



EARLY WARNING COUNTRY REPORT JULY 2022

“Don’t Abandon Us”

PREVENTING MASS ATROCITIES IN PAPUA, INDONESIA

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SIMON-SKJODT CENTER
FOR THE PREVENTION OF GENOCIDE

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FOREWORD

Genocide and related crimes against humanity are devastating in their scale and scope; in the enduring scars for survivors and their families and the long-term trauma they cause in societies; and in the economic, political, and social costs and consequences, often extending far beyond the territory in which they were committed.

Working to prevent future genocides requires an understanding of how these events occur, including considerations about warning signs and human behaviors that make genocide and mass atrocities possible. We know from studying the Holocaust and other genocides that such events are never spontaneous. They are always preceded by a range of early warning signs. If warning signs are detected and their causes addressed, it may be possible to prevent catastrophic loss of life.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's founding charter, written by Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, mandates that our institution strive to make preventive action a routine response when warning signs appear. Wiesel wrote, “Only a conscious, concerted attempt to learn from past errors can prevent recurrence to any racial, religious, ethnic or national group. A memorial unresponsive to the future would also violate the memory of the past.”

The Museum's Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide was established to fulfill that vision by transmitting the lessons and legacy of the Holocaust, and “to alert the national conscience, influence policy makers, and stimulate worldwide action to confront and prevent genocide.” The Simon-Skjodt Center's Early Warning Project works to fulfill this aspect of the Museum's mandate by using innovative research to identify early warning signs. In doing so, we seek to do for today's potential victims what was not done for the Jews of Europe.

One of the Simon-Skjodt Center's goals is to ensure that the United States government, other governments, and multilateral organizations have institutionalized structures, tools, and policies to effectively prevent and respond to genocide and other mass atrocities. The Early Warning Project is listed in the [Global Fragility Act](#) (2019) as a source to determine where the US government should prioritize its Global Fragility Strategy, a landmark ten-year effort to improve US action to stabilize conflict-affected areas and prevent extremism and violent conflict.

The more governments and international organizations develop their own early warning tools and processes, the better our Early Warning Project can help serve as a catalyst for preventive action.

In many places, mass killings are ongoing—in countries such as Burma, Syria, and South Sudan. These cases are well-known. But this risk assessment's primary focus—and the gap we seek to fill—is to draw attention to countries at risk of a new outbreak of mass killing. The Simon-Skjodt Center focuses on

situations where there is a risk of, or ongoing, large-scale group-targeted identity-based mass atrocities and where we believe we can make the most impact based on a combination of factors. These factors include the ability for Simon-Skjodt Center staff to conduct rigorous field work in the area (or a pre-existing level of staff expertise in the area), opportunities for effective engagement with the community at risk, and the need to draw attention to cases where policy, media, and public attention on the case are lower than merited by the level of risk.

Preventing genocide is of course difficult. In deciding how to respond, policy makers face an array of constraints and competing concerns. Yet, the choice to prevent one potential tragedy should not take a back seat to confronting ongoing crises. We know from the Holocaust what can happen when early warning signs go unheeded. We aim for this risk assessment to serve as a tool and a resource for policy makers and others interested in prevention. We hope this helps them better establish priorities and undertake the discussion and deeper analysis that can help reveal where preventive action can make the greatest impact in saving lives.

Naomi Kikoler
Director
Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide
June 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

This report assesses the risk of mass atrocities (large-scale, systematic violence against civilian populations) in Papua, Indonesia, over the next 12–18 months. Since its integration into Indonesia in 1969, Papua has seen ongoing political resistance and armed rebellion in favor of independence, and government repression in response. The region is home to Indigenous Papuans and a growing population of migrants from other parts of Indonesia, layering intercommunal tensions on top of the conflict over the region’s governance. An upward trend in the frequency of violent incidents prompted this analysis of the potential for mass atrocities. This report is based on field research in Indonesia, including in Papua, from March to August 2021, as well as on expert consultations and a literature review. The report’s conceptual framework and research questions draw from the atrocity assessment framework developed by the US government.

Structural Risk Factors

Five structural factors are at the root of mass atrocity risks in Papua:

1. Indonesia has an extensive history of mass atrocities.
2. Indigenous Papuans have been excluded from political decision making; efforts by the state to address their grievances have failed.
3. The Indonesian state’s and multinational companies’ exploitation of natural resources has contributed to conflicts over land, Indigenous Papuan antipathy toward the state, and tensions between Indigenous Papuans and Indonesian migrants.
4. Indonesia’s security forces in the region have been implicated in human rights abuses, but have not been held accountable, feeding Indigenous Papuans’ resentment against the state.
5. Indigenous Papuans and Indonesian migrants residing in Papua often find themselves in conflict over economic, political, religious, and ideological issues.

Precipitating Factors

In the context of these structural factors, which are longstanding and difficult to change, three precipitating factors are increasing risks in the near term:

1. Protests, riots, and communal mobilization: mutual fears between Indigenous Papuans and Indonesian migrants are spurring group mobilization in a dangerous spiral.
2. Increasing divisions among Indigenous Papuans: these divisions could increase the vulnerability of pro-independence civilians to attacks and/or lead pro-independence groups to contemplate extreme measures—such as inciting attacks on vulnerable migrants—in an effort to foster greater unity.
3. Escalating armed conflict between Indigenous Papuan rebels and Indonesian security forces: increasing activity by armed groups has already provoked brutal responses by Indonesian

security forces and could spur even harsher crackdowns, in turn increasing Papuan antipathy toward the state and the popularity of pro-independence movements.

Plausible Mass Atrocity Scenarios

We identify two plausible mass atrocity scenarios in Papua. These are “worst-case scenarios,” not inevitable or even most likely outcomes. In both, atrocities would be committed by militia, with tacit support or acquiescence from Indonesian security forces, in response to increasing protests and/or rebel attacks by Indigenous Papuans demanding independence from Indonesia.

Although it is difficult to forecast the size and durability of a protest movement, we believe a combination of factors—increasing rebel attacks, better coordination and organization of pro-independence civilian organizations, and the ease of communication—makes it plausible that pro-independence protests could reach a new level in the next 12–18 months.¹

If political and social unrest persist, and if it were to spread across the region, it is possible that the Indonesian government could determine that the scale or persistence of the protests would justify a more severe response, which could lead to large-scale killing of civilians.

- Scenario A describes mass atrocities committed by pro-Indonesia Indigenous Papuan militia, with the support of the military and police, against pro-independence Indigenous Papuans. This scenario depends on Indigenous Papuan groups remaining divided.
- Alternatively, if Indigenous Papuans become more cohesive and better coordinated, that may lead to Scenario B, in which Indonesian migrants and Indonesian security forces commit atrocities against Indigenous Papuans (perceived collectively as in opposition to the Indonesian state and threatening migrant interests).

Mitigating Factors and Uncertainties

Several sources of resilience dampen the risk in Papua, including women’s groups, local Papuan press, and non-political civil society organizations. In addition, we highlight a number of important uncertainties that should be monitored closely, including the tactics of security forces and pro-independence demonstrators, the evolving capability of pro-independence armed groups, and possible shifts in Indonesian military policy.

Recommendations

We conclude with recommendations to the Indonesian government, regional and local government, civil society, pro-independence activists, multinational corporations, and Indonesia’s international partners to help prevent mass atrocities. The specific recommendations are organized around five lines of effort:

1. Improving freedom of information and monitoring atrocity risks in the Papua region.
2. Managing conflicts in Papua through nonviolent means.
3. Addressing Papuan grievances and drivers of conflict.
4. Addressing potential flashpoints.
5. Supporting justice and accountability efforts.

INTRODUCTION

Papua, Indonesia—composed of Indonesia’s two easternmost provinces, Papua and Papua Barat²—is the only region in the country that continues to experience significant armed conflict and political instability. Political resistance and low-level armed insurgencies have been ongoing since the region (also referred to as West Papua) was integrated into Indonesia through the Act of Free Choice in 1969 (prior to which Papua was a part of the Dutch Empire). While other regions of Indonesia have benefited from the country’s democratic transition and economic development, Papua remains highly militarized and lags in development indicators.³

Figure 1. Indonesia country map



In recent years, violence between Indigenous Papuan supporters of Papua’s long-standing independence movement and the Indonesian government has intensified. The Indonesian government has maintained large numbers of military and police forces in Papua to target pro-independence rebel groups, but they have also been implicated in human rights abuses. The situation is further complicated by the increasing fragmentation within Indigenous Papuan groups, as well as the rising competition between Indigenous Papuans and the growing numbers of Indonesians from other parts of the country who have moved to Papua more recently (hereafter referred to as migrants). These

divisions and tensions, coupled with the struggle for independence, if not addressed, could lead to further violence against civilians.

Since Timor Leste’s successful independence referendum in 1999, the policies of the Indonesian government regarding Papua have become increasingly nationalistic and centralized,⁴ in direct opposition to the preferences of many Indigenous Papuans.⁵ The Indonesian government has responded to Papuan resistance with an ineffective autonomy scheme and by militarizing the region; Papua has the highest ratio of security forces to population in Indonesia.⁶ This approach, which is often accompanied by human rights violations, has proved incapable of resolving the conflict over Papuan independence aspirations. Impunity has been the norm.⁷ Three UN human rights experts recently declared, “Urgent action is needed to end ongoing human rights violations against Indigenous Papuans.”⁸

After his election to the presidency in 2014, President Joko Widodo pledged to tackle Papuan problems, including human rights violations, more seriously.⁹ However, now well into his second term, President Widodo’s response has fallen short. While he has carried out economic reforms, they have been narrowly focused on development and have not effectively addressed Papuan concerns around issues of human rights, politics, and identity. In addition, militarization of the region has increased under President Widodo, due in part to the influence of the military and other national politicians. Civil liberties in Papua remain limited, stirring a rallying cry for resistance to the state. Security forces monitor the work of journalists and prevent information, particularly about human rights and security conditions, from being publicized internationally. This lack of transparency and subsequent lack of attention to the conflict enables Indonesian security forces to continue to commit human rights violations in Papua without censure, increasing the risk for future violence.

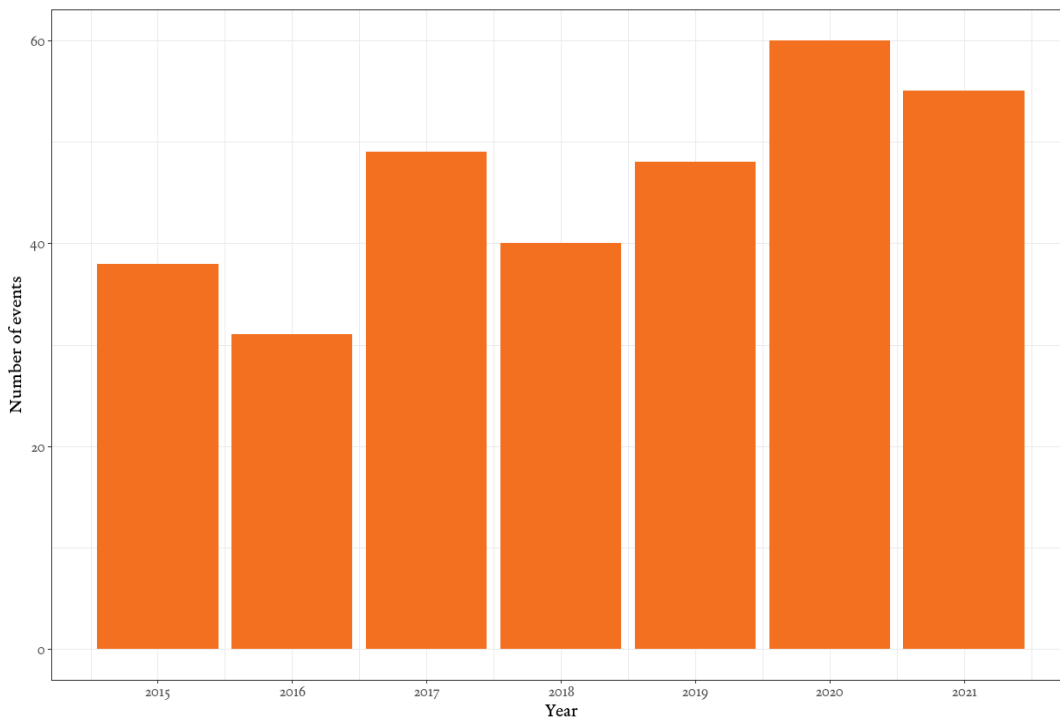
Recent developments in Papua suggest that resistance groups are gaining political and military momentum. In 2014, three Papuan political movements unified to establish the United Liberation Movement for West Papua and, in 2019, multiple Papuan military factions reportedly joined forces under a single command. Attacks by pro-independence rebel groups have increased steadily over the past five years.¹⁰ As the independence movement gains ground, it is perceived as a greater threat to the Indonesian state and, by extension, to migrants from other parts of Indonesia now living in Papua.

In return, Indonesian authorities are tightening state control by crushing independent press, cutting internet access, and intimidating journalists and civil society organizations, especially those that sympathize with pro-independence Papuans.¹¹ The government has increased its military presence in Papua Barat province and migrants are increasing their capabilities to mobilize—expanding their networks, strengthening their lines of communication and overall ability to coordinate—in the face of the growing pro-independence movement. Meanwhile, intergroup tensions between mostly Christian Indigenous Papuans and mostly Muslim migrants are rising, as evidenced by demonstrations and riots in 2019 which led to the deaths of 59 people.¹² As Figure 2 shows, the number of incidents of violence against civilians in Papua and Papua Barat provinces has been trending upwards over the last several years. According to the UN, between 60,000 and 100,000 people have been forcibly displaced since December 2018.¹³

The risk of large-scale violence in Papua persists—and may be rising—even as Indonesia continues to grow in population, wealth, and international political influence. The consequences of violent instability in Papua, therefore, would extend well beyond the people of the region. The fourth most

populous country in the world and the world’s largest Muslim-majority nation, with a median age just over 30, Indonesia has the largest economy in Southeast Asia and the seventh largest in the world (by purchasing power parity). Its government has played a leadership role in ASEAN, including over the last year seeking to press Myanmar’s military junta to abandon its violent response to protests. Indonesia’s political importance to the United States, in particular, is evidenced by the launch in 2015 of a “strategic partnership” at ministerial level. Indonesia has taken on the presidency of the G20 for 2022 and will chair ASEAN in 2023.

Figure 2. Incidents of violence against civilians in Papua and Papua Barat provinces, 2015–2021



Source: Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED); acleddata.com.

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The Simon-Skjoldt Center for the Prevention of Genocide’s Early Warning Project seeks to provide governments, civil society, and vulnerable communities with advanced and reliable warning about potential atrocity crimes. The project aims to highlight situations where mass atrocities—“large-scale, systematic violence against civilian populations”¹⁴—are not yet taking place but where early warning signs are apparent.

This report is the fifth in a series of studies on selected countries facing relatively high risk for atrocity crimes, yet lacking sufficient policy attention to addressing those risks.¹⁵ These reports are designed to delve deeper into country-specific contexts and help inform preventive action.

Because mass atrocities are rare but devastating events, it is critical to analyze how they might occur even in contexts, such as Papua, Indonesia, where they are not the likeliest outcome. As such, this report presents “worst-case scenarios” that *could plausibly occur*, not forecasts of the most likely outcomes. The intent of presenting plausible mass atrocity scenarios is to stimulate and inform preventive measures.

We selected Indonesia because it has consistently ranked on the cusp of the Early Warning Project’s “high-risk” list, yet mass atrocity risks did not seem to receive much attention.¹⁶ Indonesia ranked 27th highest-risk (2.8 percent, or approximately one in 36 chance) for experiencing a new mass killing in 2021 or 2022.¹⁷ Initial consultations with experts affirmed that deeper inquiry could help elucidate the nature of the risks and attract international attention, and they indicated that the Papua region merited a special focus.¹⁸

Information in this report is based on field research in Indonesia, including in Papua, from March to August 2021 (see Appendix for details), as well as on consultations with experts and Papuan activists and a literature review. The report’s conceptual framework and research questions draw from the atrocity assessment framework developed by the US government.¹⁹ We begin by detailing structural risk factors—that is, characteristics that are slow to change but create the context in which conflict and atrocity crimes might occur. We then discuss precipitating factors, which further heighten the risk for systematic violence against civilian populations. Based on this analysis, we describe mass atrocity scenarios that we judge could *plausibly* occur in the next 12–18 months. Finally, we discuss mitigating factors or resiliencies, which decrease the likelihood of the identified scenarios unfolding, and conclude with recommendations for the Indonesian government, Papuan groups and their leaders, foreign governments engaged in Indonesia, international organizations, and both domestic and international civil society organizations.

STRUCTURAL RISK FACTORS

We highlight five characteristics that are at the root of potential mass atrocities in Papua, Indonesia: (1) history of mass atrocities, (2) political exclusion, (3) natural resource exploitation, (4) militarization and human rights abuses, and (5) identity-based conflict. Although these factors are difficult to change in the near-term, understanding them is crucial to assessing the risk for atrocity crimes in Papua, Indonesia.

HISTORY OF MASS ATROCITIES

*Countries with a history of mass atrocities are more likely to experience future mass atrocities. Past atrocities can indicate a willingness by powerful actors to use extreme violence in the future, and unresolved grievances from previous atrocities contribute to distrust and animosity between groups and may be used to justify future violence.*²⁰

Indonesia has experienced multiple mass killing episodes since 1945.²¹ The largest mass killings in Indonesia occurred in 1965–1966 when the Indonesian army attempted to seize power and eliminate its biggest political opponent, the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). The army accused the PKI of a coup attempt and began massacring PKI members, killing some 600,000 to 1,000,000

people.²² The killings were not carried out by the army itself but by civilian militia groups that the army mobilized and supported logistically. Some of these militias obtained weapons from the military, but most were armed only with machetes, spears, or other simple weapons. Subsequent atrocities orchestrated by the Indonesian military in the last decades of the 20th Century in East Timor,²³ Aceh,²⁴ and Papua²⁵ have to varying degrees followed the template established in the anti-communist killings, though not at the same scale.

Although these historical episodes of mass atrocities occurred before the country's transition to democracy in 1998, Indonesia has not undertaken significant transitional justice processes that might help address the legacies of past atrocities. Hardly any of the victims of prior episodes of mass violence have achieved justice and very few if any perpetrators have been held accountable. Governments in power, including after the fall of the New Order government in 1998, were not interested in establishing transitional justice programs for victims. This is because the parties involved in these mass atrocities, especially the Indonesian army, are still very influential. Pushing for criminal accountability and other forms of transitional justice can create a backlash because of the strong political position of the perpetrators of past mass atrocities.

POLITICAL EXCLUSION AND THE FAILURE TO ADDRESS PAPUAN SELF-DETERMINATION CLAIMS

The presence of prior state-led discrimination—such as excluding a specific group of people from positions in government, the military, or other roles—is strongly associated with mass atrocities. Past discrimination can “condition leaders and citizens to think of a specific category of people as unworthy, as second-class citizens, against whom violence is acceptable in crises.”²⁶

Decades of political exclusion have contributed to Papuan grievances against the Indonesian state and Indigenous Papuans' vulnerability to persecution and violent attacks. Since the Netherlands colonized Papua in the 19th century and Indonesia took control of the region in the 1960s, the lives of Indigenous Papuans have been largely determined by non-Papuans. Although the Indonesian government has taken some steps in the last 20 years to address historical marginalization of Papuans, these efforts have largely failed to address Papuan grievances, in part because the Indonesian government has failed to consult Papuans when developing purported solutions.

The Papua region was not part of the Indonesian state at the time of independence in 1945. On December 19, 1961, President Soekarno called for mobilization to seize Papua from Dutch administrators.²⁷ The mobilization forced the Netherlands to conduct negotiations which culminated in the signing of the New York Agreement on August 15, 1962. The agreement, which required the Netherlands to leave Papua and grant power to the UN Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA) and later Indonesia, included a provision for holding a plebiscite to determine whether the Indigenous Papuans would join with Indonesia.

Box 1: Indigenous Papuan Identity, Prejudice, and Racism

The people living in Papua, Indonesia represent an enormous diversity of identities. A central division is between Indigenous Papuans, whose ancestors have lived in the region for many generations, and migrants, who have moved to the region from other parts of Indonesia in more recent years.

Indigenous Papuans themselves are a very diverse group—including an estimated 261 ethnic groups¹—but most share a strong identity as Indigenous or simply Papuan, rather than Indonesian. Most Indigenous Papuans are Christians or follow local religions, despite being divided into many tribes with different languages, customs, traditions, and faiths.

In Indonesia, there is a deeply ingrained bias in both public opinion and policy-making that Indigenous Papuans have a lower culture than other Indonesians because they maintain traditional lifestyles—for example, gathering foods instead of farming. Indigenous Papuans are also sometimes described—for example, in the Special Autonomy Law—as people “originating from the Melanesian race group.” No other ethnic group in Indonesia is defined by its race.

Although many Indigenous Papuans embrace their Melanesian identity, the perception of racial distinctiveness has given rise to racist narratives and biased treatment of Indigenous Papuans. For example, Indigenous Papuans living outside Papua are often ridiculed because of their skin color, curly hair, and diets. Many Indonesians in various cities, especially Java, refuse to rent out their premises to Papuan students. In 2019, police, military, and intelligence officers in Surabaya directed racial slurs at Papuan students, calling them “monkeys”—the most common racial slur directed toward Papuans—when they refused to hoist the Indonesian national flag to commemorate Indonesian independence day. This triggered anti-racism protests in Java and cities across Indonesia, including in Papua.

A number of Indigenous Papuans consulted for this report said that racism was at the root of the risks they face as a community.² Real and perceived discrimination has fueled an “us-versus-them” mentality between Indigenous Papuans and Indonesians, and decades of unfulfilled promises by the state have reinforced the perceived need for Papuan resistance to Indonesian rule.

¹ Aris Ananta et al. “Statistics on Ethnic Diversity in the Land of Papua, Indonesia,” *Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies* 3, no. 3 (2016): 458–474, <https://doi.org/10.1002/app5.143>.

² See Filep Karma, *Seakan Kitorang Setengah Binatang: Rasialisme Indonesia di Tanah Papua*, Jayapura: Deiyai, 2014. Available here: <https://www.tapol.org/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/pdfs/Seakan%20Kitorang%20Setengah%20Binatang%20Id.pdf>

Real and perceived discrimination has fueled an “us-versus-them” mentality between Indigenous Papuans and Indonesians, and decades of unfulfilled promises by the state have reinforced the perceived need for Papuan resistance to Indonesian rule.

The 1969 Act of Free Choice, proposed by Indonesia and approved by majority vote of the UN General Assembly, integrated Papua into the Indonesian state.²⁸ The Act, which was met with resistance by the Papuan people, passed in favor of Indonesian control through a process of deliberation and consensus (*musyawarah dan mufakat*) that was easily manipulated by the Indonesian state. In reality, there was no *musyawarah* or *mufakat* involved in the process. Only 1,026 people—selected by the Indonesian military and forced to vote publicly—participated in the vote to “determine” whether Papua would stand alone as an independent country or be integrated with Indonesia. There are many accounts circulating among Indigenous Papuans about intimidation, pressure, and manipulation from the Indonesian military and intelligence, directed toward those who participated in the Act. Therefore, many Papuans believe the process was actually the “Act of No Choice.”²⁹

Resistance—including political advocacy and armed rebellion—started immediately after the unification process began.³⁰ The Indonesian government responded with a series of military operations.³¹ During the administration of the New Order government (1966–1998), Papua became the site of the heavy-handed “Military Operations Area” (Daerah Operasi Militer or DOM), which was ultimately unsuccessful in quelling resistance. Indonesian security forces committed gross human rights violations,³² contributing to distrust of the government and in some cases outright opposition to the state.³³

When the New Order government collapsed in May 1998, a hundred Papuan leaders gathered and submitted a petition to the administration in Jakarta demanding the right to self-determination for the Papuan people. The government responded by granting special autonomy—a step short of self-determination—in 2001.³⁴ Under the special autonomy law, the provincial government has autonomy in all matters except defense, international relations, fiscal and monetary policy, religion, law, and justice. The law also provides for greater financial transfers to Papua in order to foster economic development; improve the standard of living, prosperity, and welfare of the people; realize fairness in natural resource revenues; uphold human rights; and implement good governance.

Despite this progress, the special autonomy that was supposed to resolve conflict in Papua led to new conflict. New institutions, such as the Papuan People’s Assembly (*Majelis Rakyat Papua*, or MRP) and Papuan People’s Representative Council (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Papua*, or DPRP), were created under the special autonomy law to represent Indigenous Papuans. While these new institutions established a modicum of political representation for Indigenous Papuans, they did not serve Indigenous Papuan needs, partly because Jakarta failed to ratify necessary bylaws or abide by the requirement to consult with the MRP on amendments.



Students and activists gathered for a protest in Jakarta, Indonesia, on August 28, 2019, to support Papuans call for independence from Indonesia and to condemn the racial abuse case against Papuan students in Surabaya, East Java. *Andrew Gal/NurPhoto via Getty Images.*

Previously set to expire in 2021, the special autonomy law was amended by parliament on July 15, 2021 and extended for another 20 years. The original law requires that any amendments go through a consultative process through the Papuan People’s Representative Council (DPRD) and the Papuan People’s Assembly (MRP). However, the central government ignored this requirement and made the change without consulting Papuans. The amendment includes three major revisions to the law: (1) increasing state funding to Papua Barat province for the next 20 years; (2) simplifying the process of splitting and creating new local governments in Papua; and (3) increasing Indigenous Papuan representation in regency/municipality parliaments by instituting a 25 percent quota.

Despite these provisions’ potential benefits, the new law “increases friction between Papua and Jakarta and ignores long standing Papuan demands for limiting migration and protecting human rights,” according to a recent detailed analysis.³⁵ Papuan activists and politicians see this amendment as an attempt to further divide Papua.

By increasing opportunities for access to political power, the amendment increases inter-tribal competition for power and incentivizes stronger alignment with tribal identities. The amendment also creates sometimes-arbitrary borders, thereby increasing risk for land conflict. Critics also decry the omission in the revisions of Papuans’ right to form political parties, and note that creating more administrative areas opens the door for increased militarization of Papua.³⁶

As an independence activist in Jayapura explained,

The revision of the special autonomy law only has one goal, namely to divide the Indigenous Papuans. This law only benefits Papuan elites, who come to power by pitting Papuans against each other. Jakarta is very happy and benefits when Papuans fight with each other. This special autonomy is the result of collusion between Papuan elites and Jakarta elites to extract Papua's natural wealth.³⁷

Whatever the government's intentions were, the amendment and extension of the special autonomy law appears to have exacerbated conflict between Papuans of different tribes, while failing to satisfy longstanding demands for Papuan self-determination.

NATURAL RESOURCE EXPLOITATION, LAND CONFLICT, AND UNEQUAL DEVELOPMENT

Resource scarcity, poor resource management, unequal access to resources, or disputes over land use can contribute to conflict between groups. When inter-group conflicts are violent, they are associated with elevated risks of atrocity crimes.³⁸

Exploitation of natural resources in Papua by multinational corporations, with support of the Indonesian state, has led to conflicts over land and resentment among Indigenous Papuans that they have not shared in economic progress. Government investments in Papua's development have mainly benefited migrants, thereby contributing to conflict between migrants and Indigenous Papuans, and increasing Indigenous Papuans' grievances with the state.

Starting in 1967, two years before the Act of Free Choice, Indonesia signed a contract with an American company, Freeport McMoran Inc., to grant a copper mining concession. Conflicts between Freeport McMoran and Indigenous Papuans started as soon as the company began mining. The Indonesian government sold Freeport land belonging to Indigenous tribes, particularly the Amungme and Kamoro, without providing compensation. Dissent and protest from local groups was met with repression. Only after extensive pressure from international CSOs did Freeport finally settle with Indigenous rights groups in 1996.³⁹ The company agreed to set aside one percent of its profits to provide education and health services to members of the Amungme and Kamoro tribes. However, according to field observations and interviews, the fund is poorly managed and has become another source of conflict among Indigenous tribes, which argue over the management and control of these resources.⁴⁰

Freeport McMoran has become a symbol of many Indigenous Papuans' resentment towards the Indonesian government and multinational corporations. As a result, the Freeport mining complex in the Grasberg mountains is often the target of attacks by Papuan rebel forces. Armed Indigenous rebel groups often come into conflict with companies protected by the state. Mining companies are the most frequent targets of these attacks. Freeport, the largest mining company in Papua, is the most frequently targeted, however, timber and plantation companies are also. Some attacks have allegedly come from Indonesian security forces, deliberately creating chaos with the aim of blackmailing the company to pay more for the security they provide.⁴¹ Although Freeport claims it has stopped these under-the-table payments to the Indonesian military, according to interviewees, Freeport continues to illegally pay Indonesian security forces.

Mega-estate projects, including the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE) of 2015⁴² and the new Food Estate Program of 2020,⁴³ are also spurring conflict between Indigenous Papuans, state security forces, and private companies protecting the sites. Indigenous groups collectively own the lands used for these programs, but the government never consulted them in developing the policies for the mega projects.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, as part of the special autonomy law, the Indonesian government has invested billions of US dollars into developing Papua with uneven results. Although aggregate statistics indicate significant improvement in the 2010s, both Papuan provinces still rank lowest of the country’s 33 provinces on Indonesia’s Human Development Index.⁴⁵ The numbers obscure the uneven distribution of economic progress and the resentment that it has fed among non-elite Indigenous Papuans. Infrastructure development initiatives launched by the administration of President Joko Widodo are considered by Indigenous Papuans to benefit only migrants and large-scale investors by strengthening their domination over the economy, leaving the Indigenous population even further behind. The billions of dollars poured into these institutions and initiatives have succeeded in creating a new elite and educated class of Indigenous Papuans, but most of the population has not experienced these benefits. With few jobs available, elite Papuans squabble over limited government jobs (to which they feel entitled) and non-elites struggle for their livelihoods in competition with other Papuans and migrants.⁴⁶

MILITARIZATION, HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, AND IMPUNITY

Mass atrocities are typically “preceded by less widespread or systematic serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law,”⁴⁷ often perpetrated by armed forces.⁴⁸ When such violations or crimes go unpunished, leaders and “foot soldiers” alike may conclude that such violence is acceptable and legitimate.⁴⁹

The presence in the Papua region of a large number of Indonesian security forces—which have been implicated in human rights abuses, but not held accountable—feeds Indigenous Papuans’ resentment against the state, and ultimately increases risk for large-scale violence. Papua is the most militarized region in Indonesia. In 2013, there were around 37,000 soldiers or police in Papua—one soldier or policeman per 97 inhabitants, compared to the rest of Indonesia, where the ratio is one soldier or policeman per 296 inhabitants. The current figure is likely much higher due to the proliferation of local government, which has been accompanied by the establishment of new police and army stations. The military has increased its organizational presence since 2016, adding new units at every level of civilian government.

Despite the extensive presence of state security forces, the military and police have low institutional capacity to control soldiers and police alike. Widespread corruption and impunity leaves soldiers and police free to violate the laws they are supposed to enforce: the biggest impact of the militarization of Papua is insecurity experienced by both Indigenous Papuans and migrants.⁵⁰



Indonesian security forces take position along a street after hundreds of demonstrators marched near Papua's biggest city Jayapura on August 29, 2019. THAMRIN HATTA/AFP via Getty Images.

Security operations carried out by the military have shown lack of respect for human rights standards, resulting in frequent abuses by soldiers in the field. In a March 2022 public statement, three independent UN human rights experts decried “shocking abuses against Indigenous Papuans, including child killings, disappearances, torture, and mass displacement of people.”⁵¹ For example, the military has indiscriminately burned entire villages to root out rebels.⁵² Meanwhile in the urban areas, the police used torture and violence against civilians to control riots and crowds. In mining and logging areas, security forces have extorted miners for protection,⁵³ and in some cases the military openly participates in business activities (Freeport's scrap metal business, for example, is under the control of a military unit). Although Indonesia has made efforts to recruit Indigenous Papuans to be soldiers and officers, these efforts have not reduced the human rights violations committed by state security forces.⁵⁴

In addition, according to field interviews, both military and police encourage the formation of militias under the guise of defending the state, a policy reinforced by the Indonesian military defense doctrine which relies on the “total people’s defense” or “total defense system” (*pertahanan rakyat semesta*).⁵⁵ This doctrine describes a system of complete integration of military and civilian components, envisioning the civil and military elements of state coordinating down to the local level, with the military in the leadership role. Further, the doctrine assumes that the capabilities of the Indonesian

military are limited, therefore public participation is required to defend the country. The 2015 Indonesian Defense White Paper describes: “The system is essentially a defense involving all citizens in accordance with their roles and functions,” which, by 2025, is “expected to reach 100 million citizens who are militant.”⁵⁶ In Indonesia’s past and in other countries, informal militia have been implicated in violence against civilians, sometimes with tacit support from the state.⁵⁷

Box 2: New Roads, Greater Access

In Indonesia’s Fiscal Year of 2021, the Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing allocated IDR 6.19 trillion (US\$429.4 million) for infrastructure development in Papua and IDR 3.75 trillion (US\$259.7 million) for Papua Barat Province.¹ The focus of these infrastructure projects is road building to improve regional connectivity and complete the Trans-Papua road construction project. As a result of the road building project, Papuans can more easily access health services, education, and economic opportunities. At the same time, clearing roads has altered social relations and accelerated deforestation.² The parties who benefit the most from the opening of these roads are land-based businesses.

Road construction is also linked to security operations carried out by the Indonesian military and police, and will likely facilitate military operations and protect businesses led by retired military elites.³

Road openings and infrastructure improvements also changed political relations, allowing for increased connectivity among village heads and, as a result, strengthening tribalistic patronage networks among Indigenous Papuans. Improved connectivity has also made relations between Indigenous Papuans and migrants more complex. Improved infrastructure allows migrants to more easily participate in the Papuan economy, which in turn strengthens feelings among Indigenous Papuans that they are being marginalized. Because the Papuan economy still relies on subsistence, improved connectivity does not provide great benefits for Indigenous Papuans.

Several research reports have documented the connection between road building and mobilization during violent riots. However, it should be understood that it is not roads and connectivity that create conflict in the first place, but connectivity can make conflict more lethal and spread faster.⁴

¹ In Papua Province, the allocation is as follows: US\$50.8 million are for building natural resources (dams and its irrigation networks); US\$ 311 million for roads and bridges; US\$47.3 million for building new settlements, and US\$20 million for public housing. In Papua Barat Province, the allocation is as follows: US\$ 37.6 for building water resources; US\$ 184.2 for roads and bridges; US\$21.6 for new settlements; and US\$ 15.9 for public housing. See Badan Pengawasan Keuangan dan Pembangunan (BPKP), “Pemerintah Percepat Pembangunan Infrastruktur Papua dan Papua Barat,” July 30, 2021, <https://www.bpkp.go.id/berita/read/30714/23678/Pemerintah-Percepat-Pembangunan-Infrastruktur-Papua-dan-Papua-Barat>.

² Forest Watch Indonesia studied that between 2000 and 2009, the rate of deforestation in Papua was around 60,300 hectares per year. Those numbers tripled between 2013 and 2017 and became 189,300 hectares per year. See, Forest Watch Indonesia, *Bioregion Papua: Hutan dan Manusianya* (Papua Bioregion: Forests and Its People), (Jakarta: FWI, 2019), <https://fwi.or.id/en/state-of-bioregion-papua/>.

³ See, a study by a coalition of civil society organizations called #Bersihkan Indonesia, “*Ekonomi-Politik Penempatan Militer di Papua*,” Jatam, August 18, 2021, <https://www.jatam.org/ekonomi-politik-penempatan-militer-di-papua-kasus-intan-jaya/>.

⁴ See for example, Nancy Lee Peluso, “A Political Ecology of Violence and Territory in West Kalimantan, *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 49, no. 1, (2008): 48–67.

IDENTITY-BASED CONFLICT INFLUENCED BY MIGRATION AND SHIFTING DEMOGRAPHICS

Identity-based conflicts—especially when characterized by “differential access to power, wealth, status, and resources”—can increase the risk of mass atrocities by amplifying intergroup tensions.⁵⁸ Leaders can incite violence by exploiting social identities and exaggerating an “us-versus-them” mentality.

The movement of people from other parts of Indonesia into the Papua region over multiple decades has contributed to identity-based competition between Indigenous Papuans and migrants. Tensions over land, economic opportunities, and political representation are commonplace. Although migration and demographic changes do not necessarily raise mass atrocity risks, inter-communal conflicts can foster an “us-versus-them” mentality that, when combined with other factors, increases the risk of large-scale, group-targeted violence.

Indigenous Papuans and migrants represent multiple ethnic, linguistic, religious, and racial groups, differences magnified by a history of disparate treatment by the Indonesian state. While there are an estimated 261 Indigenous Papuan ethnic groups,⁵⁹ most Indigenous Papuans are Christians or follow local religions, and the majority identify as Papuan rather than Indonesian. Migrants usually identify as Indonesian, though they represent various ethnic groups and religious identities from across Indonesia. The plurality of migrants is Javanese and Muslim.

For Indigenous Papuans, migration is a major source of tension, as described by an Indigenous parliamentarian of Papua Barat province DPRPB:

Papuans are increasingly being marginalized. We are like guests in our own land. But who exactly is the guest? Aren't (the migrants) the newcomers? But now they are masters and we are guests. They control all the land here.⁶⁰

There is no reliable census data on Indigenous Papuans and migrants in Papua Barat province.⁶¹ However, several Indonesian demographers have assessed that the number of migrants and Indigenous Papuans in Papua Barat is almost equal; in Papua province,⁶² by contrast, Indigenous Papuans maintain a significant majority (greater than 75 percent).⁶³

Behind this growth in migrants is *transmigration*, a government program to move people to Papua from densely populated Indonesian islands such as Java and Bali. Indonesia started sending transmigrants to Papua in 1964, long before the region was integrated into the Indonesian state.⁶⁴ From 1964 to 1998, 53,853 families or 207,277 individuals were transferred to Papua.⁶⁵ Instead of occupying a special designated territory, these migrants were inserted into Papuan villages with the hope they would transfer their agriculture technology and economic skills to Indigenous Papuans. While the stated purpose of the program was to reduce overcrowding, the Indonesian government may have also intended for it to promote unification and ideally create a national identity across islands. A bleaker interpretation, offered by some Indigenous Papuans and some scholars, is that the government might have also intended for this program to force demographic change and dilute the “problematic” communities, such as the Indigenous Papuans who were calling for independence.⁶⁶

Though the transmigration programs facilitated significant population movement, the majority of migrants to Papua have come spontaneously, to pursue economic opportunities, mostly in cities where

they compete with Indigenous Papuans for economic opportunities in the informal sector.⁶⁷ Migration has become a rallying cry for the grievances of Indigenous Papuans who struggle to compete in the labor market. Migrants believe that Papua is part of Indonesia and, as citizens, they have the right to work and make a living in the region. As said by a Javanese rice farmer in Merauke,

*Everyone is free to come here. This is also Indonesian territory. We come as Indonesian citizens in the territory of Indonesia. So, no problem, right? Indeed, sometimes there is friction with the natives. But our principle is, "Where the earth is stepped on, there the sky is upheld." We respect the people here.*⁶⁸

On many occasions competition has exploded into open conflict, though thus far the scale has remained small.

The influx of migrants has also led to violent intercommunal conflicts over land. In Papua most lands are held communally as customary lands and the customary claim is recognized by Indonesian civil law. However, customary land claims create uncertainty in property rights. In interviews in Merauke and Sorong regencies in Papua, migrants complained of difficulty obtaining certainty of the rights to the land they buy even though their ownership has been certified by the state. Migrants' land can be reclaimed by the descendants of the seller as customary land.

A migrant rice farmer in Merauke explained,

*Land ownership here is uncertain, even if we have certified the land. For example, today we buy land, we certify it, tomorrow there may be children or families who claim this land as their customary land. Usually they demand money. If money is not given, there will be violence.*⁶⁹

On the other hand, Indigenous Papuans complain that migrants have come and occupied their lands illegally under the protection of the Indonesian authorities. Indigenous lands were certified and their property rights passed to migrants without compensation. In Sorong, a former transmigrant admitted that, with the increasing number of migrants, land rights for migrants are more secure because Indigenous Papuans do not dare claim land that has been controlled by migrants.⁷⁰

In addition to stoking intergroup tensions, the concentration of migrants in urban and coastal areas has political ramifications. In coastal areas, migrants easily make up the majority in local parliaments and could take the majority in urban areas in the future. Indonesia's party system, which is easily manipulated by "money politics," or buying votes, allows migrants to become a majority in local parliaments because they have more money to spend during elections. Although often underestimated, local parliaments play a crucial role in determining the government's budget and priorities for allocation of funds.

Even though the 2021 amendments to the Special Autonomy Law codify "affirmative action" for Indigenous Papuan representation in local parliament,⁷¹ this step appears to have contributed to tensions: according to field interviews, it is perceived by Indigenous Papuans as insufficient and by migrants as unfair.

PRECIPITATING FACTORS OF ATROCITY CRIMES

In situations where multiple structural risk factors are present, atrocity crimes become more likely when there are major socio-political changes that shift the balance of power, change incentive structures, and further divide groups. Three precipitating factors have emerged in recent years that increase the risk for large-scale, group-targeted violence in Papua: (1) protests, riots, and communal mobilization; (2) increasing divisions among Indigenous Papuans; and (3) escalating armed conflict between rebels and Indonesian security forces.

PROTESTS, RIOTS, AND COMMUNAL MOBILIZATION

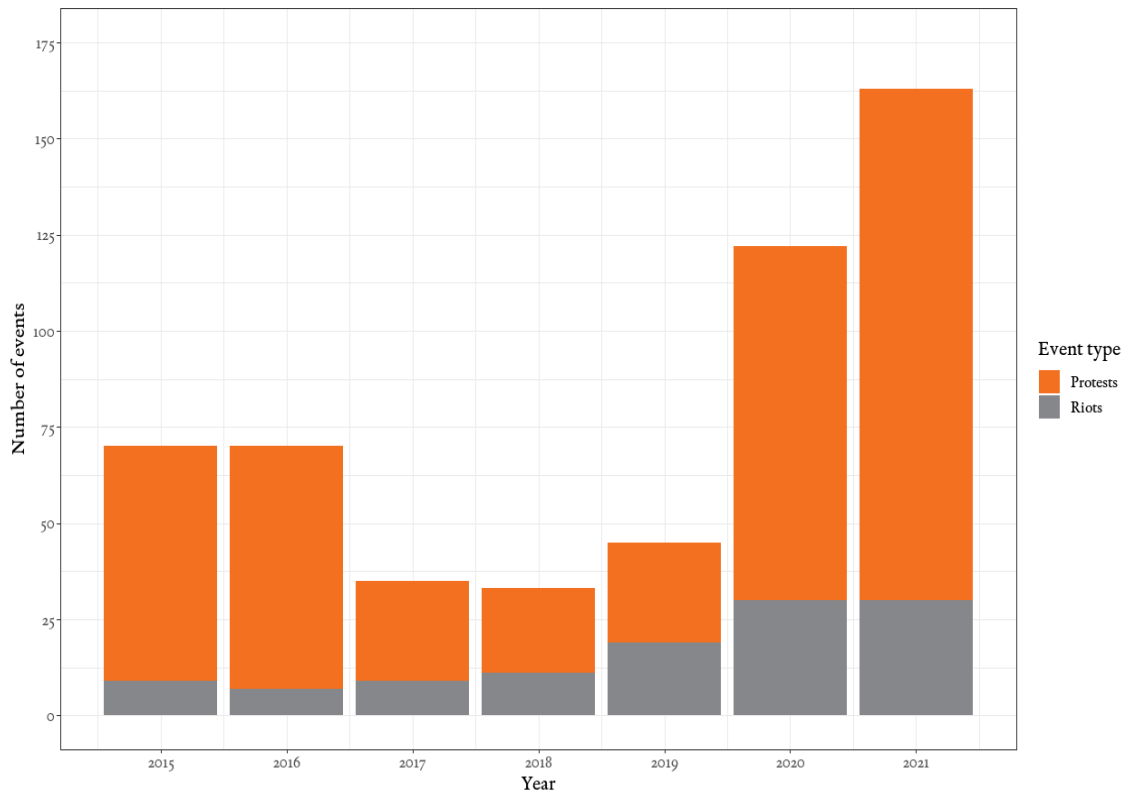
Recent anti-racism demonstrations and riots, rooted in longstanding Papuan grievances, have intensified conflict between Indigenous Papuans and migrants. Fears of the other group are spurring group mobilization and vice-versa, in a dangerous spiral. Violent incidents between migrants and Indigenous Papuans are not new. These conflicts usually begin with demonstrations led by Indigenous Papuan groups advocating for autonomy or independence or protesting racism. Peaceful protests have often devolved into riots, as security forces use force against protestors, provocateurs incite violence, or Indigenous Papuans target migrants' property or even migrants themselves.

It should first be underscored that peaceful demonstrations are protected under both international and domestic law. This report and the scenarios discussed should not be interpreted as discouraging any individual or group from exercising their rights to assemble peacefully and freely express their opinions. The Indonesian government is responsible for protecting these fundamental rights.

Tensions between migrants and Indigenous Papuans rose to new levels after demonstrations in August–October 2019 that began after reports spread on social media that Papuan students in East Java were the victims of racist attacks and police discrimination. The protests, the biggest in Papua's history, were held in 23 Papuan cities, 17 other Indonesian cities, and three cities abroad.⁷² The Papuan Student Alliance (AMP) organized the protests and called on Papuan students living elsewhere to return home. Many of these demonstrations incorporated strong calls for independence from Indonesia and the desire for self-determination. Initially peaceful, the protests turned into riots as thousands marched through the streets, ultimately targeting government buildings, migrant-owned businesses and property, and finally migrant people. These riots killed 59 people in Jayapura and Wamena, most of them migrants.⁷³ Indonesians outside of Papua were angered by perceived attacks on Muslims, with the Islamic Defenders Front in Java calling for “jihad” against (mostly Christian) Indigenous Papuans.⁷⁴ Indonesian security forces were accused of using excessive force against protestors, including shooting into crowds.⁷⁵

As Figure 3 shows, the frequency of protests and riots in the Papua region has risen dramatically since 2019.

Figure 3. Protests and riots in Papua and Papua Barat provinces, 2015–2021



Source: Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED); acleddata.com.

The 2019 anti-racism protests and riots stood out from prior protests by spreading very quickly at a large scale, occurring in multiple locations, and voicing common messages. They demonstrated the extent to which Indigenous Papuan groups have organized and built the capacity for rapid mobilization. In field interviews, many migrants in Papua mentioned the experience of migrants in East Timor and expressed fears that, if Papua were to become an independent state, they could be forcibly expelled.⁷⁶ A trader who controls large tracts of land in Jayapura and Keerom told us that he did not want to lose what he had built with years of hard work. "I would die defending mine," he said.⁷⁷

The fact that migrants in Papua drew a parallel to East Timor does not necessarily mean that the two situations are highly comparable. It does suggest that the level of alarm among migrants is quite high. The mass atrocities in East Timor can also be taken as a cautionary tale—for the Indonesian government and its international partners—about what a “worst case scenario” can entail and the perils of ignoring warning signs.

Following the 2019 anti-racism demonstrations, rumors circulated among Indigenous Papuans in Jayapura and several other cities that migrants from multiple ethnic groups,⁷⁸ with the support of the military and police, had organized a militia called “Barisan Nusantara.”⁷⁹ The existence of such a

militia is difficult to prove; migrant leaders in various cities we interviewed did not acknowledge its existence, though they agreed that, when the riots occurred, migrants were indeed prepared to defend themselves. Whether or not Barisan Nusantara is real, the rumored existence of migrant militias has increased the vigilance and incentivized mobilization among Indigenous Papuans. These mutually reinforcing group fears could eventually feed cycles of violence.

The threat appears to be increasingly perceived by both sides as existential—a mindset that can be used to justify deliberate attacks on civilian populations. Some Indigenous Papuans already claim to be victims of a “slow motion genocide”⁸⁰ due to demographic changes and economic marginalization, whereas migrants feel they would lose everything if Papua were to become an independent state. One migrant leader from Jayapura said,

*Like it or not, we have to be ready. [Pro-independence Papuans] cannot just ask for independence and expel us from this land. We have rights here too. Just like them.*⁸¹

Some Indigenous Papuans already claim to be victims of a “slow motion genocide” due to demographic changes and economic marginalization, whereas migrants feel they would lose everything if Papua were to become an independent state.

INCREASING DIVISIONS AMONG INDIGENOUS PAPUANS

Longstanding divisions among Indigenous Papuans have intensified because of Indonesian government policies. These divisions could make pro-independence civilians more vulnerable to attacks (e.g., by Indonesian security forces or by pro-Indonesia Indigenous Papuans), and/or lead pro-independence groups to contemplate extreme measures—such as inciting attacks on vulnerable migrants—in an effort to foster greater unity. Those extreme measures could, in turn, also raise fear among Indigenous Papuans who are collaborating with Indonesia, pushing them to create militias in cooperation with Indonesian security forces.

Indigenous Papuans are divided into many tribes with different languages, customs, traditions, and faiths. In our field research, many Indigenous Papuans we interviewed complained about the difficulty of uniting due to tribalism, nepotism, and territoriality among tribes. As said by a member of the local parliament in Jayapura,

*The biggest problem for Papuans is unity. We have a hard time getting together. Everyone is cutting other people to be able to profit. This division makes it easier for Indonesia to conquer Papua.*⁸²

Historically, colonial administrations determined which missionaries could evangelize a given region, meaning that Papuan tribal identities today are often attached to religious identities. An additional

identity dynamic contributing to divisions among Indigenous Papuans is between the mountain people (*orang gunung*) and coastal people (*orang pantai*). Historically, coastal people held more power though, since 2015, mountain people have gained political ground and currently dominate local politics and control of government positions and resources. To date, “anti-mountain people” (or “anti-*Wamena*”) sentiments have fueled heated rhetoric between groups but have not contributed to violence.

Local elections in Papua are also contributing to divisions and even violence among Indigenous Papuans. Candidates, especially incumbents, tend to manipulate the number of voters in order to win,⁸³ which is made easier by corruption and weak election administration institutions. The manipulation of voter data has increased tensions between supporters of regional head candidates, often along clan or tribal lines. Violent incidents have occurred in connection with recent general, regional, and local elections. For example, in 2019, Indonesian troops shot and killed four people after protesters attacked the home of a rival candidate who was accused of stealing votes to win a seat on a local council in the Fayit district of Asmat regency.⁸⁴

Indigenous Papuans are also divided in their support of Indonesia. The massive cash flows from Special Autonomy have created jobs for Indigenous Papuan elites, although these jobs often come with abuse, according to field interviews. Meanwhile, Jakarta was relieved of its responsibility to provide services to ordinary Papuans. Many Indigenous Papuans perceive that Special Autonomy has “bought” the elites of Indigenous Papuans.⁸⁵ Our field research indicates that Indigenous Papuans who support Indonesia are generally businesspeople seeking funds for development projects or are local politicians who need Jakarta’s support against their fellow Indigenous Papuan opponents.

There are two mechanisms by which divisions among Indigenous Papuans could contribute to atrocity risk. First, as outlined in the following section, some pro-Indonesia Indigenous Papuan groups might capitalize on Indonesian military backing and use their own militia groups to target pro-independence Indigenous Papuan groups. Second, increasing divisions between Indigenous Papuan groups may lead Indigenous leaders to demonize migrants and anyone who supports the Indonesian state to foster an “us-versus-them” attitude. Indigenous leaders might even provoke a major attack on Indigenous groups (perhaps through instigating riots) to make the case that Indigenous Papuans must unify to counter this common enemy. In short, divisions between Indigenous Papuans could, in a worst-case scenario, create incentive for political actors to manufacture what could ultimately become a mass atrocity-triggering event.

Box 3: Religious Radicalism in Papua

Most migrants in Papua are Muslim, while most Indigenous Papuans are Christian. Although Indonesians are known as moderate and tolerant, religious radicalism is on the rise across Indonesia. As said by an Islamic leader in Sorong,

Papua is not a Christian land. We are Indonesians, most of whom are Muslim. So it is impossible for Papua to be independent and become a Christian country. They have to deal with us first if they want independence.¹

Conservatism and intolerance are also growing among Indigenous Papuans. Riots in the Tolikara district on July 17, 2015 started when the leaders of the Evangelical Church of Indonesia (GIDI) forbade Muslims to pray for Eid al-Fitr because GIDI was holding a meeting nearby. GIDI youth threw stones at Muslims who ignored the prohibition, and police—who are generally Muslim Indonesians, even in Papua—were called and fired on the youth, resulting in the death of one GIDI member. In response, riots broke out, and rioters burned migrants' stalls and a mosque.

The violence in Tolikara marked a new wave of Islamic radical infiltration into Papua. Islamic groups called for mobilization and announced a *jihad* against Papua. Papua's proximity to Sulawesi and the Philippine island of Mindanao makes it a strategic base for militants. To date, there have been no attacks by Islamic extremists in Papua, though there is some evidence of extremist groups actively recruiting migrants in Papua.²

¹ Interview in Sorong, 28 April, 2021.

² A new report by IPAC examines the recent arrests of suspected ISIS supporters in Merauke, Papua. The report suggests that while it is not the first evidence of pro-ISIS cells in Papua, it is by far the largest extension of ISIS influence seen to date. See Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC), *How a Pro-ISIS Cell Emerged in Papua*, February 3, 2022, <http://www.understandingconflict.org/en/conflict/read/107/How-A-Pro-ISIS-Cell-Emerged-In-Papua>.

ESCALATING ARMED CONFLICT BETWEEN REBELS AND SECURITY FORCES

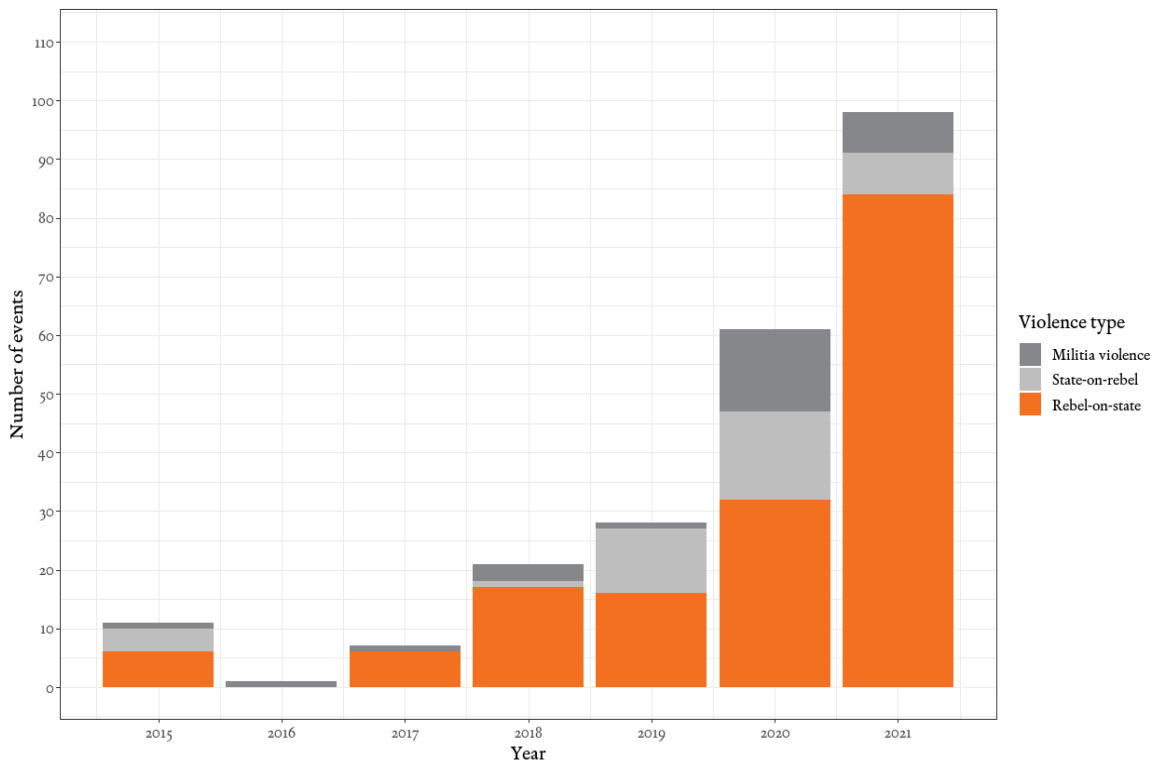
While the persistence of low-level armed conflict in itself indicates elevated risk of mass atrocities, the escalation of conflict is acutely worrisome. Increasing activity by armed groups has already provoked brutal responses by Indonesian security forces, and could spur even harsher crackdowns and killings. In turn, this could increase Papuan antipathy toward the state and the popularity of pro-independence movements, which could ultimately lead to even more violence.

After years of relative quiet, the Papuan independence movement reemerged in 2014 when the United Liberation Movement for West Papua united three political movements and began an international diplomacy offensive. Since 2019, the Papuan rebel group known as the *Tentara Pembebasan Nasional* or *National Liberation Army* (TPN)—an armed wing of the Free Papua Organization established in the 1970s⁸⁶—has also become more active.⁸⁷

As seen in Figure 4, the annual number of conflict events in Papua and Papua Barat provinces increased eightfold between 2015 and 2021. Conflict fatalities follow the same trend, topping 50 in 2021. Pro-independence rebel violence against state forces, including the Indonesian military and

police, are a growing share of these violent incidents, as seen in Figure 4. Rebel attacks on civilians have also increased over the same period, according to Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED).

Figure 4. Conflict events in Papua and Papua Barat provinces, 2015–2021: by actor



Source: Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED); acleddata.com. Conflict events include battles and remote violence.

Although the frequency of military attacks on civilians has remained roughly constant over the past several years, according to ACLED, the state’s response to rebel group attacks has been increasingly aggressive, with large consequences for Indigenous Papuan civilians. For example, the Indonesian military and police launched Operation Nemangkawi to track down the rebel group responsible for killing 20 Indonesian construction workers in Nduga in 2018.⁸⁸ Operation Nemangkawi has failed to capture key TPN figures, but forcibly displaced thousands⁸⁹ and included widespread human rights abuses, which have been met with impunity. As part of Operation Nemangkawi, Indonesian authorities have also increased their control over Papuan civil society by restricting press freedom, harassing independent journalists, and intimidating CSO activists who sympathize with Indigenous Papuans. Security forces are also increasing pressure on and monitoring of peaceful pro-independence organizations such as the National Committee for West Papua (Komite Nasional Papua Barat, or KNPB),⁹⁰ which fuels Indigenous Papuan distrust of the government and increases support for the KNPB.

In December 2021, the TNI Commander and Indonesian military elites promised to drastically change policy in Papua.⁹¹ In an important step, the TNI plans to withdraw from Papua all “non-organic troops” (a term for auxiliary troops from military units outside Papua)⁹² and shift from its combat-heavy approach to “territorial operations,” emphasizing civic action programs.⁹³ The TNI commander, General Andika Perkasa, also said he would prioritize a “humanistic approach” with an emphasis on communicating with Papuans.

It is too early to tell whether significant changes in Indonesian military strategy will actually follow these pronouncements, let alone whether a new approach of this type would reduce the level of violent conflict. Scholars and activists have raised various questions—for example, whether a shift to “territorial operations” is premature given the increasing frequency of violent incidents, and whether it is proper to use funds designated for Papua by the Special Autonomy law to support these operations.⁹⁴ Meanwhile, attacks by rebel and government forces are regularly reported.

PLAUSIBLE ATROCITY CRIME SCENARIOS

Here we describe scenarios involving large-scale, systematic attacks on civilian populations in Papua that we assess could plausibly unfold in the next 12–18 months. These are worst-case scenarios, meaning by definition they are less likely to occur than others, including variations on the status quo.

We focus on describing plausible mass atrocity scenarios to combat the recurring “failure of imagination,” which has been cited in many past cases of mass atrocities.⁹⁵ Based on their trailblazing research on cognitive biases, Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky explain that, when people are unable to bring to mind a reasonable scenario, they dismiss the idea as “impossible or highly unlikely.”⁹⁶ Describing plausible scenarios can help counteract this error in reasoning. Although mass atrocities are statistically rare, history has shown that they occur with disturbing and devastating regularity. The scenario descriptions presented below are meant to help increase attention on mass atrocity risks, and inform policy and programming to help prevent a worst-case outcome.

SCENARIO OVERVIEW

Our research suggests two plausible mass atrocity scenarios. In both, atrocities would be committed by militia with tacit support or acquiescence from Indonesian security forces, in response to increasing protests and/or rebel attacks by Indigenous Papuans demanding independence from Indonesia. Even a protest triggered by a perceived religious offense could ultimately morph into conflict between Indigenous Papuans who are pro-Indonesia and those who support Papuan independence. Although both sides have capacity to commit some violence, the military and pro-Indonesia militias together represent significantly more resources (from the military) and access (from the local militias) to commit atrocity crimes targeting pro-independence Indigenous Papuans.

In both scenarios, the Indonesian government’s response to Indigenous Papuans’ mobilization would determine whether mass atrocities occur. The Indonesian government’s response to the pro-independence movement so far can be characterized as low-level repression; chances are this will continue. However, it is possible—for reasons explained below—that the Indonesian government could determine that the scale or persistence of the protests would justify a more extreme response. In this case, the presence or absence of security forces’ support for militia groups would determine whether mass atrocities occur.

Table 1. Summary of plausible mass atrocity scenarios

	Potential Perpetrators	Target Groups	Triggers	Additional Comments
Scenario A: Internal division exploited	Pro-Indonesia Indigenous Papuan militia groups ⁹⁷ with the backing of Indonesian security forces	Indigenous Papuans perceived to support Papuan independence	Protests by Indigenous Papuans followed by widespread riots throughout Papua that Indonesian security forces could not contain	The Indonesian military has backed militia groups to commit atrocity crimes against its perceived opposition multiple times, including in 1965–66 against supporters of the Indonesian Communist Party, in 1967 when suppressing the leftist PGRS/Paraku group in West Kalimantan, and in 1999 against pro-independence groups in Timor Leste.
Scenario B: Identity conflict mobilized	Indonesian security forces and migrant militia groups ⁹⁸	Indigenous Papuans	Protests by Indigenous Papuans followed by widespread riots throughout Papua that Indonesian security forces could not contain	The Indonesian military and police are multi-ethnic, though majority Muslim. If there is a religious riot, the security forces may split along ethnic or religious lines to defend their religious groups. This occurred in Maluku (1999–2003) and in Poso, Central Sulawesi (1998–2000).

SCENARIO A: INTERNAL DIVISIONS EXPLOITED

In this scenario, unrest would first appear in the form of protests and demonstrations, organized and led by pro-independence Indigenous Papuan groups. As security forces become involved, peaceful demonstrations may turn into riots targeting government offices, public facilities, and finally migrant residents. As discussed above, these first two elements of the scenario occur commonly in the Papua region.

This hypothetical scenario would diverge from recent patterns if political and social unrest were to persist, and to spread across the region. Although it is difficult to forecast the size and durability of a protest movement, we believe a combination of factors—increasing rebel attacks, better coordination and organization of pro-independence civilian organizations, and the ease of communication—makes it plausible that pro-independence protests could reach a new level in the next 12–18 months.

For example, the capability of civil organizations with aspirations for independence is getting better and the network of inter-city organizations in Papua is also improving. In our assessment, organizations such as the KNPB (National Committee for West Papua) have networks in almost all major cities in Papua. AMP (Papuan Student Alliance), which organizes Papuan students outside Papua, has also shown better organization. If protests and riots were to occur in major cities as they did in August 2019, they would pose a major challenge to security forces.

A widespread, resilient protest movement to assert Papuan independence would likely be perceived by the Indonesian government as a significant threat. If low-level repression failed and pro-independence activists rejected attempts at political accommodation, the Indonesian government would necessarily consider other ways to protect its core interests.

The Indonesian military has the ability to mobilize militia groups, control over Indonesian intelligence networks,⁹⁹ and an interest in maintaining the territorial integrity of the republic. In this circumstance, perceiving a threat to the Indonesian state, the military might mobilize pro-Indonesia Indigenous groups to attack pro-independence groups, capitalizing on inter-Papuan conflicts. With the backing of state security forces, these groups would have the access, capacity and motive to commit atrocity crimes against Indigenous Papuans who are perceived to oppose the Indonesian state.

This scenario would roughly follow historical precedent. The Indonesian military has backed militia groups to commit atrocity crimes against its perceived opposition multiple times, including in 1965–66 against supporters of the Indonesian Communist Party, in 1967 when suppressing the leftist PGRS/Paraku group in West Kalimantan, and in 1999 against pro-independence groups in Timor Leste. Although the Indonesian government and military today are very different from the ones that orchestrated these past atrocities, we cannot rule out a severe response if they were faced with a crisis and more moderate measures proved inadequate.

SCENARIO B: IDENTITY CONFLICT MOBILIZED

In Scenario B, the tensions between Indigenous Papuans and migrants that have been building for years reach a crisis point. Mass demonstrations may be triggered by a perceived racist incident (similar to the anti-racism demonstrations in August–October 2019) or a perceived religious offense. Political groups representing Indigenous Papuans, such as the KNPB and AMP, might increase their propaganda and mobilization against Indonesia and its perceived supporters. Such escalation could include increasing attacks on Indonesian military and police by pro-independence rebels, as well as attacks on migrants in the course of riots.

These first elements of this scenario represent incremental escalation of existing conflicts. Its potential to turn into mass atrocities depends on how Indonesian security forces respond. If they were unable to contain violent conflict between Indigenous Papuans and migrants, and/or if rebel attacks on Indonesian military or police were unexpectedly successful, Indonesian security forces might mobilize migrant militias (e.g., help coordinate, provide with arms or training) to attack Indigenous Papuan civilians. Although calls for violence would be against Papuans who are pro-independence, militias would likely target all Indigenous Papuans indiscriminately.

The Indonesian military and police are multi-ethnic, though majority Muslim. If there is a religious riot, the security forces could split along ethnic or religious lines to defend their religious groups. This occurred in Maluku (1999–2003) and in Poso, Central Sulawesi (1998–2000).

In this scenario, large-scale violence would be more likely to occur in coastal areas or in Papua Barat where the number of migrants and Indigenous people is relatively balanced.

CRITICAL UNCERTAINTIES

The following factors are uncertain at the time of writing, but should be closely monitored because they would significantly affect atrocity risk and how any atrocity scenario would unfold:

1. How would security forces respond to large-scale demonstrations? How would demonstrators, in turn, respond to the tactics of security forces? Both plausible mass atrocity scenarios are premised on growing or persistent pro-independence protests, even when met with violent responses by security forces. If Indonesian security forces and communal militia were to respond to protests nonviolently, or if demonstrators were deterred from further protests by initial responses, the risk of mass atrocities would be substantially lower. Neither the tactics of security forces nor the response of pro-independence demonstrators can be predicted confidently, so these dynamics should be monitored closely.

2. Will pro-independence armed groups be able to increase their capabilities by obtaining more weapons? What tactics will they use to demonstrate their strength? We do not know how the organizational capabilities, weaponry, and strategy of these groups will evolve. If the capabilities of pro-independence armed groups increase and the groups assume an uncompromising posture or wage a major attack on Indonesian security forces, the risk of mass atrocities against Indigenous Papuans would increase. If pro-independence groups signal a willingness to negotiate, the risk of mass atrocities would decrease.¹⁰⁰

3. Will the Indonesian military change its policies in Papua? As discussed above, the Indonesian military has promised a softer approach to its operations in Papua. If this strategy is really implemented, it could change the conflict equation in Papua. However, it remains unclear how pro-independence groups would respond to a change in the Indonesian military’s policies. It is not yet known whether this strategy would reduce the risk of mass atrocity in Papua because its success would depend on the ability to gain support from the civilian population for military objectives.

RESILIENCE AND MITIGATING FACTORS

In addition to identifying the factors contributing to risk for mass atrocities, we also identify several sources of resilience, which may mitigate the risk of mass atrocities against Papuans. Resiliencies are “social relationships, structures, or processes that are able to provide dispute resolution and meet basic needs through non-violent means.”¹⁰¹

PAPUAN PEACE NETWORK

Following the publication of the *Papua Road Map*, a book that offered avenues for conflict resolution in Papua,¹⁰² the *Jaringan Damai Papua* (Papua Peace Network) was created. This dialogue network includes both Indigenous Papuan and Indonesian religious leaders, academics, intellectuals, and activists from various backgrounds. The Peace Network seeks to create dialogue for peace at the grassroots level. According to one activist from the Papua Peace Network,

*(It) is perhaps the only grass-roots effort to create peace in Papua. It starts from the villages and moves upwards to the elite level in Papua. Unfortunately, this effort is not supported by Jakarta.*¹⁰³

This Peace Network still exists although is weaker after the deaths of its two founders.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, the Papua Peace Network and the ideas in the Papua Road Map remain the most promising mitigating factor in Papua. The Papua Road Map is still the most comprehensive blueprint for achieving peace in Papua, identifying four important problems: the marginalization and discrimination of Indigenous Papuans; failure of economic development; the history and flaws of Papua’s integration into the Republic of Indonesia; and the Indonesian state’s accountability for past violence.

PAPUAN LOCAL PRESS

Papua has an abundance of print, television, and online media managed both nationally and locally. Though some media have become the mouthpiece of the Indonesian government, military, or intelligence agency, other Indigenous Papuan media work independently. Independent, balanced media outlets can dispel rumors, conspiracy theories, and hoaxes, thereby reducing the risk of mass atrocities.

Two Indigenous Papuan media, *Jubi* and *Suara Papua*,¹⁰⁵ are independent and able to provide balanced news about Papua. *Jubi* and *Suara Papua* are often seen as representing the views of Indigenous Papuans. However, the Indonesian government and security forces view *Jubi* and *Suara Papua* as tools of the separatists.

Jubi employs both Indigenous Papuans and Indonesian journalists. Meanwhile, *Suara Papua* is still managed exclusively by Indigenous Papuans. In April 2021, *Jubi's* editor-in-chief, Victor Mambor, who often received threats and intimidation, had his car vandalized by unknown people. *Suara Papua's* website has repeatedly been hacked and its editors regularly harassed and intimidated.

Media like *Jubi* and *Suara Papua* mitigate mass atrocity risk in Papua because they strive for objective journalism and represent the views of the Papuan people, who are often portrayed negatively by national and local media. According to one editor in Jayapura,

*The national media are too biased when broadcasting the issues of Papua. Here, at the local level, we want to be objective. We listen to all parties. But strangely, even doing journalism properly is a crime in this country. There will be no peace without reliable and objective information.*¹⁰⁶



Local women selling different goods at the market in Wamena, Papua, January 23, 2015.
Dreamstime/Mirek1967

WOMEN-LED CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

When women are directly involved in peacebuilding and political processes, they can help to improve the content and implementation of peace agreements.¹⁰⁷ Papuan women play a key role in the Indigenous Papuans' economy. In addition to working in the domestic and agricultural sectors, some Papuan women are traders in Papuan traditional markets. “Papuan Mamas,” as they are popularly known, comprise the majority of Indigenous Papuan traders.

On many occasions, Papuan Mamas intervened directly in everyday, hyper-local interpersonal conflicts to prevent them from escalating into identity-based conflicts. One woman activist said,

Papuan Mamas have an important role to play in creating peace. It's not just because they're women. They are the mothers of Papuan children. This violence is against their nature as mothers who want to nurture human beings. [It is also] against their economic interests. If the situation is chaotic, Papuan women cannot work and as a result the whole family does not eat.¹⁰⁸

In addition, Papuan Mamas are often connected with migrants, who depend on the Mamas for food and other supplies. This gives them a unique position to promote peaceful coexistence, but they are not immune from conflict arising from economic imbalances between Papuan Mamas and migrant traders.

THE GROWTH OF NON-POLITICAL CIVIL SOCIETY

Various Indigenous Papuan and migrant civil society groups have recently emerged.¹⁰⁹ These groups promote literacy, films, art, and other intellectual activities and have no interest in Papuan conflict or politics. Some of these groups are jointly managed by Indigenous Papuans and migrants of Indonesian descent.

These groups have ‘soft-power’ in Papua because they operate at the grassroots level in building dialogue. They are independent from government, security forces, or independence movements. This kind of civil society group can act as a bridge, not only between Indigenous Papuans and migrants but also among Indigenous Papuans themselves.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations include a mix of longer- and shorter-term actions to help reduce the risk of mass atrocities in Papua, Indonesia, organized around five lines of effort. Tying them together is a simple idea, but one whose importance cannot be overstated: In addressing the situation in Papua, all parties should be recognized and treated with the respect and dignity that is owed all human beings. Having been excluded too often from conversations and decisions concerning their future, Indigenous Papuans frequently express a strong desire simply to be recognized and treated as equals. It is crucial that all strategies acknowledge Indigenous Papuan's voices, interests, and desires.

1. IMPROVE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND MONITORING OF MASS ATROCITY RISKS IN THE PAPUA REGION

The Indonesian government should:

- Lift restrictions imposed on journalists, researchers, and international civil society activists so that they are able to publish freely without threat of imprisonment and civil society groups can operate without undue restrictions throughout the region.¹¹⁰
- Work with the UN to arrange a technical cooperation agreement with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and welcome a visit to Papua by UN human rights officials¹¹¹ or a special rapporteur.¹¹²

Indonesia's international partners should:

- Advocate for lifting restrictions in Papua on media freedom and rights monitoring.
- Press the Indonesian government to cooperate with UN human rights mechanisms, such as by negotiating a technical cooperation agreement with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and welcoming a visit to Papua by UN human rights officials or a special rapporteur.
- Report regularly to their capitals on mass atrocity risks, violent incidents, and human rights trends in the Papua region, drawing on resources such as the UN's Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes.¹¹³
- Support local groups monitoring violent incidents and human rights violations.

2. MANAGE CONFLICTS IN PAPUA THROUGH NONVIOLENT MEANS

The Indonesian government and pro-independence Papuan leaders should:

- Adhere strictly to international human rights and international humanitarian law standards.
- Engage in negotiations about the conflict between pro-independence Papuans and the Indonesian government, modeled on the negotiations that led to the 2005 agreement between the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement.

Papuan leaders should:

- Facilitate dialogue among Indigenous Papuans to manage divisions and promote social cohesion.

Indonesia's international partners should:

- Support negotiations, including through mediation, between the Indonesian government and pro-independence Papuan groups.
- Support community-level dialogue and peacebuilding to mitigate tensions between Indigenous Papuans and migrants and among Indigenous Papuans.
- Support informal and formal Papuan civil society groups at advocating with the Indonesian government.¹¹⁴

3. ADDRESS PAPUAN GRIEVANCES AND DRIVERS OF CONFLICT**The Indonesian government should:**

- Follow through on the recent commitments by the Indonesian National Armed Forces Commander to withdraw non-local troops from Papua, and shift from a combat-heavy approach to one that focuses on the well-being of the civilian population.
- Reform the Special Autonomy Law to more effectively protect the rights and cultural identity of Indigenous Papuans, particularly given the rising migrant population in the region.
- Ensure that the exploitation and extraction of natural resources in Papua respects Indigenous Papuans' rights and contributes to the prosperity of the Papuan people.

Multinational corporations operating in the Papua region should:

- Adhere to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Publicly announce an action plan for doing so with measurable benchmarks.
- Commission regular independent assessments of how their business operations and contributions to community development interact with conflict and human rights issues.¹¹⁵ Make reports of these assessments available to the public, especially including local communities.
- Consult with local communities about how their activities should be modified to ensure that they do not exacerbate conflict or human rights abuses.

The Papuan Regional Government should:

- Prioritize public services to Indigenous Papuans, especially those who are marginalized.
- Investigate allegations of corruption by local government officials and increase the transparency of its financial management.

- Facilitate and finance activities aimed at building peace in Papua, such as the Papua Peace Network.

4. ADDRESS POTENTIAL FLASHPOINTS

The Indonesian government and pro-independence Papuan leaders should:

- Discourage all militias and ethnic associations that have the potential to be converted into militias from taking up arms—for example, by employing peace messaging in public communications and in private communication with group leaders.
- Counter misinformation/disinformation in Papua, especially that which could contribute to violence, and make public statements in support of peace.

The Indonesian government should:

- Ensure that security forces operating in the Papua region are well trained in nonviolent strategies for managing crowds, public protests, and riots.
- Ensure that security forces do not provide support to militia or ethnic associations that could engage in violence. Investigate and punish the enabling of militia violence.

Indonesia's international partners should:

- Support the Indonesian government in training and equipping security forces to use nonviolent strategies for managing crowds, public protests, and riots.
- Vet potential recipients of security sector assistance on their human rights performance and restrict assistance to those with acceptable records, in accordance with relevant law and policy.
- Support community-level early warning/early response networks.

5. SUPPORT JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY EFFORTS

The Indonesian government should:

- Conduct impartial investigations of alleged violations of domestic and international human rights and humanitarian law, and hold perpetrators accountable up to the highest chain of command.

Indonesia's international partners should:

- Press for independent investigation, documentation, and justice and accountability for potential atrocity crimes.
- Support local civil society groups to promote justice and accountability for atrocity crimes.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Recognizing that protests could contribute to a situation in which some actors choose to commit atrocities should in no way be interpreted as discouraging any individuals or groups from exercising their rights to free expression and assembly. Freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are protected under both international law and under the Indonesian Constitution.
- ² Papua refers to territory formerly known as West New Guinea which in 1969 was incorporated into Indonesian territory through the controversial Act of Free Choice. In 2008, Indonesia divided Papua into two provinces: Papua and West Papua, also known in Indonesian as Papua Barat. In this report we will refer to Papua to mean both provinces. When referring to each distinct province, we will use their official names (Papua province and Papua Barat province).
- ³ Ross Tapsell, “The Media and Sub-national Authoritarianism in Papua,” *Southeast Asia Research*, 23, no. 3, (2015), 319–334.
- ⁴ The military holds veto power over policies in West Papua for reasons of security and “national unity.” “NKRI Harga Mati” (Unity of the Indonesian Republic Is a Closed Deal) is the most popular slogan in the country. Several former and active civilian officials who were tasked to give advice to the president have complained about resistance from the military when dealing with policies on Papua. The term “veto power” came from one of the interviewees. Various off the record interviews on June 20 and August 1, 2021.
- ⁵ The term *Orang Asli Papua* (Indigenous Papuan) is an official term used in Indonesian law, especially in the 2001 Special Autonomy Law and its revision in 2021. The term is therefore also a legal term.
- ⁶ See Made Supriatma, “TNI/Polri in West Papua: How Security Reforms Work in the Conflict Regions” *Cornell University Southeast Asia Program* 95, (2013), <https://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/54614>.
- ⁷ The murder of Theys Hiyo Eluay, a charismatic Papuan leader, in 2001 is perhaps the most prominent example. The killing was proven to have been carried out by the army’s special forces (Kopassus). The Kopassus commander in charge, Lieutenant Colonel Hartomo, was sentenced to 3 years and 6 months, and dismissed from military service. However, it was later discovered that he was released and not fired. At the peak of his career Hartomo became head of military strategic intelligence (*Kabais*) and he retired as Major General. See also Amnesty International, *Don’t Bother, Just Let Him Die, Killing with Impunity in Papua*, (Jakarta Pusat: Amnesty International Indonesia, 2018), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa21/8198/2018/en/>.
- ⁸ See OHCHR, “Indonesia: UN experts sound alarm on serious Papua abuses, call for urgent aid,” March 1, 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=28180&LangID=E>.
- ⁹ Sita W. Dewi, “Jokowi takes wife, children on campaign trail,” *The Jakarta Post*, June 6, 2014, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/06/06/jokowi-takes-wife-children-campaign-trail.html>; Michael Bachelard, “Joko Widodo Promises to Focus on West Papua,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, August 23, 2014, <https://www.smh.com.au/world/joko-widodo-promises-to-focus-on-west-papua-20140823-107jd0.html>; Randy Fabi and Kanupriya Kapoor, “Indonesian President Looks to Open up Neglected Papua Region,” *Yahoo News*, June 11, 2015, <https://news.yahoo.com/indonesian-president-looks-open-neglected-papua-region-040702162--finance.html>.
- ¹⁰ Data extracted from Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, <https://www.acledata.com/data/>.
- ¹¹ One example is the intimidation of a Papuan journalist, Victor Mambor. He is the chief editor and founder of *Tabloid Jubi*, a local media respected for its courage in reporting events in Papua. Mr. Mambor has been bullied several times and on April 23, 2021, his vehicle was vandalized while parked in front of his house. Read more here: <https://asiapacificreport.nz/2021/04/23/tabloid-jubi-journalist-victor-mambor-terrorised-over-papua-reports/>.
- ¹² Differences between Indigenous Papuans and migrants are often labeled as racial, and Indigenous Papuans frequently describe discrimination against them as racist.
- ¹³ UN News, “Indonesia: Shocking abuses against Indigenous Papuans, rights experts report,” March 1, 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1113062>.
- ¹⁴ Scott Straus, *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention* (Washington, DC: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2016), 31. <https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/Fundamentals-of-Genocide-and-Mass-Atrocity-Prevention.pdf>.
- ¹⁵ Previous Early Warning Project country reports include Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, Mali, and Cote d’Ivoire.
- ¹⁶ The Statistical Risk Assessment is designed to forecast the onset of state or non-state-led mass killings, defined as deliberate actions of armed groups that result in the deaths of at least 1,000 noncombatant civilians in a year or less. A list view of the results is available here: <https://earlywarningproject.ushmm.org/ranking-of-all-countries>.
- ¹⁷ Indonesia ranked 22nd, 32nd, and 39th in the previous three Statistical Risk Assessments for 2020–2021, 2019–2020, and 2018–2019, respectively.
- ¹⁸ Key factors from the statistical model underlying Indonesia’s high-risk assessment include its large population size, history of mass killing, high ethnic fractionalization, and the fact that it’s not a state signatory of the First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- ¹⁹ US Department of State and USAID, “Working Draft, Atrocity Assessment Framework: Supplemental Guidance on State/USAID Conflict Assessment Framework,” <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/cso/archive/ap/241116.htm>.
- ²⁰ See Straus, *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention*, 55.
- ²¹ The Early Warning Project considers there to have been five mass killings in Indonesia: 1949–1962 (Government kills civilians during effort to defeat Islamist Darul-Islam insurgency), 1965–1966 (Military eliminates suspected Communists and sympathizers), 1969–2007 (Government kills civilians during effort to defeat West Papuan secessionist insurgency), 1975–1999 (Government kills resisting Timorese in massacres and famine), and 1989–2005 (Government kills civilians during effort to defeat separatist insurgency in Aceh).
- ²² RB Cribb, *The Indonesian Killings of 1965–1966: Studies from Java and Bali*, (Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, 1990); also, Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season: A History of the Indonesian Massacres, 1965–66*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).
- ²³ Indonesia’s 24-year occupation of East Timor (from 1975–1999) was characterized by violence and gross human rights abuses. While many atrocities occurred during this period, the massacre in Santa Cruz (1991), in which hundreds of people died at the hands of the Indonesian military, is widely cited. While the total death toll during Indonesian occupation is debated, Ben Kiernan has calculated that up to a fifth of the East Timorese

population perished. See Ben Kiernan, “The Demography of Genocide in Southeast Asia: The Death Tolls in Cambodia, 1975–79, and East Timor, 1975–80,” *Critical Asian Studies* 35, no. 4 (2003): 585–597; Human Rights Watch, “Justice Denied for East Timor Indonesia’s Sham Prosecutions, the Need to Strengthen the Trial Process in East Timor, and the Imperative of U.N. Action,” December 20, 2002, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2002/12/20/justice-denied-east-timor/indonesias-sham-prosecutions-need-strengthen-trial>.

²⁴ Similar to Papua, the Aceh province of Indonesia has experienced decades of conflict and violence between the Indonesian government forces and the pro-independence Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, GAM). Between 1989 and 2004, 10,000 to 30,000 people were killed during the conflict. For a comprehensive account of the human rights abuses that took place see Amnesty International, *Time to Face the Past: Justice for Past Abuses in Indonesia’s Aceh Province*, (London: Amnesty International Ltd, 2013), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa21/001/2013/en/>.

²⁵ Deliberate attacks on civilian targets, extrajudicial killings, rape, and torture are among the violations reported to have occurred in Papua during the New Order period. See Brundige, Elizabeth, et al. “Indonesian human rights abuses in West Papua: Application of the law of genocide to the history of Indonesian control.” *New Haven: Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic, Yale Law School* (2004), https://law.yale.edu/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/Intellectual_Life/West_Papua_final_report.pdf.

²⁶ See Straus, *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention*, 59–60.

²⁷ In Indonesian history, this mobilization is known as “Trikorla” or *Tri Komando Rakyat*/Three People’s Command, namely a call to (1) thwart the formation of the Papuan state; (2) flying the red and white flag in West Irian; and (3) prepare for general mobilization to defend the independence and unity of the homeland and nation.

²⁸ Although many international observers said that the act of free choice was fraudulent, the United States and Australia supported Indonesia in voting to ratify TAFC at the UN General Assembly. In the vote, 84-member states approved the integration of West Papua to Indonesia and 30 abstained.

²⁹ The term “The Act of No Choice” appears repeatedly in various interviews in Papua. It was mentioned among others by a member of the provincial parliament (DPRP) and a member of the Papuan People’s Assembly (MRP) in Jayapura, various interviews in Jayapura April 10–16, 2021. This terminology also resonates internationally. See for example, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-10-09/west-papua-petition-australias-promise-about-to-be-tested/9025206>.

³⁰ The handover of power from UNTEA to Indonesia in 1963 created a lot of discontent from the bureaucrats, military and police of Indigenous Papuans. The Indonesian military arbitrarily confiscated houses, burned Dutch books and documents, and destroyed anything related to the Dutch. This anti-Dutch attitude of the Indonesian military and bureaucrats, as part of Indonesian nationalism, offended the Indigenous people who were educated by the Dutch. See, RG Djopari, *Pemberontakan Organisasi Papua Merdeka (Free Papua Movement Rebellion)*, (Jakarta: Grasindo, 1995).

³¹ On Indonesian military operations in the Papua region, see Amiruddin al Rahab, “Operasi-operasi Militer di Papua: Pagar Makan Tanaman? (Military Operations in Papua: Fence Eating Plants?)” *Jurnal Penelitian Politik*, Vol. 3. No. 1 (2006): 3–23, <https://ejournal.politik.lipi.go.id/index.php/jpp/article/view/420>.

³² Papuans remember very well the brutalities of the Indonesian military operations. State violence experienced by Papuan civilians is recorded in the report of a collaborative study conducted by Indonesia’s National Commission for Women and several civil society organizations. The study interviewed 170 women and found 138 violence cases of state violence such as shootings, arbitrary detention, torture, and disappearance of husband or family members. See, *Stop sudah!: kesaksian perempuan Papua korban kekerasan dan pelanggaran HAM, 1963-2009: hasil pendokumentasian bersama kelompok kerja pendokumentasian kekerasan & pelanggaran HAM perempuan Papua, 2009–2010*, Kerja sama Komnas Perempuan, Pokja Perempuan Majelis Rakyat Papua, dan International Center for Transitional Justice, 2010.

³³ The operations carried out by the Indonesian military between 1977–78 were the most brutal in Papuan history. The Indonesian military deployed about 10,000 troops with the support of helicopters and Bronco OV-10 bombers. The death toll of Indigenous Papuans is estimated to be 1,605. Not all of those killed were members of the Free Papua Organization. See Robin Osborne, *Indonesia’s secret war: the guerilla struggle in Irian Jaya* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1985), 72–73.

³⁴ Team 100, as it was known, met with President Habibie on February 26, 1999, and demanded the right of self-determination for Papua. Habibie refused the demand but promised to grant a special autonomy to Papua. On August 30, 1999, Indonesia lost the referendum in Timor Leste and chaos followed. President Habibie lost the vote of confidence in the People’s Consultative Assembly. On 20 October he was replaced by KH Abdurrahmah Wahid (Gus Dur) as president. The legislative process for the Special Autonomy Law for Papua took place during this presidential administration. However, President Wahid’s government fell on July 23, 2001. He was replaced by his deputy, Megawati Sukarnoputri. This special autonomy law was ratified by President Megawati on November 21, 2001.

³⁵ Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, *Diminished Autonomy and the Risk of New Flashpoints in Papua*, 2021, <http://www.understandingconflict.org/en/conflict/read/106/Diminished-Autonomy-and-the-Risk-of-New-Flashpoints-in-Papua>.

³⁶ Sixty-three people were arrested for protesting the passage of the amendment in Jayapura and Jakarta. See Sebastian Strangio, “Protests Greet Indonesia’s Renewal of Papuan Autonomy Law,” *The Diplomat*, July 19, 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/07/protests-greet-indonesias-renewal-of-papuan-autonomy-law/> and CNN Indonesia, “Demo Against Otsus, 23 Papuan Students Arrested by Officials,” July 14, 2021, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20210714134727-32-667606/demo-tolak-otsus-23-mahasiswa-papua-ditangkap-aparat>.

³⁷ Interview with an independence activist in Jayapura, April 12, 2021.

³⁸ UN, *Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes: A Tool for Prevention* (New York: UN, 2014), 10, https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/about-us/Doc.3_Framework%20of%20Analysis%20for%20Atrocity%20Crimes_EN.pdf.

³⁹ See, Adérito de Jesus Soares, “The Impact of Corporate Strategy on Community Dynamics: A Case Study of the Freeport Mining Company in West Papua, Indonesia,” *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, 11, no. ½ (2004): 115–142, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24675258>.

⁴⁰ Direct observations and interviews in Timika and Jakarta between April–August, 2021. For example, we found the offices of one Freeport-funded community-based organization empty, reportedly because the director had siphoned off funds and staff were not being paid.

⁴¹ See, Global Witness, *Paying for Protection*, 2005, <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/archive/paying-protection/>.

⁴² In 2015, former President Yudhoyono launched MIFEE, an integrated project to provide food and renewable energy. Besides creating food estates, this project also aims to allocate millions of hectares for palm oil under the pretext of creating renewable energy. Though the project has failed, some

of the forests that were planned to be converted into MIFEE have already been cleared, the wood harvested, and palm oil plantations created. Papua is Indonesia’s last tropical forest to be the target of palm oil businesses after others such as Sumatra and Kalimantan experienced massive deforestation. See “An Agribusiness Attack on West Papua: Unravelling the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate,” downloaded here: https://awasmiffee.potager.org/?page_id=25.

⁴³ In September 2020, President Joko Widodo’s administration announced a Food Estate Program project on the southern coast of Papua. The food estate is planned to cover an area of 2 million hectares including the regencies of Merauke, Mappi, and Boven Digul. The project will also convert 1.3 million hectares of forest. Although it is not stated publicly, the area of the Food Estate project is almost the same as the MIFEE project. See Swallowing Indonesia’s Forest, <https://awasmiffee.potager.org/uploads/2021/03/Swallowing-Indonesias-Forests.pdf>.

⁴⁴ The Indonesian constitution states that “all land, water, and air are controlled by the state and used as much as possible for the benefit of the people.” This constitutional mandate allows the state to claim land for public use and is often used to justify land grabbing. Land grabbing is carried out through manipulating permit issuance. A recent study by Greenpeace International shows that land acquisition for palm oil plantations largely violates government regulations. The violators are companies that have links to political elites in Jakarta. See, Greenpeace, *License to Clear: The Dark Side of Permitting in West Papua*, (Amsterdam: Greenpeace International, 2021).

⁴⁵ For example, the Human Development Index (HDI) increased quite significantly, from 54.45 in 2010 to 60.84 in 2019 in Papua province and from 59.6 in 2010 to 64.7 in 2019 in Papua Barat province. These increases are greater than the national average in the same period, which is 0.53 per year. The number of poor people in Papua has also decreased from 50% in 1999 to 27.74% for Papua and 23.01% for West Papua in 2019. See, <https://www.bps.go.id/indicator/26/494/1/-metode-baru-indeks-pembangunan-manusia-menurut-provinsi.html>.

⁴⁶ Bobby Anderson, *Papua’s Insecurity: State’s Failure in Indonesian Periphery*, (Washington: East West Center, 2015).

⁴⁷ UN, *Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes*, 11, https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/about-us/Doc.3_Framework%20of%20Analysis%20for%20Atrocity%20Crimes_EN.pdf.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴⁹ See Straus, *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention*, 60.

⁵⁰ “Security force impunity remains a problem,” according to the *2020 State Department Country Report on Human Rights Practices*, 6, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/indonesia/>.

⁵¹ UN News, “Indonesia: Shocking abuses against Indigenous Papuans, rights experts report,” March 1, 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1113062>.

⁵² Paul Gregoire, “There are Continued Calls for Freedom as Villages Burn in West Papua,” *Vice*, January 26, 2015,

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/4w798q/there-are-continued-calls-for-freedom-as-villages-burn-in-west-papua>; Martin Vengadesan, “West Papua groups: Indonesian military is burning our villages,” *Malaysiakini*, September 11, 2019, <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/491603>.

⁵³ Gold miners in Timika said in interviews that they have to pay ‘dues’ to the ‘anggotas,’ or members of state security forces. Miners told us that different tailing areas are controlled separately by military and police units.

⁵⁴ Amnesty International has noted that between 2010–2018 there have been 69 cases of unlawful killings that have claimed 95 lives. Cases related to the police took 39 lives, the military 27, a combination of the police and the military 28, and the civil service police (*Satpol PP*) 1 person. See Amnesty International, *Don’t Bother, Just Let Him Die, Killing with Impunity in Papua*, 6-7,

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa21/8198/2018/en/>; See also *2020 State Department Country Report on Human Rights Practices*, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/indonesia/>.

⁵⁵ “Indonesian Defence White Paper,” *Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Indonesia*, November 20, 2015, <https://www.kemhan.go.id/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/2015-INDONESIA-DEFENCE-WHITE-PAPER-ENGLISH-VERSION.pdf>; John Chang Hoon Lee, “A Spirit of Destruction”: The Origins of the Indonesian Military’s Institutional Culture,” May, 2013, <https://ecommons.cornell.edu/bitstream/handle/1813/38831/jcl364.pdf>, p. 54.

⁵⁶ “Indonesian Defence White Paper,” 2015, p. vi.

⁵⁷ Kate Ferguson, *Architectures of Violence: The Command Structures of Modern Mass Atrocities* (London: Hurst Publishers, 2020); Sabine Carey and Neil Mitchell, “Pro-government Militias,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 20 (2017): 127–147.

⁵⁸ James Waller, *Confronting Evil: Engaging Our Responsibility to Prevent Genocide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 181.

⁵⁹ Ananta et al. “Statistics on Ethnic Diversity in the Land of Papua, Indonesia.”

⁶⁰ Interview in Sorong, April 26, 2021.

⁶¹ Census data are unreliable for several reasons. Papua has a large area, the population is scattered, and the terrain is challenging. The absence of reliable data is also exacerbated by the tendency of local elites to manipulate data for various purposes. Each local agency has its own demographic data to serve the interests of the elite who administer it. Population data can be manipulated for general election purposes. It can also be used to manipulate the amount of funds requested from the provincial or central government. Uncertainty about demographic data is ultimately becoming a source of corruption. Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC), *Number Matters: The 2020 Census and Conflict in Papua*, October 29, 2019, http://file.understandingconflict.org/file/2019/10/Report_60F1.pdf.

⁶² In Papua province, the Dani Indigenous Papuan tribe is the largest ethnic group (23.32%). Javanese rank second and make up 11.32% of the total population. Migrants are dominant in several coastal regencies such as Keerom, Merauke, Nabire, Timika, and in Jayapura City. In Papua Barat, Javanese are the biggest ethnic group and make up 14.76% of the total population. Javanese and other migrants are concentrated in Sorong City and Sorong Regency where the Aimas transmigration complex is located.

⁶³ Ananta et al. “Statistics on Ethnic Diversity in the Land of Papua, Indonesia.”

⁶⁴ A similar program, colonization, had also been carried out by the Dutch East Indies government. However, the transmigration program only started to intensify during the New Order era, especially after the Act of Free Choice 1969.

⁶⁵ This transmigration program has produced enclaves of migrants such as in Arso and Skamto areas (Keerom regency), Merauke regency, Sarmi District (Sarmi regency), Aimas (Sorong), Prafi (Manokwari), and Uwapa (Nabire).

⁶⁶ See Philip M. Fearnside, “Transmigration in Indonesia: Lessons from Its Environmental and Social Impacts,” *Environmental Management* 21, no. 4 (1997): 553–570; Lachlan McNamee, *Indonesian Settler Colonialism in West Papua*, (2020), <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssm.3601528>; Simona Sienkiewicz, “Religion and Internal Migrations in the Processes of Indonesianisation and Islamisation of West Papua,” *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska. Sectio K, Politologia* XXVII.1, (2020): 25–42. The current-day continuation of the transmigration program in Papua remains highly controversial, with some critics stating that it “threatens Indigenous culture” and will continue to “destabilize a troubled area.” “West Papua: Indonesian Transmigration Program Further Marginalizes the Indigenous Population,” *Unrepresented Nations & Peoples Organization*, November 6, 2014, <https://unpo.org/article/17676>.

⁶⁷ Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), *Statistics of Migration Papua: Results of 2015 Intercensal Population Survey*, (Jakarta: BPS-Statistic Indonesia, 2016): 46–51, <https://www.neliti.com/publications/48198/statistics-of-migration-papua-results-of-the-2015-intercensal-population-survey>.

⁶⁸ Interview with a Javanese rice farmer in Merauke, April 18, 2021.

⁶⁹ Interview with a rice farmer who owns around 10 hectares of rice field in Merauke, April 19, 2021.

⁷⁰ Interview with a farmer in Aimas, Sorong regency, April 28, 2021.

⁷¹ In the July 2021 amendments to the law on special autonomy, it is regulated that Indigenous Papuans will automatically have 25% of the seats in the regency/municipality parliament (previously, this provision only applied at the provincial level). They are appointed by the regent/mayor from representatives of tribal heads (*kepala adat*), religious leaders, and women.

⁷² See Veronica Koman, *The 2019 West Papua Uprising: Protests against Racism and for Self-determination*, (London: Tapol, 2020).

⁷³ The International Coalition for Papua is the only report on this violence that provides the list of names of the victims. See Johnny Blades, “Death toll from Papua 2019 protest month put at 59,” *RNZ*, March 6, 2020, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/411118/death-toll-from-papua-2019-protest-month-put-at-59>; <https://humanrightspapua.org/news/2020/unrests-throughout-august-and-september-2019-result-in-59-fatalities/>.

⁷⁴ Human Rights Watch, “Indonesia: Investigate Riot Deaths in Papua” October 7, 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/10/07/indonesia-investigate-riot-deaths-papua>.

⁷⁵ During the handling of an anti-racism demonstration in the Regent’s office yard in Deiyai Regency (August 29, 2019), officers shot at the crowd which resulted in eight deaths and 16 injuries. All who died were native Papuans. See Abeth You, “A Tragic Story from the Courtyard of the Deiyai Regent’s Office,” *Jubi*, August 28, 2019, <https://jubi.co.id/kisah-tragis-dari-halaman-kantor-bupati-deiyai/>.

⁷⁶ A referendum was held in East Timor (later known as Timor Leste) on August 30, 1999. The referendum was to determine whether to accept the offer of special autonomy from Indonesia or become independent as a country. 78.5% of East Timorese who were eligible to participate in the referendum voted to become an independent country. Violence erupted soon after the referendum was held. Militia armed by the Indonesian military and intelligence carried out terror and murder against the civilian population and supporters of independence. More than half of East Timor’s population was displaced and 1,500 people died before the international coalition forces (InterFET) arrived to restore security on September 15. For documentation of the violence that occurred, see Geoffrey Robinson, “*If You Leave Us Here, We Will Die*”: *How Genocide Was Stopped in East Timor*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011). Also, James J. Fox and Dionisio Babo Soares (eds.), *Out of the Ashes: Destruction and Reconstruction of East Timor*, (Canberra: ANU Press, 2003).

⁷⁷ Interview in Jayapura, April 15, 2021.

⁷⁸ Indigenous Papuans distinguished themselves from other Indonesians. They call other Indonesian ethnic people “Amber,” which means yellow skin and straight hair as opposed to their black skin and curly hair. Some Indonesian ethnic people however also have darker skin and curly hair. Papuans call them “Komin”; Ethnic associations are very common in Papua and elsewhere in Indonesia, with migrant groups sometimes connected to networks of their co-ethnic or co-religionists from outside Papua. One of the largest in Papua, and also in Indonesia, is the Communion of South Sulawesi Families (KKSS – Kerukunan Keluarga Sulawesi Selatan, which include Buginese, Makassarese, Butonese). Meanwhile, other tribes in Jayapura have the Communion of Javanese and Madurese Harmony, the Sunda Madurese Javanese Family Association (Ikaswara) in Sorong, the Communion of Javanese Family in Timika, and so on.

⁷⁹ There is also a national-level organization called “Barisan Nusantara.” The organization was formed in Jakarta in 2013 and its founders are former activists in the 1980s and 1990s. This organization also has a branch in Papua.

⁸⁰ Darius Shahtahmasebi, “West Papua: The Genocide that is Being Ignored by the World,” *Indigenous Peoples Major Group for Sustainable Development*, <https://www.indigenouspeoples-sdg.org/index.php/english/tt/1081-west-papua-the-genocide-that-is-being-ignored-by-the-world>.

⁸¹ Interview in Jayapura, April 18, 2021.

⁸² Interview April 17, 2021.

⁸³ See Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC), *The 2018 Local Elections in Papua: Places and Issues to Watch*, May 31, 2018, http://file.understandingconflict.org/file/2018/05/Report_45.pdf.

⁸⁴ See, Victor Mambor, “Indonesian Troops Kill 4 in Papua Post-Election Violence,” *Benar News*, May 28, 2019, <https://reliefweb.int/report/indonesia/indonesian-troops-kill-4-papua-post-election-violence>.

⁸⁵ See, Anderson, *Papua’s Insecurity*, xiv.

⁸⁶ Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC), “West Papua: the OPM, the TPN-PB and the Terrorist Label,” August, 2021, <https://humanrightspapua.org/resources/the-opm-the-tpn-pb-and-the-terrorist-label/>.

⁸⁷ The Papuan Task Force of Gadjah Mada University (2021) noted that the violence, in terms of armed contact between the Indonesian military and rebel groups, increased in the 2010–2021 period. The spike in violence occurred over the last five years with the number of cases 19 (2017), 23 (2018), 40 (2019), 65 (2020), 51 (2021 to April). For the record, this Task Force recorded the amount of violence from the national mass media, which are usually very biased in reporting events in Papua. However, the data presented at least provides an illustration that the number of clashes between the Indonesian military and rebel groups has escalated. See, Gugus Tugas Papua Universitas Gadjah Mada, *Tindak Kekerasan di Papua (2010–2021)*, (Yogyakarta, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2021).

⁸⁸ The group responsible for this attack was led by Egianus Kogoya, a charismatic young man who was 18 years old at the time of the attack. To date, military operations carried out by Indonesia have not been able to capture this individual. Hasanudin Aco, *Mengenal Egianus Kogoya, Sosok di Balik Konflik Bersenjata di Nduga Papua* [Get to know Egianus Kogoya, the Figure Behind the Armed Conflict in Nduga Papua], July 31, 2019, <https://www.tribunnews.com/nasional/2019/07/31/mengenal-egianus-kogoya-sosok-di-balik-konflik-bersenjata-di-nduga-papua>.

⁸⁹ The crisis in Nduga alone has created 5,000 refugees. Aisha Kusumasomantri and Yulanda Iek, “Invisible victims of the Papua Conflict: the Nduga Regency Refugees,” *New Mandala*, March 11, 2021, <https://reliefweb.int/report/indonesia/invisible-victims-papua-conflict-nduga-regency-refugees>; Kate Lamb, “Indonesia Deploys 400 Battle-Hardened Troops to Troubled Papua,” *Reuters*, May 6, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/indonesia-deploys-400-battle-hardened-troops-troubled-papua-2021-05-06/>.

⁹⁰ Many Indigenous Papuans support the National Committee for West Papua (Komite Nasional Papua Barat, or KNPB), which is considered the most powerful non-armed civilian organization in Papua. Today, security forces have detained and imprisoned their leaders, but the KNPB still has the ability to mobilize and promote its messaging to the public. The Indonesian government’s tightening of control over the Papuan people actually increased the success of the KNPB, as it Indigenous Papuan increased distrust of the government.

⁹¹ Made Supriatma, “Indonesia’s ‘New’ Security Approach in Papua is Fraught with Risks,” *Fulcrum*, February 25, 2022, <https://fulcrum.sg/indonesias-new-security-approach-in-papua-is-fraught-with-risks/>.

⁹² See, Dewi Nurita, “Menimbang Opsi Penarikan Pasukan Non-Organik,” *Koran Tempo*, December 17, 2021, <https://koran.tempo.co/read/nasional/470390/penarikan-pasukan-tni-non-organik-dari-papua-jadi-pertimbangan-pemerintah>. Accessed January 3, 2022.

⁹³ “New approach in Papua,” *The Jakarta Post*, February 7, 2022, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/opinion/2022/02/06/new-approach-in-papua.html>.

⁹⁴ Supriatma, “Indonesia’s ‘New’ Security Approach in Papua is Fraught with Risks,” <https://fulcrum.sg/indonesias-new-security-approach-in-papua-is-fraught-with-risks/>.

⁹⁵ Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell*, (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

⁹⁶ Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, “Availability: A Heuristic for Judging Frequency and Probability,” *Cognitive psychology* 5, no. 2 (1973): 229.

⁹⁷ These could include Komponen Cadangan (Komcad), Barisan Merah Putih, Putra-Putri Pejuang Pepera, Boys and Girls of the Pepera Fighters, Hansip, Wamra, or Lembaga Missi Reclasseering Republik Indonesia (LMR-RD).

⁹⁸ These could include Barisan Nusantara and Martial Arts groups.

⁹⁹ The head of regional intelligence in Papua is usually held by a military officer.

¹⁰⁰ At the same time, if pro-independence armed groups have less capacity, or face divisions amongst themselves, state security forces may take advantage of that weakness to use repression, torture, or killings to quell dissent.

¹⁰¹ US Department of State and USAID, “Working Draft, Atrocity Assessment Framework,” 7.

¹⁰² This book, released in 2009 by a group of academics from the Indonesia Institute of Science (LIPI), is based on four years of research (2004–2008) mapping conflicts in Papua. It aims to open a dialogue between the Indonesian government and Indigenous Papuans who feel marginalized and excluded when talking about their own destiny and dignity. The administration of President Yudhoyono’s administration initially welcomed the recommendation proposed in this book. However, once the administration saw the consequences and future possibilities that the Papuan people could determine their own destiny, the government refused to support it. The next administration, led by President Joko Widodo, never addressed the book. See Muridan S. Widjojo, *Papua Road Map: Negotiating the Past, Improving the Present, and Securing the Future*, (Jakarta: LIPI, Yayasan Tifa, Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2009).

¹⁰³ Interview in Jayapura, April 18, 2021.

¹⁰⁴ Dr. Muridan Widjojo from LIPI and Fr. Neles Tebay, a Catholic priest from Jayapura Diocese.

¹⁰⁵ *Jubi* is published in print and digital, while *Suara Papua* is only published in digital. Both are publications that are usually referred by foreign journalists who cannot enter Papua because of restrictions imposed by the government.

¹⁰⁶ Interview in Jayapura, April 17, 2021.

¹⁰⁷ Jana Krause, Werner Krause, and Piia Brännfors, “Women’s Participation in Peace Negotiations and the Durability of Peace,” *International Interactions* 44, no. 6, (2018): 985-1016, DOI: 10.1080/03050629.2018.1492386.

¹⁰⁸ Interview in Jayapura, April 17, 2021.

¹⁰⁹ Our research in the field found such groups in urban areas in Papua. In Jayapura, we found a Papuan literacy group that formed a non-formal university called “Universitas Kaki Abu.” In Sorong we met the group called “Papua Cendekia” and “Buku Untuk Papua” (Books for Papua). In Nabire there is Koname (Nabire Reading Community); in Fakfak there is Tifa Kompos; while in Manokwari there is Noken Pustaka, and so on.

¹¹⁰ The Indonesian government has used the controversial 2008 Information and Electronic Transaction (ITE) law to silence and imprison activists and critics such as human rights lawyer Veronica Koman and Papuan independence activist Augustinus Yolemal. In addition, the Indonesian government’s secretive interagency “clearing house” continues to obstruct foreign journalists from traveling to Papua. See Freedom House, “Freedom in the World 2022: Indonesia,” <https://freedomhouse.org/country/indonesia/freedom-world/2022>; Freedom House, “Freedom on the Net: Indonesia,” <https://freedomhouse.org/country/indonesia/freedom-net/2021>; Human Rights Watch, “Indonesia Still Restricting Foreign Media From Papua,” May 8, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/05/08/indonesia-still-restricting-foreign-media-papua>.

¹¹¹ Previous attempts to visit Papua by the past and current UN High Commissioner for Human Rights have not been successful. See here RNZ, “Indonesia Working with UN Rights Chief on Papua Visit,” September 19, 2019, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/399145/indonesia-working-with-un-rights-chief-on-papua-visit> and here Phelim Kine, “Indonesia Shuts Out UN Rights Chief From Papua: No Follow-Up to Official Invitation to Troubled Region,” June 19, 2019, Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/06/19/indonesia-shuts-out-un-rights-chief-papua>.

¹¹² As a sign of cooperation, the Indonesian government and the special rapporteurs who authored the most recent UN statement about human rights abuses in Papua could work together to coordinate a visit to Papua. See OHCHR, “Indonesia: UN experts sound alarm on serious Papua abuses, call for urgent aid,” March 1, 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=28180&LangID=E>.

¹¹³ UN, *Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes*, https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/about-us/Doc.3_Framework%20of%20Analysis%20for%20Atrocity%20Crimes_EN.pdf.

¹¹⁴ Supporting civil society groups is a recognized strategy for preventing atrocities. See USAID, “Field Guide: Helping Prevent Mass Atrocities,” April, 2015, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/Field_Guide_Mass_Atrocities.pdf.

¹¹⁵ Several frameworks exist for conducting conflict sensitivity and human rights impact assessments of the type recommended. For example, see: The Danish Institute for Human Rights “Guidance and Toolbox,” <https://www.humanrights.dk/tools/human-rights-impact-assessment-guidance-toolbox/>; Huma Haider, *Conflict Sensitivity: Topic Guide*, (Birmingham: GSDRC, University of Birmingham, 2014), <https://gsdrc.org/topic-guides/conflict-sensitivity/>.

APPENDIX: DESCRIPTION OF FIELD RESEARCH

The field research for this report was conducted between March and August 2021. The researchers visited four major cities in Papua, namely Timika, Jayapura, Merauke, and Sorong. Plans to visit Wamena and the Pegunungan Bintang regencies, both in the Central Highlands region of Papua where there has been an escalation in violence between the Indonesian military and separatist rebel groups, could not be carried out due to security reasons and the pandemic. Several sources in Wamena and the Central Mountains region, however, were contacted and interviewed by telephone. Additional interviews were conducted face-to-face and/or by telephone in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Denpasar (Bali), Surabaya, and Malang. Interviews were generally conducted one-on-one. However, on several occasions, the researchers held discussions with 3–12 participants together. Overall, researchers interviewed 154 people in private and held four group discussions.

Interviewees came from diverse backgrounds. Among them were pro- and anti-independence activists, journalists, academics, and local public intellectuals. The interviewees also included the leaders of civil society organizations; leaders of Indigenous Papuan political organizations such as Papuan People Councils and Indigenous Papuan parliamentarians, leaders of migrant organizations and migrant ethnic associations; local leaders of organizations with national affiliations such as Catholic Youth Organization (PMKRI); Christian Youth Organization (GMKI); local leaders of national political parties; local leaders of religious organizations such as Indonesian Ulema Council; leaders of KINGMI Papua church; GIDI Church, other Christian denominations; and the Catholic church. Intensive interviews were also conducted with pro-independence groups such as the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP); the National Liberation Army/Free Papua Organization; the West Papua National Committee (KNPB); and the Papuan Student Alliance (AMP) activists.

In addition, research was also carried out by reviewing documents, studies, and research from scholars and civil society organizations, photographs, and videos.

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Cover: Papuan activists attend a protest in Surabaya on December 1, 2020, to mark the Free Papua Organization anniversary. JUNI KRISWANTO/AFP via Getty Images



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