

UA 58/21

AI Index: ASA 21/4209/2021 of 28 May 2021

INDONESIA
PAPUAN POLITICAL ACTIVIST FACES LIFE IMPRISONMENT

Victor Yeimo, a pro-independence political activist from Papua and a spokesman for the West Papua National Committee, has been arbitrary arrested and charged with treason for peacefully protesting racial discrimination in Indonesia during the uprisings in August and September of 2019. In addition to the charge of treason, the Papua Police Chief suggested that one of the reasons behind his arrest was his participation at the 40th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in March 2019, indicating there is a political motivation to his detention. He has been detained in solitary confinement with severely restricted access to his family and lawyer. The Indonesian authorities must grant Victor Yeimo's immediate release or prosecute him in a fair trial.

Please ask the Chief of the National Police to:

- Immediately release Victor Yeimo and drop all charges against him, unless there is sufficient credible and admissible evidence that he has committed an internationally recognized offence and is granted a fair trial in line with international standards.
- Pending his release, ensure that he has regular, unrestricted access to his family and a lawyer of his choice and that he is protected from torture and other cruel or degrading treatment.

Write to:

General Drs. Listyo Sigit Prabowo, M.Si.
Chief of Indonesian National Police
Jalan Trunojoyo No. 3
South Jakarta
Indonesia
Salutation: Dear Sir

Please copy:

Mr. Yulastiawarman Zakaria
Chargé d'affaires for the Republic
of Indonesia
55 Parkdale Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 1E5
Fax: 613 724 1105
Phone: 613 724 1100
Email: publicaffairs@indonesia-ottawa.org

Additional Information

On 9 May 2021, a special police unit, Satgas Nemangkawi, arrested Victor Yeimo, a spokesman for the West Papua National Committee (Komite Nasional Papua Barat, KNPB) in Jayapura, the capital of Papua province. Police charged him with treason for a 2019 statement, made during anti-racism protests, calling for a referendum on independence.

Mr. Yeimo was arrested without a warrant at 7.15pm when he was at a kiosk in Jayapura. Mr. Yeimo's lawyers received arrest and detention warrants the following day at 6pm, a breach of Indonesian criminal procedure law which requires an arrest warrant to be presented at the time of arrest.

On the first evening of his detention, Mr. Yeimo was moved from Papua province's regional police detention center in Jayapura to the Police's Mobile Brigade Headquarters (Mako Brimob) in Abepura, without his lawyers being notified. This move to Mako Brimob signified higher security and more difficulties accessing Mr. Yeimo and his lawyers have complained that family visits will now be more difficult.

Mr. Yeimo has been accused of violating the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP), namely Article 106 on treason, Article 110 of the KUHP on treason with conspiracy. As addition, he is also charges for violating Article 14 sections (1) and (2) on broadcasting hoax resulting in riot and Article 15 on broadcasting uncertain information resulting in riot of Law No 1/1946 on Criminal Law, Article 66 on disrespecting the national flag of Law No 24/2009 on Flag, Language, National Emblem, and the National Anthem, Article 160 KUHP on incitement, Article 187 KUHP on arson, Article 365 KUHP on theft using violence, Article 170 section (1) on collective violence, Article 2 of Emergency Law No 12/1961 on illegal possession of arms and Article 64 KUHP. Police have indicated that they will add more charges. Papua police chief stated that, "We are looking into all police reports, the process forwards will proceed based on each report, let him get old in prison."¹

Mr. Yeimo had been on Papua police wanted list number LP/317/IX/RES.1.24/2019/ Direskrimum dated 5 September 2019. Seven key activists arrested for treason at the time in Jayapura who were moved to Balikpapan in South Kalimantan province were collectively known as '[the Balikpapan Seven](#)'. Mr. Yeimo was supposed to have been tried alongside the Balikpapan Seven. However, he escaped to Papua New Guinea and had just returned to Jayapura end of last year. Despite prosecutors seeking up to 17 years for the Balikpapan Seven, they were eventually sentenced to up to eleven months in prison. Prosecutors did not appeal despite the significant gap between their demands and the verdicts.

The Indonesian authorities have used these criminal code provisions, mainly Articles 106 and 110 KUHP, to prosecute tens of peaceful pro-independence political activists in Papua due to legitimately exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

Amnesty International does not take any position on the political status of any province or region in Indonesia, or any other state, including calls for independence. However, the organization believes that the right to freedom of expression also includes independence or other political solutions.

¹Kompas, '*Otak Kerusuhan Papua Ditangkap, Kapolda: Biar Saja Dia sampai Tua di Penjara*', 10 May 2021, available at <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2021/05/10/160132878/otak-kerusuhan-papua-ditangkap-kapolda-biar-saja-dia-sampai-tua-di-penjara>.