

Papua: Government not seen as serious about resolving armed conflict in Papua

Wednesday 8 January 2025, by [BALOWSKI James](#), [KELEN Theo](#) (Date first published: 19 December 2024).

Theo Kelen, Jayapura — The Indonesian government is considered to not be serious about resolving the armed conflict in Papua. An approach of peaceful dialogue must continue to be encouraged as an effort to resolve the conflict in Papua, but the government has ignored this.

Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (Kontras) legal division head Andrie Yunus says that incidents with the dimension of an armed conflict continue to occur repeatedly in Papua. Yunus said that Kontras monitoring from December 2023 to November 2024 recorded 51 violent incidents of with the dimension of an armed conflict. These incidents resulted in the death of 21 people and 36 people being injured.

“We believe that the Indonesian government has no serious intention of resolving the [the armed conflict in Papua]”, Yunus told Jubi on Thursday December 19.

Yunus said that violence and armed conflicts have continued in Papua, and are actually caused by the repeated factor of state policies that prioritise a militaristic security approach in Papua. Yunus said that troops from outside Papua, both from the TNI (Indonesian Military) and Polri (Indonesian Police), have been repeatedly deployed to Papua.

A Kontras report covering the period October 2023 to September 2024 recorded that 3,342 TNI soldiers were deployed to Papua. A total of 2,505 came from the Indonesian Army, 437 from the Indonesian Navy and 400 from the Indonesian Air Force. A total of 2,787 TNI soldiers were deployed as part of the Indonesia-Papua New Guinea Border Security Task Force, and the remaining 555 were placed under the Operational Control (BKO) of local territorial military units.

According to Yunus, sending TNI and Polri troops to Papua under the pretext of securing vulnerable areas or to assist in development projects will only trigger more violence, resulting in loss of life and injury. This will certainly cause prolonged trauma for the indigenous Papuan people.

“We are also highlighting that the Indonesian government officiated the formation of [five new] Territorial Development Battalion in Papua, which are under the auspices of the Cenderawasih/XVII Regional Military Command (Kodam). This policy has the potential to cause massive human rights violations. It should not have been done”, he said.

In addition to this, Yunus said that the government is also pushing through National Strategic Projects (PSN) that are appropriating the land and forests of indigenous Papuans. Yunus said that these PSN have the potential to create great damage to the environment. Indigenous people who depend on the forests for their livelihoods are also marginalised because of these PSN.

Civilians most impacted upon National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) Chairperson

Atnike Nova Sigiro says that civilians are most affected by the armed conflict in the land of Papua. Sigiro said that Komnas HAM's monitoring from January to December found 85 cases of armed conflict and violence in Papua.

“(There are still) armed conflicts between the TNI/Polri and the TPNPB [West Papua National Liberation Army]. The impact (of these armed conflicts) has created various problems, including fatalities, injuries, internal displacement and the cessation of public services”, said Sigiro during a media briefing event titled “Komnas HAM Notes: The Human Rights Situation in Papua in 2024” in Jakarta on Wednesday December 18.

Sigiro said that armed conflicts have resulted in the 32 civilians being killed and 17 civilians being injured. A total of 14 members of the armed TPNPB also died, and seven others were injured.

The armed conflict also resulted in eight TNI members being killed and 10 others being injured. In addition to this, seven Polri members were killed and five injured. “[The] majority of the victims who died or were injured were civilians”, she said.

Komnas HAM mediations commissioner Prabianto Mukti Wibowo said that Komnas HAM is calling on the parties to end armed contacts and acts of violence. Wibowo said that armed contacts only escalate the conflict and threaten the safety of civilians.

Wibowo said Komnas HAM is asking the TNI and Polri to always use measurable and proportional measures to avoid people falling victim and for the TPNPB and the TNI and Polri not to target civilians and public service facilities in the conflict.

Only through peaceful dialogue National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) researcher Professor Cahyo Pamungkas says that only a peaceful dialogue can resolve the conflict in Papua. According to Pamungkas, a security approach will only prolong the conflict.

“(The armed conflict) must be resolved through dialogue”, Pamungkas told Jubi by phone on Thursday.

Pamungkas said the government must start encouraging a peaceful dialogue. He said that a dialogue is important in order to discuss all the issues, both the failure of development, marginalisation and discrimination against indigenous Papuans, state violence and accusations of human rights violations, as well as the controversy over the history and political status of the Papua region.

“[There] must be dialogue with pro-independence groups. They must be invited to negotiate, and hold a dialogue to solve the problems (in Papua)”, he said.

According to Pamungkas, as long as the Indonesian government prioritises a security approach it will only give birth to more violence. He is also asking the Indonesian government to evaluate the security approach in Papua that has now been pursued for 65 years.

“Violence when confronted with violence will give birth to violence and (will become) a cycle of violence that cannot be broken”, he said.

Andrie Yunus says that preparations for a peaceful dialogue must be carried out by cooperating with all parties. Yunus said however that in order to encourage dialogue, the Indonesian government must stop deploying TNI and Polri troops from outside Papua to Papua.

“(The Indonesian government must also) stop extractive policies that clear Papuan forests and

marginalise indigenous peoples. And stop the construction of military posts (in Papua)", he said.

Theo Kelen

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Translated by James Balowski