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INDONESIA

GRAVE HEALTH CONCERNS FOR DETAINED PAPUAN ACTIVIST

Victor Yeimo, a pro-independence political activist from Papua and a spokesman for the West Papua National Committee, was arbitrarily arrested on 9 May 2021 and charged with treason for peacefully protesting racial discrimination. Held in solitary confinement, there are serious concerns about his deteriorating health and unrestricted access to health services and facilities must urgently be made available to him. The Indonesian authorities must immediately release Victor Yeimo and drop all charges against him, unless charged with a recognizable criminal offence, in accordance with international standards of fairness.

Please ask the President 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, grant Victor Yeimo prompt, regular and unrestricted access to medical care on request and as necessary;
- Ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment and that he has regular access to his family and a lawyer of his choice in line with the right to a fair trial.

Write to:

Ir. H. Joko Widodo
President Republic of Indonesia
State Secretariat
Jl. Veteran No. 17-18
Kota Jakarta Pusat, DKI Jakarta
Indonesia 10110
Salutation: Dear President

Please copy:

Mr. Yulastiawarman Zakaria
Chargé d'affaires for the Republic
of Indonesia
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Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 1E5
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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 centre in Jayapura to the Police's Mobile Brigade Headquarters (Mako Brimob) in Abepura, without his lawyers being notified. This move to Mako Brimob prison signified higher security and probable difficulties accessing Mr Yeimo.

His case has been handed to the prosecutor and the first trial is scheduled to take place on 24 August 2021. We are concerned that Victor's trial might be moved to other city just as the trial of the Balikpapan 7. If this happens, then the access of the lawyers and family will be more difficult. He should be released or, instead of keeping him in the Mako Brimob isolation cell, he should be moved to the state prison during trial.

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. If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

The Indonesian authorities have used these criminal code provisions, mainly Articles 106 and 110 KUHP, to prosecute several peaceful pro-independence political activists in Papua simply for peacefully exercising their human rights, including the 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, including the right to advocate for self-determination or other political issues, carried out in a peaceful manner, must be respected and protected.