*, September 1, 2002]

"... as Indonesian security and police widen their hunt for the unidentified gunmen, reprisals have already begun against the rebels. One man was killed in a firefight with Indonesian troops on Sunday." [*Asia Pacific Radio*, September 9, 2002]

2001 According to media reports dozens of people, mostly combatants, were killed in clashes between the Indonesian army and rebels. In November, Theys Eluay, a prominent independence leader, was kidnapped and later found dead.

"A leading independence politician in the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya was kidnapped and later found dead, police said. Theys Eluay, was found in his wrecked car at the bottom of a ravine just outside the Irian capital Jayapura. Investigators believe he was murdered." [*CBC*, November 12, 2001]

"Clashes between Indonesian security forces and poorly armed rebels have left dozens of people dead in the past year." [*CBC*, November 12, 2001]

2000 At least 100 people, mostly civilians, were killed in clashes between separatists and government forces this year.

"Official reports say 26 died and more than 50 were wounded in weekend violence. Groups calling for independence in the remote eastern region claim 58 people have died since the clashes began in the town of Wamena last Friday after police shot dead several people protesting against efforts to pull down the flags." [*Pacific Islands Report*, 10 October 2000]

1999 At least 11 civilians were killed by government security forces and insurgents.

"In Irian Jaya armed insurgents of the Free Papua Movement (OPM) killed 4 persons and kidnapped 11 others from a plantation near Arso in May." [*Indonesia Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1999*, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US State Department, 2000]

1998 Government restrictions prevented independent assessment, but there were reports of dozens of civilians killed by the military, including at least 20 on the island of Biak in July.

Indonesian military action in the remote interior of West Papua (named Irian Jaya by Indonesia) has been responsible for the deaths of at least 137 civilians over the past 18 months, a new report has established.... Entitled Report on Human Rights Violations and Disaster in Bela, Alama, Jila and Mapnduma, Irian Jaya, the report was compiled by parish leaders of three Christian churches in the area.... The report states that Indonesian forces burned 13 churches, 166 homes, two health clinics and 29 'men's houses' and shot at least 11 civilians who had returned to their gardens for food after hiding in the jungle..... The majority of deaths referred to in the report, including some 90 deaths so far this year, are the result of hunger and sickness due to displacement by military operations. The Indonesian army is trying to re-establish government control in the area where OPM

resistance fighters took foreign hostages in May 1996." [West Papua : New Report Condemns Indonesian Military," *The Guardian*, June 24, 1998]

A *Guardian Weekly* article (August 9, 1998) suggests at least 21 people died at the hands of the military after a separatist flag was raised July 1 on the island of Biak. "Local church leaders are preparing a report on the deaths, but the Red Cross has been denied permission to visit the island and banned from Irian Jaya."

"In Irian Jaya, the western, Indonesian half of New Guinea, at least one man was killed and more than 20 wounded when soldiers fired into a crowd of 700 that unlawfully raised a rebel flag last Monday. Earlier protests also resulted in deaths and injuries." [*The Associated Press*, July 12, 1998]

1997 "Several" deaths (see above).

1996 At least 25 people.

"Rioting in numerous Irian Jaya towns, including Timika/Tembagapura, Nabire, Jayapura, and Wamena, resulted in several deaths and many injuries. The riots tended to pit newly arrived nonindigenous peoples against indigenous groups who claimed that the 'outsiders' were monopolizing jobs, exploiting local labor, and illegally expropriating indigenous lands." [*Indonesia Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1996*, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US State Department, 1997]

Political Developments:

2004 Papuan rebels and citizens remained upset about government delays and reluctance to institute special autonomy for the Papua region. In an effort to gain their trust, the Indonesian government established an investigation into human rights abuses in Papua which concluded that both the police and Indonesian military were involved in serious violations of human rights. Former Army General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, campaigning on economic and security issues, won the September 2004 presidential election by a wide margin.

"Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono won by a huge margin, giving him a powerful mandate, which he has promised to use well." [*BBC News*, October 9, 2004]

"The National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) has completed the report on its investigation into bloody incidents in the Papua towns of Wamena and Wasior, saying soldiers and police committed gross abuses in both cases." [*Jakarta Post*, August 9, 2004]

"The central government's reluctance to implement Law No. 21/2001 on special autonomy status for Papua might incite a separatist movement in the province, a court was told. 'The government's wishy-washy policies have made Papuans doubt the central government's commitment to developing the province,' Papua Governor J.P. Salossa told the Constitutional Court on Thursday." [*Jakarta Post*, July 9, 2004]

"The whole of Papua society could unite in a movement to secede from the Republic of Indonesia if the government insisted on splitting the province, a religious leader warned." [*Jakarta Post*, March 18, 2004]

"The Indonesian government on Wednesday ruled out imposing a state of emergency in its easternmost province of Papua, where a low-level separatist revolt has been waged for decades." [*Agence France-Presse*, January 28, 2004]

"Papuans have laid their hopes on the Constitutional Court, which on Wednesday will examine the validity of a law that splits Papua into three provinces, as the last resort to solve legal and political problems in the area." [*Jakarta Post*, January 13, 2004]

2003 A government plan to divide the province of Papua into three separate provinces resulted in bloodshed as the plan's supporters and opponents clashed in August, leading the government in Jakarta to withdraw the proposal. Earlier in the year, approximately 40 fighters belonging to the Free Papua Movement surrendered to authorities.

"Tension is high in the Indonesian province of Papua as separatists mark their would-be independence day. A group of several hundred people defied a ban on raising the independence flag, but there were no reports of violence.... The authorities have forbidden any attempt to mark the anniversary and brought in more than a thousand extra troops and police to prevent any disturbance." [*BBC News*, December 1, 2003]

"Two people have been killed and four wounded in fresh violence in Indonesia 's Papua province... over a government plan to split the province into three, officials said Monday.... Migrants to Papua from elsewhere in Indonesia are among the supporters of the plan to create a new province of Central Irian Jaya. Hundreds of Amunge tribesmen armed with bows and arrows and spears are among the opponents.... The bloodshed prompted the government to shelve the plan to split the resource-rich territory of some 411,000 square kilometers [158,700 square miles]. The government says the aim is to improve administration in the wild and mountainous territory, which has a population of about three million. Opponents say the real aim is to lessen support for a long-running separatist movement. They say the division violates the grant of special autonomy to the resource-rich province which went into effect in January 2002." [*Agence France Presse*, September 1, 2003]

"More than 40 members of the separatist Free Papua Movement have surrendered to authorities in Indonesia 's easternmost province.... ElShinta radio says the rebels have handed over 234 guns of various types, 1,684 rounds of ammunition, 56 hand grenades, 11 home-made bombs and other explosives." [*ABC Radio Australia News*, June 30, 2003]

2002 Independence groups unanimously rejected the special autonomy package offered to the province by the Indonesian government. As a result, Jakarta renewed its use of armed force and several sources reported that the November 2001 murder of Presidium Chairman Theys Eluay was the work of members of the Indonesian special forces. At the same time, tensions mounted within the independence movement between proponents of a peaceful solution and those factions that support armed struggle.

"Indonesia has attempted to end the conflict by offering special autonomy to Papua, as in Aceh. The original draft of the law, created by members of Papua's educated elite, was watered down in Jakarta to produce a document short of the aspirations of even the most conciliatory Papuans. It does offer some potentially important concessions, notably returning more natural resource wealth to the province and giving a greater (but limited) role to Papuan adat (customary law). However, implementation has been left to an inefficient, sometimes corrupt bureaucracy, and most Papuans appear to reject it on principle. The success of special autonomy is, therefore, open to question." [*International Crisis Group*, September 13, 2002]

"As East Timor continues to rebuild in the wake of its [sic] bloody struggle for independence, another Indonesian province seems to be heading for a major conflict with the administration in Jakarta. A full-blown push for independence for West Papua appears to be gathering pace, albeit in an atmosphere of violence and division between those who propose peace and those who advocate an armed struggle against the Indonesians." [*Radio National Perspective*, September 18, 2002]

2001 In October, Indonesia's parliament passed a sweeping autonomy bill to give Irian Jaya the largest share of resource revenues, and some powers of self-government and customary law but the new President Megawati ruled out independence or a province wide referendum on the subject. Many residents rejected the autonomy package and called for outright independence or a referendum.

"Indonesia's parliament has passed a bill that will give the restive eastern province of Irian Jaya more autonomy and a greater share of tax revenues. The government hopes the new law will help end the nearly 40 years of separatist fighting in the province. Under the bill, the name of the province will officially change to Papua. From next year, the province will be able to keep 80% of revenues from logging and fishing, and 70% from the mining of oil and natural gas reserves. The new law will also allow the province to fly its own independence flag and use its own anthem." [*BBC*, October 23, 2001]

"Many Papuans have rejected the package. The long-established Free Papua Movement (OPM) want nothing less than a referendum for independence, along the lines of that held in East Timor in 1999, when the people voted overwhelmingly to secede from Indonesia." [*BBC*, January 3, 2002]

2000 In a landmark congress in West Papua in June, 501 tribal leaders proposed a plan for an independent 'State of Papua', despite President Wahid stating the province could not break away from Indonesia, and called on the world to recognize their sovereignty. In August, Indonesia's MPR (Provisional Peoples Consultative Assembly) rejected the West Papuan Congress demand for independence, instead agreeing to grant autonomy to the province. By mid-October, the government formally banned the flying of the 'Morning Star' flag, resulting in an escalation of violence.

[Sources: www.abc.net.au/ra/newdaily/rael-1june2000-242.htm, 1 June 2000; *The Guardian*, 23 August 2000; *Associated Press*, 23 October 2000]

"The 60-page document envisages a federal republic with six territories; a two-house parliament; and a prime minister elected for a four-year term." [www.abc.net.au/ra/newdaily/rael-2june2000-25.htm, 2 June 2000]

"In dealing with these problems, the government remains firm in its stand not to compromise, let alone to tolerate separatist movements in the country," Mr. Wahid told legislators." [*The Globe and Mail*, 8 August, 2000]

1999 Despite a February meeting with President Habibie, where Irianese leaders expressed unanimous support for independence, the government offered only dialogue on special autonomy. In October newly-elected President Wahid put Vice-President Megawati Sukarnoputri in charge of resolving issues related to the province.

"Government policy toward Irian Jaya varied between dialog and unilateral measures that evoked opposition from residents of the province. On February 26, President Habibie met with 100 Irianese leaders as part of a 'National Dialogue on Irian Jaya' based on terms of reference negotiated by Irianese and government representatives.... In September the Parliament passed a package of laws that divided Irian Jaya into three provinces. When governors were sworn in for the two new provinces, there were very large demonstrations in Jayapura, Biak, Nabire, and Merauke to protest the division.... When Abdurrahman Wahid became President in late October, he put Vice President Megawati Sukarnoputri in charge of resolving issues related to Irian Jaya along with several other provinces. In late November, the Government announced that it would postpone division of Irian Jaya and would engage in dialog with the province on options for special autonomy. President Wahid went on a 2-day visit, beginning December 31, to the provincial capital, Jayapura, and to Merauke; during his visit Wahid announced that the name of the province would be changed to Papua." [*Indonesia Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1999*, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US State Department, 2000]

1998 Tentative peace talks began late in 1998.

"Responding to a written request for a military ceasefire in Irian Jaya, Indonesia has begun preliminary talks with leaders of the secessionist Free Papua Movement (OPM)." [*Jane's Defence Weekly*, 18 November 1998, p18]

1997 Due to allocation disputes, the Freeport company suspended a program of regional development

funded from mine profits.

"The company began moving forward on its plan to distribute a percentage of its profits to indigenous groups in the area as part of a regional development effort, but suspended disbursements for new projects under this initiative in August because of disputes over how the funds should be allocated." [*Indonesia Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997*, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US State Department, 1998]

1996 The Freeport mine, viewed by the native population to provide few jobs and inadequate compensation for the environmental damage from its operations, continued to be the focus of opposition and violence in 1996.

Background:

Led by the Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM), the movement for independence began in 1969, when Irian Jaya became an eastern province of Indonesia in a UN-endorsed process that was opposed by many West Papuans. In 1977, Indonesia launched a major offensive against the guerrillas and ruthlessly put down Papuan uprisings, which included the bombing of a pipeline at Freeport Indonesia, a huge US-owned copper, gold and silver mine the native population believes provides too few jobs and inadequate compensation for the environmental damage from its operations. Tensions increased in the early 1980s when Indonesia sped up the settlement in West Papua of hundreds of thousands of Javanese from their heavily populated island. According to human rights organizations, Indonesia forces have perpetrated extrajudicial executions in attempts to crush the independence movement, a notable example being the murder of Presidium Chairman Theys Eluay in 2001. A 1999 plan to split Papua into three regions remains vehemently opposed by rebels and Papuan citizens and in 2002 a special autonomy package offered by the Indonesian government was unanimously rejected by Papuan independence groups.

"A seminar featuring respected intellectuals, analysts and religious leaders has urged the government to lift Presidential Instruction No. 1/2003 on the formation of two new provinces in Papua, and consistently enforce Law No. 21/2001 on special autonomy for the resource-rich province to help solve the increasingly complex issues." [*Jakarta Post*, February 18, 2004]

"Indonesian integration-cum-colonization of Papua – implemented with US complicity – has amounted to an undeclared war against the indigenous population. It has brought racial and religious discrimination, wholesale seizure of local communities' lands, assaults on their livelihoods and cultures, and other severe human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, torture, and rape. Powerful foreign investors and approximately one million non-Papuan migrants dominate the territory's economy and civil and military administration, marginalizing and dispossessing the 1.2 million native Papuans." [*Pacific Islands Report*, October 2000]

"And from the most populated island of Java, home to 120 million people, and other islands to the west came 'transmigrants', tens of thousands assisted by the Government to relocate with the promise of two hectares of land a piece. Other outsiders followed the new opportunities for trade. Of the 1.9 million people who live in the province, between 750,000 and 850,000 were born outside Irian Jaya, and the non-indigenous population will continue to rise as the central Government targets Irian Jaya as a priority resettlement area." ["Irian Jaya: Trapped between tradition and tomorrow," *Herald*, July 11, 1998]

"[In 1977] The army struck back in an operation called 'Tumpas' (annihilation) which left thousands dead. Three villages near the mine were destroyed by army troops." ["Hostage Crisis And Separatist Fight Drag On, " Pratap Chatterjee, Indonesia, *InterPress Service*, February 5, 1996]

"In 1962, regarding itself as the successor to all of the Netherlands' former empire, Indonesia sent troops to ' West Irian. ' The military presence remained and the harsh treatment of Melanesian Papuans fostered resistance. After seven years of Indonesian control, the resistance became formalised under the name OPM." [Robin Osborne, *Indonesia 's Secret War*, Allen & Unwin, 1985, p.50]

Arms Sources:

Indonesia's recent military suppliers include the United Kingdom, USA, Germany, France, Russia, the Netherlands, South Korea, Slovakia, and Singapore. Indonesia also draws on domestic arms production. The US and the EU suspended arms transfers in 1999 due to the horrific human rights record of the Indonesian military. The EU did not renew the arms embargo when it expired on January 17, 2000. Although the US suspension is still in effect, the US is considering reestablishing military ties with Indonesia if the government can demonstrate that the human rights record of the military has improved. However, the murders of Presidium Chairman Theys Eluay in 2001, and of two American teachers in 2002, all of which were allegedly committed by Indonesian security forces, have served as obstacles to the immediate resumption of military relations. In spite of its continuing arms embargo, the US in August 2002 offered a US \$50 million anti-terrorism package to Indonesia that includes police training, exchanges for high-level military personnel, and the establishment of an anti-terrorism unit.

Rebel groups appear to be equipped with homemade weapons, mostly bows and arrows, weapons stolen from the military, as well as guns accumulated in neighbouring Papua New Guinea.

[Sources: SIPRI Yearbook 2002; *The Military Balance 2000-2001*; *International Crisis Group*, September 13, 2002]

"During Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri's visit to Moscow in April 2003, the two countries signed a \$193m contract

under which Russia will supply Indonesia with two Su-27SK and two Su-30MK aircraft and two Mi-35 helicopters." [*The Military Balance 2003-2004*, p. 298]

"Two of the rifles had been stolen by rebels from a military armoury at Wawena in a raid in April... in which 29 rifles and thousands of rounds of ammunition were stolen." [*Agence France Presse*, November 5, 2003]

"The US Congress has again blocked military aid to Indonesia despite the Bush Administration wanting to draw the Indonesian Army into the 'war on terror'. The US Senate unanimously approved a measure to cut \$US400,000 (\$570,000) in military training assistance next year in an effort to force the Indonesian Government to fully co-operate in the investigation into the murder of two American teachers in Indonesia's eastern-most province, Papua, last year." [*Sydney Morning Herald*, October 31, 2003]

"If confirmed, evidence of Indonesian military involvement [in the murder of Theys Eluay] could seriously impair the Bush administration's efforts to restore U.S. assistance to the Indonesian military, suspended in 1999 to protest the involvement of the armed forces in human rights atrocities in East Timor. Such evidence would also represent a setback to a key U.S. foreign policy goal in Southeast Asia of engaging the Indonesian military, known by the initials TNI, in the campaign against terrorism." [*Washington Post*, November 3, 2002]

"... the rebels are short of almost every kind of modern military equipment. The majority of weapons are still the instruments of tribal warfare. Guns are usually home-made. Although the occasional modern firearm is captured from police or soldiers, ammunition is hard to come by. Communications are still largely managed by courier." [*The Australian*, January 29, 2002]

"The guerrillas, who come from indigenous groups -- such as the Amungme, the Dani, the Ekari and the Nduga -- are mostly armed with bows and arrows." ["Hostage Crisis And Separatist Fight Drag On," Pratap Chatterjee, Indonesia, *InterPress Service*, February 5, 1996]

Economic Factors:

Economically, the West Papuans feel they have endured many years of economic and social exploitation, as well as environmental degradation. The US firm Freeport McMoRan operates one of the world's largest gold mines in West Papua but few of the economic benefits reach the people which remain among Indonesia's poorest. The Indonesian military has long guarded foreign-owned oil and mining projects in the province for financial compensation; however, in 2003 the government indicated its intention of ceasing to offer protection to these companies in the future. West Papua is also exploited for its timber, gas, and exotic species.

"The head of Indonesia's military said yesterday he has proposed to withdraw military forces protecting vital oil and mining projects around the country, potentially exposing foreign investors to separatist violence.

"The move would affect several American companies just as the United States is moving to cut military aid to the Indonesian military... Most heavily dependent on military protection is PT Freeport Indonesia, a subsidiary of the U.S. gold and copper mining company Freeport-McMoRan, which is guarded by some 2,500 soldiers and police under military command... Indonesia's military guards a number of important exploration sites around the country, and reportedly receives large sums of money in return." [*The Washington Times*, November 11, 2003]

"The struggle over land and natural resource rights is a key aspect of the conflict in Papua... that pits the Indonesian state against an independence movement supported by most of the indigenous population... Injustices in the management of natural resources under Indonesian rule have contributed significantly to the conflict. The state has often given concessions to resource companies in disregard of the customary rights of indigenous Papuan communities, while troops and police guarding these concessions have frequently committed murders and other human rights abuses against civilians." [*International Crisis Group*, September 13, 2002]

"Beanal, also a leader of the Amungme tribe, says the ferocious exploitation of Irian Jaya's natural resources had been among the main triggers for the stronger independence demands. 'The Indonesian government and its greedy foreign partners have deceived the Irianese. They took our seven golden mountains. Where are the treasures now?' he asked. Beanal was referring to the partnership between the U.S. firm Freeport McMoRan and the Indonesian government for who have been [sic] running huge copper mining operations in Timika. These operations have been the target of criticism at home and overseas for gross environmental destruction, ignoring the interests of local people and unfair distribution of royalties with the local government." [*InterPress Service*, March 5, 1999]

"Suharto, an army general, came to power in 1965 by ousting Sukarno, Megawati's father. The accompanying bloodbath left half-a-million dead. Two years later, Freeport became the first major foreign investor in the country, and it remains the largest foreign taxpayer." ['Mining Company Cancels Risk Insurance', Pratap Chatterjee, *InterPress Service*, September 22, 1996]

Project Ploughshares
57 Erb Street West
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 6C2
tel (519) 888-6541 fax (519) 888-0018 Email: plough@ploughshares.ca