

Solidarity Statement: Stop the repression in West Papua

Friday 6 September 2019, by [Movements \(Asian\)](#) (Date first published: 4 September 2019).

In response to the crackdown on activists and protesters in West Papua, which has followed this attack, regional left organisations have issued the following joint statement.

On August 17, Indonesian Independence Day, armed Indonesian police, soldiers and radical Islamic militia stormed a student dormitory in the Indonesian city of Surabaya (on the island of Java), which housed West Papuan students, arresting 43.

The attack reportedly took place because the students had allegedly refused to raise the Indonesian flag.

Indonesia invaded West Papua in 1962 and has continued a brutal occupation since. It has conducted military attacks in areas populated by civilians, under the cover of targeting West Papua's pro-independence forces. It is illegal to raise the West Papuan flag (the Morning Star — a symbol of independence).

Reports of human rights abuses, extrajudicial killings, torture and displacement are rife.

West Papuans are regularly subject to racism and according to eye-witness reports, students were tortured and called "monkeys", "pigs" and "dogs" during the attack on August 17.

Following the attack, protests have continued in West Papua and thousands of people have taken to the streets to protest Indonesia's systematic racism, and to demand freedom and a referendum on independence.

In the Indonesian cities of Medan and Bandung the students have also received support.

In response to the protests, Indonesia has sent more than 1200 troops into West Papua, including the notorious Detachment 88 and Brimob (mobile police units). Detachment 88, which is trained by Australia, with the United States and Britain was reportedly involved in the attack in Surabaya and has been regularly used in a counter-insurgency role in West Papua. It was reportedly responsible for the killing of West Papuan independence leader, Kelly Kwalik.

Protesters and activists are being repressed by Indonesian forces. The internet has been cut off and journalists are prevented from entering the province, which is preventing information from coming out of West Papua. Surya Anta, spokesperson for the Indonesian People's Front for West Papua was also arrested on August 31.

This statement on behalf of left organisations in the Asia-Pacific raises the following demands:

1. Stop the repression against West Papuan activists and protesters and release all those detained during the protests, including Surya Anta.
2. Respect the right to self-determination of the Papuan people by agreeing to an internationally monitored referendum on independence.
3. Immediate withdrawal of military forces from West Papua.
4. Stop racism and systemic racist discrimination against the Papuan people.
5. Restore internet access in West Papua.
6. Allow international journalists access to West Papua.

Signatories:

Socialist Alliance (Australia)

Socialist Party of Malaysia - PSM

Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation - CPI(ML)

Party of the Laboring Masses - PLM (Philippines)

Korean House for International Solidarity (South Korea)

Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières (ESSF), France

Asia Monitor Resources Centre, Hong Kong

Socialist Workers, Thailand

Sedane Labour Resource Centre (LIPS), Indonesia

International Movement of Catholic Students Asia Pacific (IMCS AP)

Socialist Party of Bangladesh

Jammu Kashmir Awami Workers Party

Radical Socialist, India

Left Voice, Sri Lanka

Fightback Aotearoa New Zealand

The Alliance Party of Aotearoa New Zealand

Australia-Asia Worker Links

Socialist Alternative (Australia)

New Anticapitalist Party of France

Ash Brennan from the Free West Papua Campaign Australia

Cambodian Civil Society Partnership (CCSP)

Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)-Southeast Asia

Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID)

Southeast Asia Conflict Studies Network (SEACSN)

Socialist Aotearoa (New Zealand)

Peoples Empowerment Foundation - Thailand

Left21, Hong Kong

WorkerCom, Hong Kong

Borderless Movement, Hong Kong

Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Red Star

To add your organisation to the list of signatories, please email:

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P.S.

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<https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/stop-repression-west-papua>