

# Mass arrests in Indonesia during West Papua protests

Saturday 3 December 2016, by [BELAU Arnold](#) (Date first published: 2 December 2016).

**Indonesian colonial police arrested 221 people on 1 December in three different cities, with 203 people arrested in Jakarta, four in Sentani, West Papua, and 14 people in the central Java city of Yogyakarta.**

In Jakarta, a peaceful demonstration commemorating the anniversary of the birth of the nation of West Papua, which was led by the Indonesian People's Front for West Papua (FRI-West Papua) and the Papuan Student Alliance (AMP), ended with brutal arrests by the Metro Jaya regional police. Before being arrested, the protesters from the AMP and FRI-West Papua said they were ruffed up and protest materials were seized.

"We hadn't even reached the Hotel Indonesia traffic circle [in central Jakarta] when we were blocked by security personnel. They (the security personnel) tore the Morning Star headbands off our heads, our command line was cut. Then we were sprayed with water from a water cannon. After this, we were taken in four trucks to the Metro Jaya police headquarters", one of the protesters, Roberta Muyapa, told Suara Papua in Jakarta.

He said that after being taken to the Metro Jaya police headquarters, the protesters were left to dry out in an open area for around four hours. All 203 of them, he said, were arrested by fully-equipped Indonesian colonial police along with hundreds of officers from the Metro Jaya regional police and Mobile Brigade paramilitary police.

Those arrested included FRI-West Papua spokesperson Surya Anta, AMP general chairperson Jefry Wenda, AMP Bandung activist Markus Medlama, Social Movement for Democracy (Gema Demokrasi) activist Yohanes Damian alias Galesh, Anka Thomas, Jefri Wanda, Frans Nawipa, Iriantibus Murib, Frans Douw, Pyan Pagawak and Minus Gibian.

Three of the 10 people arrested – Surya Anta, Jefry Wenda and Markus Medlama – were abused and assaulted by Indonesian colonial police. All of those arrested in Jakarta have now been released.

In Yogyakarta, protesters from the AMP and FRI-West Papua who were holding a peaceful demonstration were reported to have been forcibly disbursed by Indonesian colonial police and members of intolerant mass organisations.

According to information received by Suara Papua, at 1pm Indonesian police together with scores of members of mass organisations lined up to block protesters from FRI-WP and then seized protest materials. A short time later police were ordered to arrest the protesters.

Fourteen people were forced into a truck and removed from the location. According to information from police, they were taken to the Legal Aid Foundation. But according to the latest information received at 2pm, the 14 were taken to the Yogyakarta metropolitan district police (Polrestabes).

“We invite our comrades from pro-democracy groups to go to the Yogyakarta Polresta offices this afternoon to provide solidarity to our activist comrades that were arrested so that they will be released immediately”, they said.

The 14 people arrested were Reza (Socialist Study Circle), Kukuh (Working People’s Association-Organisational Saviours Committee), Gevan (Student Struggle Center for National Liberation, Pembebasan), Opan (Muhammadiyah Regional Leadership, PMB), Randi (Pembebasan), Edo (LBH Yogyakarta), Adli (Pembebasan), Danial (Indonesian People’s United Resistance), Opik (PMD), Asrul (Pembebasan), Andi, Aruk, Katek and Edi (Pembebasan). The 14 remain under arrest.

In the Papuan provincial capital of Jayapura meanwhile, West Papua National Committee (KNPB) general secretary Ones Suhuniap, when asked for confirmation by Suara Papua, confirmed that four activists were arrested and taken to the Doyo municipal police.

Ones said that the four KNPB Sentani Ryang activists who had planned to attend a religious ceremony were stopped and arrested and that the KNPB Sentani secretariat was vandalised by officers from the Sentani municipal police.

“Four people were arrested in Sentani. But I don’t have their names yet. What is clear is that the information on the arrests is correct. We have asked that the state release them and all of those who were arrested in Yogyakarta”, he said.

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