



26 October 2011

**Statement regarding the shooting of civilians in Abepura, Jayapura, on Wednesday 19 October 2011.**

The Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect appeals to the Indonesian government to show leadership in protecting and upholding human rights in response to continuing reports that members of the Indonesian military and police opened fire on civilians attending the Third Papuan People's Congress in Abepura, Jayapura, on the afternoon of Wednesday 19 October 2011.

Reports from Kontras (The Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence) and Elsham (The Institute for the Study and Advocacy of Human Rights in West Papua) in the Papua Province of Indonesia state that these shootings occurred on the third day of the Congress, held on a field (Lapangan Zakheus/Sakeus or Taboria) in Abepura. Throughout the Congress, military and police personnel maintained a prominent armed presence. It is also reported that Forkorus Yeboisembut, Chairman of the Council of Customary Papuan Chiefs, declared Papuan independence from Indonesia during the afternoon of 19 October.

Subsequently, members of the police and military near the field allegedly fired upon civilians and moved in to arrest members of the Congress. At least five people were reportedly killed during this attack. At this time, Yeboisembut and other Congress leaders – including Selfius Bobi, Edison Waromi, Agus Krar, Dominikus Surabut and Gat Wenda – are still detained.

Kontras had confirmed three of the victims – Daneil Kedepa, Yakobus Samonsabra and Max Yew – died of gunshot wounds. Two others, Matias Maidepa and Yacop Sabonsaba, were allegedly found dead behind the military headquarters in Abepura. A team from the National Commission for Human Rights (Komnas HAM), headed by Deputy Chairperson Ridha Saleh, arrived in Papua on Tuesday 25 October to investigate the violence.

One week after this incident, tensions in Papua remain high. The Indonesian National Police is now on the highest level of alert in Papua and 300 additional members of the Police Mobile Brigade (Brimob) have been sent after Dominggus Awes, a local Chief of Police, was shot at the airport in the highlands region of Mulia.

The Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect is deeply concerned about reports of a violent assault on a peaceful and unarmed gathering of civilians in Abepura. It is also concerned by the tone of discussion about the Papuan People's Congress in Jakarta. The Congress is seen as an attack on the government and has been called a "coup"<sup>1</sup> that must be "put down" with a military solution.<sup>2</sup> The heightened presence of security forces in Papua, in addition to inflammatory language used by public officials in Jakarta, are likely to escalate tensions in Papua. Thus, the

potential for further violence is high and immediate action by the government should be taken to contain further violence.

The Centre recognises and commends the leadership shown by Indonesia in promoting human rights within the Southeast Asia region and so calls upon the Indonesian government to respond quickly and effectively to these reports.

In particular, the Centre urges the Indonesian government to:

1. Support the National Commission on Human Rights' independent investigation to determine the events that took place on the afternoon of Wednesday 19 October 2011 at the Third Papuan People's Congress in Abepura.
2. Ascertain and provide clear details regarding the whereabouts and wellbeing of all persons currently detained in connection with the attack on the Third Papuan People's Congress.
3. An independent investigation be carried out into the actions of police, military and any other State officials during the Third Papuan People's Congress and, in particular, into their actions on the afternoon of Wednesday, 19 October 2011, and subsequent actions taken in connection to the incident.

The Centre acknowledges the great strides Indonesia has made under the leadership of President Susilo Bambang Yudhuyono and expresses hope that the President will do all he can to protect the rights to life and safety of all Indonesian citizens including those in Papua.

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<sup>1</sup> Statement made by Djoko Suyanto, Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs. See "Minister Defends Papua Response, Denies Govt Role in Deaths," *The Jakarta Globe*, 21 October 2011, online at: [www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/security-minister-defends-papua-congress-was-a-coup-detat/473139](http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/security-minister-defends-papua-congress-was-a-coup-detat/473139) [accessed 22 October 2011].

<sup>2</sup> See also statements made by the Defence Minister, Purnomo Yusgiantoro. For example, see Made Arya Kencana, Banjir Ambarita and Ulma Haryanto, "Jakarta Gives US Its Side of Story in Papua Deaths," *The Jakarta Globe*, 23 October 2011, online at: [www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/jakarta-gives-us-its-side-of-story-in-papua-deaths/473590](http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/jakarta-gives-us-its-side-of-story-in-papua-deaths/473590) [accessed 24 October 2011].