

To
His Excellency
The Minister for Justice und Human Rights
Prof. Dr Yusril Ihza Mahendra
Jl. H.R. Rasuna Said Kav. 6-7
Kuningan
Jakarta Selatan
Indonesia

Fax: +62 21 5253095
or +62 21 3104149
or +62 21 5225036

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Prisoners of Conscience from Wamena - Papua

Excellency,

From amnesty international and other Organisations including my local church I regularly receive information on developments in the Papua Province. I am writing today because I am concerned about some recent reports. I must conclude that fundamental rights guaranteed under Indonesian law are being violated by state institutions.

I refer to the 13 people who are currently being detained in the prison in Abepura / Jayapura. They were sentenced in March 2001 to between two and four years imprisonment. At that time, the sentence was changed to "town arrest", which would mean that some of them have already served their full sentence. In spite of this, they were rearrested on December 11 and were to be transferred to Jakarta on December 21. No written order for this transfer was issued by the government in Wamena. When their families heard about this and inquired at the head of the regency, they were informed that the BIN (secret service) had given the order. Neither the detainees' lawyers nor their families were informed in writing about this transfer. As far as I am aware, the BIN does not have the authority to arrest people and transfer them 4,000 km across the country, without giving them the chance to inform their families and lawyers.

According to amnesty international the prisoners Yudas Meage, Obed Komba, Murjono Murib (and Amelia Yigibalom who remained at Wamena) have definitely to be regarded as prisoners of conscience since they were not involved in any act of violence but executed their right of freedom of expression (opinion). amnesty international also suspects that all prisoners did not have a fair trial.

This was not the only incident in Wamena last year that clearly violated Indonesian law. In April, an unknown number of civilians were killed during a military operation. One of them, Yapenas Murib, was tortured to death. Villages were burnt down, domestic animals shot, and gardens and the annual harvest destroyed. On November 5, the military brutally killed ten Indonesian citizens – allegedly separatists. Even the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas Ham), which is one of your own government's institutions, is concerned about severe human rights violations and plans to investigate these cases.

I write to you in your capacity as Minister for Justice and Human Rights, and urge you to ensure that in the cases mentioned above all decisions by government institutions that violate the law will be revoked and that you will ensure that these cases are handled according to Indonesian law.

In particular I ask you to ensure

- that a review of the legal base of the prisoners' transfer to Jakarta is conducted as well as a review of the sentences as some of them may have served their full sentence.
- that all prisoners of conscience are released immediately

In order to improve security in Papua I further ask you to ensure

- that all acts of violence committed by the security forces, including extrajudicial killings and torture, stop immediately
- that all perpetrators of human rights violations in the cases I mentioned are brought to justice.

Respectfully

Yours

c.c. Komnas Ham
Jl.Latuharhary No. 48
Menteng
Jakarta 10310
Indonesia