

Escalating Armed Conflict and a New Security Approach in Papua

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I. INTRODUCTION

Violence in Papua has escalated significantly since the West Papua National Liberation Army (Tentara Pembebasan Nasional-Papua Barat, TPNPB) issued a “Declaration of War” in January 2018. Attacks on the Indonesian military (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, TNI) have become more frequent, deadlier, and more widespread. In December 2021, the newly appointed TNI chief Andika Perkasa promised a new security approach in Papua. This report seeks to offer a constructive evaluation of the government’s counter-insurgency strategy and concludes that to be effective, new measures must do more to stem the flow of funding, weapons and recruits to the TPNPB and protect civilians from attacks by rebel groups and from abuse by security forces.

A 2015 IPAC report concluded that separatist groups in Papua were too fractious to constitute a serious military threat. But in the past seven years, TPNPB, the armed wing of the Free Papua Movement (Organisasi Papua Merdeka, OPM) has become better resourced, better armed and more aggressive. Its tactics are no longer limited to opportunistic ambushes. Armed groups are now actively engaging Indonesian security forces in battle over territorial control, particularly in the central highlands, where both sides have used an unprecedented level of violence against civilians.

Despite the tough talk from Jakarta, its response to an emboldened TPNPB has been mostly reactive, projecting an image of control rather than implementing a well-formulated counterinsurgency plan. Following every major attack, the government sends more troops with much media attention, but their presence remains limited to major population centres. These ad-hoc measures do little to curb support and funding for the TPNPB or eliminate its bases in the jungles. But a steady influx of soldiers with inadequate training has helped fuel displacement, depredations and human rights violations, stoking resentment against the central government.

The April 2021 decision to declare the TPNPB a terrorist organisation, a few days after the assassination of the head of provincial intelligence in Puncak regency, is an example of the government’s kneejerk security response. As of June 2022, the anti-terrorism law had not been applied in Papua, partly due to opposition from the government’s own top counterterrorism officials. But the move opens the door for future troop build-up and thus the likelihood of increased violence against local communities and provides a legal basis for pre-emptive arrests of non-violent activists.

The TNI chief’s plan calls for increasing the territorial presence of the military by building permanent regional bases across Papua and boosting local recruitment of village-level non-commissioned officers, instead of deploying soldiers from outside the region (known in Indonesian as “non-organic” troops). This ‘softer approach’ seeks to win hearts and minds of Papuans by replicating the grassroots military structures that exist across the rest of Indonesia. It ignores, however, the depth of fear and resentment felt by Papuans towards Indonesian security forces due to a history of racism and violence that has led to an increased flow of funding and recruits for rebel groups.

To have any chance of success, the new plan needs to put in place training, monitoring and accountability measures to end impunity for human rights abuses by security forces. It also needs to be accompanied by broader measures to curb the flow of weapons to the TPNPB and protect civilians from increased targeting by armed groups.

II. STRENGTHENING INSURGENCY AND ESCALATING VIOLENCE

The TPNPB had never been seen as a serious military threat because of its inability to put up sustained armed resistance against Indonesian government. In 2015, an IPAC report on the status of the independence movement suggested the OPM was too divided along regional, ethnic and personal lines to constitute a significant threat. The conflict was of such low intensity that politicians could and did ignore it without cost. The guerrillas “have never done enough damage for the government to seriously consider negotiations,” IPAC wrote.¹ Other long-time observers of Papua also predicted that the egalitarian nature of Melanesian societies would prevent the OPM from achieving the hierarchical organisation needed to launch a cohesive military campaign.² Attacks by the TPNPB were also viewed as loosely organised, sporadic, and not serving any strategic political ends.³

But the situation was changing. Four important shifts in TPNPB’s tactics against Indonesian security forces took place after 2018: attacks became more frequent and more deadly, attacks on civilians increased, the geographic coverage of TPNPB’s activity expanded, and its access to weapons increased.

A. The 2018 Declaration of War

The first sign that the OPM had changed tactics came in 2017. A local armed group in Tembagapura under Sabinus Waker and Hendrik Wamang led repeated incursions in three villages near the Freeport mining site between August and November.⁴ On 5 October, the group used excavators to destroy the roads that led to the three villages, preventing residents from leaving and thus effectively holding them hostage.⁵ The Tembagapura incident marked TPNPB’s first significant attempt to occupy territory.⁶ Two police and a local Freeport worker were killed.⁷ An estimated 1,300 residents, who were mostly migrants from Sulawesi and Java, were forced to abandon their homes.⁸ In November 2017, the TNI conducted a joint operation with the Indonesian National Police (Polisi Republik Indonesia, Polri) to retake the villages.

¹ IPAC, “The Current Status of the Papuan Pro-Independence Movement,” Report No.21, 24 August 2015, p.3.

² A scholar writing in 2015 identified only two armed factions of the OPM that posed a security threat: the Goliat Tabuni faction in Puncak Jaya and the Purom Wenda faction in Lanny Jaya. See Bobby Anderson, “Papua’s Insecurity: State Failure in the Indonesian Periphery”, East-West Center, 2015, p. 38.

³ Richard Chauvel, “Governance and the Cycle of Violence in Papua: The Nduga Crisis”, *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 17, Issue 2, No. 4, January 2019, p.5.

⁴ Polisi Daerah (POLDA) Papua, “Kronologis Aksi KKB Mengisolasi Warga di Kampung Kimbeli dan Banti Distrik Tembagapura, press release, 15 November 2017.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ In June 1977, the OPM under Kelly Kwalik leadership staged an uprising and held a distrik in Mimika for several days, Robin Osborne, *Indonesia’s Secret War: The Guerilla Struggle in Irian Jaya*, Sydney: 1985, p.69. OPM’s Vanuatu-based diplomat, the late Otto Ondawame, noted in his dissertation that between the 1980s and 1990s, OPM tactics had shifted to hostage-taking and cross-border operations from Papua New Guinea. See Otto Ondawame, “West Papuan Nationalism and the Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM)/ Free Papua Movement,” PhD thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, 2000, p. 139.

⁷ Press Release POLDA Papua, 15 November 2017, op. cit.

⁸ “Indonesia Evacuates Villagers after Shootings Near Freeport Copper Mine,” reuters.com, 17 November 2017; “Proses Evakuasi Tahap Kedua, 807 Warga Berhasil Diselamatkan,” iNews.id, 20 November 2017.

On 1 January 2018, the TPNPB released a document titled “The Rules of War for the TPNPB.” For the first time, the TPNPB outlined a framework for waging war to achieve West Papuan independence, political goals and a list of legitimate targets for combatants, along with conditions for negotiation and peaceful settlement.⁹ The release recognized the titular leadership of Goliat Tabuni over TPNPB’s ‘national’ command, despite the elderly leader’s prolonged absence from combat, and the fact that most of the attacks from 2018 onwards were attributed to Lekagak Telenggen, a younger subcommander, based in Ilaga, Puncak.¹⁰

The 2018 Declaration guaranteed the protection of civilians but listed those it considered legitimate targets. These included security personnel and intelligence, public infrastructure workers, foreign corporations, Trans-Papuan road workers (whom the TPNPB believed to be military agents), election officials, pro-Indonesian bureaucrats, both Papuan and non-Papuan. The release suggested that the OPM wanted to be seen as recognising Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, which make clear that attacks on civilians and on security forces not actively taking part in combat are not permissible. As explained below, many of their actions since the release have violated that commitment.

After the release of TPNPB’s Rules of War document, Lekagak Telenggen held a press conference on 28 January 2018 to issue a Declaration of War. Telenggen was responsible for some of the most high-profile rebel attacks in Papua from 2017 onwards. By 2018 he was widely acknowledged as TPNPB’s operational commander.¹¹ In a brief statement, Telenggen ordered all 29 TPNPB regional commands to mobilise and join the revolutionary struggle for West Papua’s independence.¹² He further demanded that all foreign companies close their operations, including Freeport in Papua province and the various oil and gas projects in Papua Barat, including oil and gas extraction in Sorong and BP’s Tangguh Project exploration of liquid natural gas (LNG) in Bintuni Bay.¹³

After the 2018 Declaration there was a concerted effort from the TPNPB to appear as a unified organisation for both domestic and international audiences. Local armed groups began communicating their activities to PNG-based TPNPB spokesperson Sebby Sambom. Sambom has since served as the main source of information about the armed group’s activity in terms of claiming attacks, reporting casualties, and responding to the government accusations of human rights abuses perpetrated by the TPNPB. Despite this new communication strategy, lingering

⁹ TPNPB, “Ketentuan Aturan Perang Komando Nasional Tentara Pembebasan Nasional Papua Barat (TPNPB) Organisasi Papua Merdeka,” 1 January 2018.

¹⁰ Goliat Tabuni was elected as TPNPB national commander during an OPM high-level conference in Biak on 1-5 May 2012 (KTT TPN 2012). At that time, a few commanders rejected Goliat’s leadership, such as Mathias Wenda who led his own group, West Papua Revolutionary Army, based in Vanimo, Papua New Guinea.

¹¹ Those who supported the 2018 declaration, among others were, Sabinus Waker, Terianus Sato, Militer Murib Hengky Wamang and Jhonny Beanal (Mimika). Later on, Egianus Kogoya from Nduga also supported the titular leadership of Goliat Tabuni and Lekagak Telenggen.

¹² By December 2020, TPNPB claimed to have established 33 commands across both provinces. But in reality, as of 2022, there were only ten kabupaten where TPNPB groups actively engaged in fighting with security forces, namely Puncak, Puncak Jaya, Intan Jaya, Mimika, Lanny Jaya, Nduga, Pegunungan Bintang, Yahukimo, Keerom-PNG border, and Maybrat (see Figure 3).

¹³ “Markas Yambi Puncak Jaya: Acara Penyerahan SK KODAP dan Ultimatum Perang TPNPB kepada Indonesia,” tpnpbnews.wordpress.com, 15 February 2018.

factionalism in the OPM military remains.¹⁴ There is little evidence of centralized coordination of violence by various rebel groups across the central highlands. But most local commanders generally acknowledge Telenggen's leadership and are willing to attribute their attacks to the TPNPB as an organisation.

B. Escalation of insurgent violence

The four years after TPNPB's Declaration of War saw a rapid escalation of violence in Papua and West Papua (Figure 1). Data compiled by IPAC, through a combination of publicly available sources, show that since 2018, the frequency of insurgency-related violence in the region increased from an average of eleven incidents a year (2010-2017) to 52 incidents a year (2018-2021).¹⁵ Since 2018, 183 clashes between government troops and TPNPB fighters have been recorded in Papua and 74 incidents in which one side used violence against civilians.

Violence in Papua became not only more frequent but also deadlier than before (Figure 2). Of the 320 insurgency-related deaths recorded in Papua and West Papua between 2010 and 2021, 211 (66 per cent) were recorded between 2018 and 2021. In terms of victims, 52 members of Indonesian security forces and 34 TPNPB fighters are reported to have been killed between 2018 and 2021, though these numbers represent best-guess estimates since neither side has an interest in definitive counts.¹⁶

The most dramatic increase is in civilian deaths. Between 2010 and 2017, 53 civilians were killed in insurgency-related violence. Between 2018 and 2021, the number of reported civilian deaths rose to 125. Civilian victims include Papuans caught in the crossfire during clashes between government forces and the TPNPB but also civilians deliberately killed as suspected enemy collaborators. The incident with the highest number of civilian casualties took place in December 2018 in Nduga when a TPNPB unit under Egianus Kogoya killed nineteen Trans-Papua roadworkers.

¹⁴ One source of factionalism has been Benny Wenda's self-proclaimed leadership of all pro-independence armed groups in Papua. Wenda, who is based in Oxford, has made repeated attempts to declare himself president of West Papua and in 2019 anointed another diaspora leader, Mathias Wenda, as the overall commander of the West Papuan Army. TPNPB groups in Papua rejected Wenda's claim. In August 2021, Wenda made another attempt to assert control by appointing Paniai-based commander Demianus Yogi as TPNPB supreme general. Again, Wenda's claim was quickly rejected by other rebel leaders. See "Panglima Tinggi TPNPB Gen. Goliath Tabuni & Semua Perwira Serta Panglima-Panglima KODAP TPNPB-OPM Se-Tanah Papua Menolak Hasil KLB ULMWP Mei 2019," ssambom.blogspot.com, 13 August 2019; and "TPNPB OPM Nilai Demianus Yogi Lakukan Kudeta Militer," jubi.co.id, 17 August 2021.

¹⁵ IPAC uses an updated version of the data gathered by the University of Gadjah Mada team that was assigned by the government as an independent Papua Task Force to document violent incidents in the two Papuan provinces. IPAC researchers filled gaps in the UGM database that covers from 2010 to May 2020 with additional data collected by other independent institutions based in Papua including the Aliansi Demokrasi untuk Papua (ALDP), and the monthly updated Memoria Passionis of the Secretariat of Justice, Peace and Integrity of the Papuan Franciscans (Sekretariat Keadilan, Perdamaian dan Keutuhan - Fransiskan Papua). The data has also been updated up to December 2021. To access the UGM database, see Gugus Tugas Papua, "Tindak Kekerasan Provinsi Papua dan Papua Barat Tahun 2010 sd Mei 2020," Universitas Gajah Mada, May 2020.

¹⁶ Militaries in insurgent conflicts often downplay their own losses and exaggerate insurgent deaths, while the insurgents do the opposite.

Figure 1: Escalation of Insurgency-related Violence in Papua and West Papua

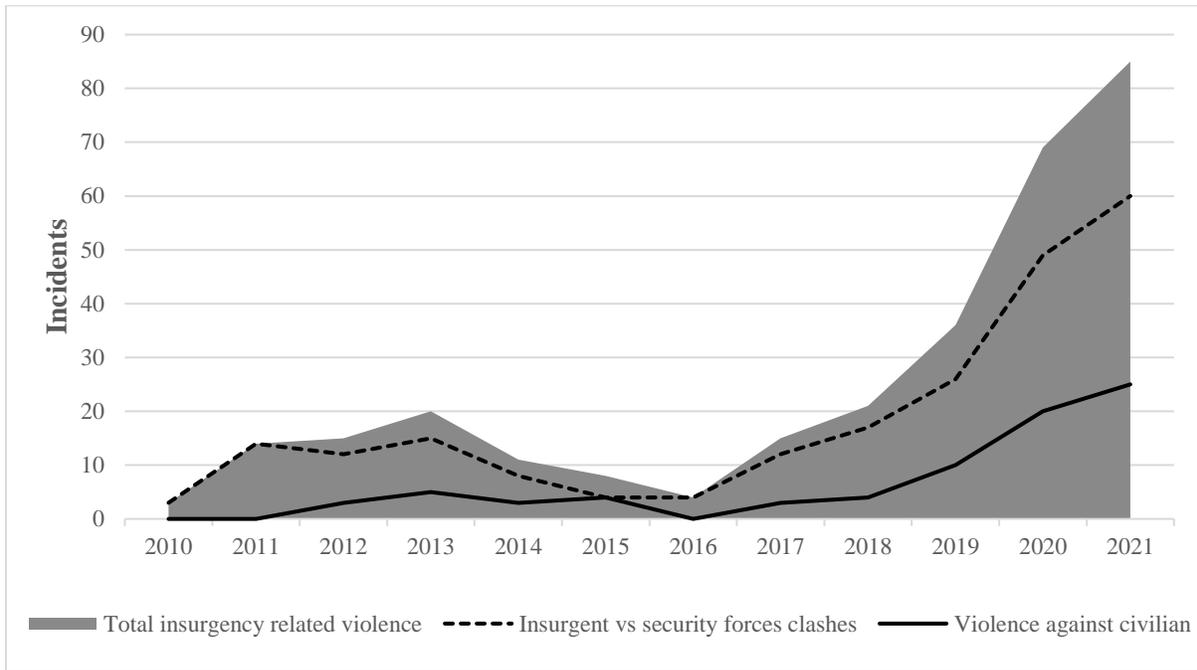
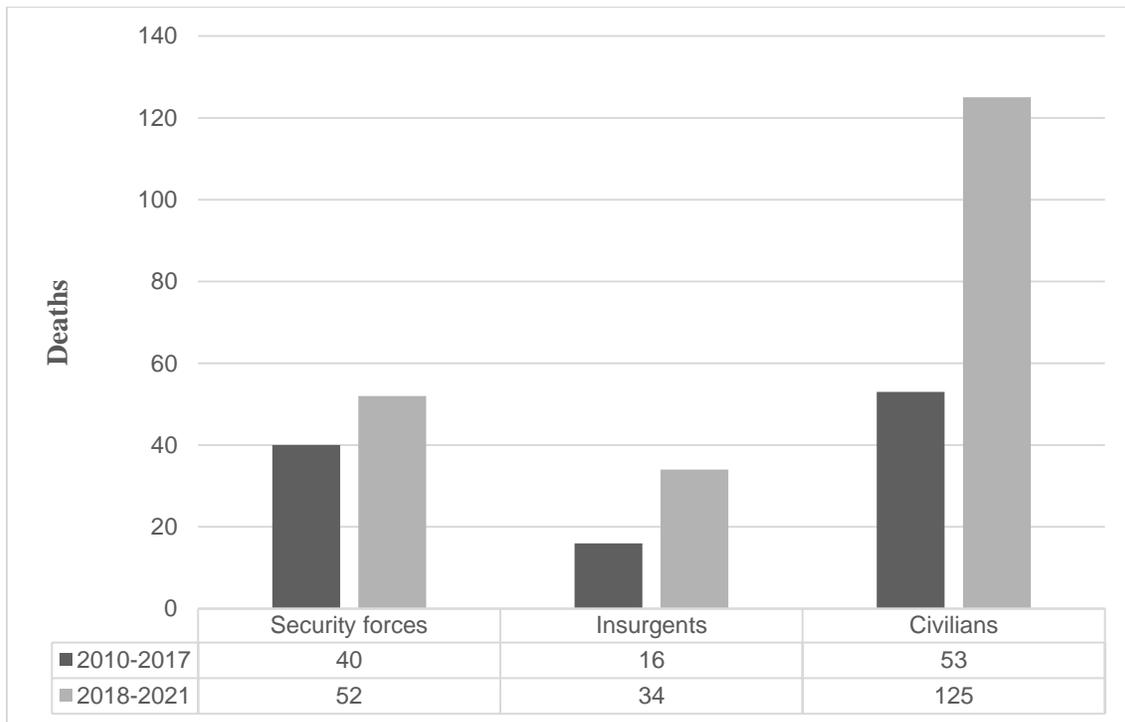


Figure 2: Deaths from Insurgency-related Violence in Papua and West Papua



Note: ninety-eight per cent of insurgency-related deaths (316) took place in Papua province.

Apart from the increasing frequency and deadliness of insurgency-related violence, there has also been a perceptible shift in TPNPB's tactics. While its attacks were previously limited to opportunistic ambushes, it is now far more aggressive in engaging the TNI in the battle over territorial control. In TPNPB's long-established bases in Puncak, there have been pitched battles, particularly in highly populated *distrik*.¹⁷ In early June 2021, the Lekagak Telenggen group occupied the Ilaga airport, the central transportation hub in Puncak for several days, and damaged communication facilities. Following this extraordinary show of force, the TPNPB also occupied several other *distrik*, including Duagi, Makki, Mayuberi, Gome, Muara and Beoga. In July 2021, the joint TNI-Polri task force claimed they were able to reoccupy these areas.¹⁸

The TPNPB has also increased the use of high-profile assassinations to target government personnel, even in areas with a heavy military presence. In June 2020, TPNPB groups under Sabinus Waker and Undius Kogoya attacked military and police forces in Intan Jaya's capital, as well as in Sugapa *distrik* and Hitadipa *distrik*. In October 2020, they ambushed a government fact-finding team despite heavy escort by security forces. The leader of the team, University of Gadjah Mada Professor Bambang Purwoko and a soldier were wounded in the attack.¹⁹ In April 2021, TNI claimed to have cleared rebel forces from Beoga *distrik* in Puncak, a traditional OPM stronghold.²⁰ But just over two weeks later, a one-star Army general, Brig. Gen. I Gusti Putu Dany, head of intelligence in Papua province (Kepala Badan Intelijen Negara Daerah, KABINDA), was ambushed and killed by the TPNPB in Beoga during an inspection tour. As noted, the assassination sparked the decision to label the OPM a terrorist group.²¹

As TPNPB attacks became more frequent and deadlier, they also became geographically more widespread (Figure 3). Previously, most violence involving armed groups was confined to just a few *kabupaten* in the central highlands, namely Puncak Jaya, Lanny Jaya and Mimika.²² Since 2018, however, armed clashes between the TPNPB and security forces occurred in *kabupaten* that had not experienced active insurgency for decades. These include Pegunungan Bintang, Intan Jaya, Yahukimo, Deiyai and Keerom. Following the violence in August 2019 sparked by anti-discrimination protests, TPNPB attacks in the central highlands also took on a communal dimension as some pro-independence groups increased targeting of non-Papuan civilians.

¹⁷ The term *distrik* in Papua is used to refer to the third level of administration, below the province and *kabupaten*. The terms *kecamatan* or *kelurahan* are used in the rest of Indonesia.

¹⁸ "Satgas Ops Nemangkawi Berhasil Rebut 10 Markas KKTB," tribatanews.polri.go.id, 27 June 2021.

¹⁹ "Anggota TGPF Tertembak di Papua Dosen UGM Bambang Purwoko," cnnindonesia.com, 9 October 2020.

²⁰ "Polisi dan TNI Pukul Mundur KKB di Beoga Papua, Kompas TV, 15 April 2021. Access: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8f3z0Sz7BJ8>

²¹ "Papua Intelligence Chief Killed in Indonesia Rebel Attack," straittimes.com, 26 April 2021.

²² These neighbouring *kabupaten* are referred as the *Black Triangle* (Segitiga Hitam) due to its remoteness and inaccessibility (can only be reached by small plane) that make it suitable stronghold for TPNPB.

C. Intensification of TPNPB Attacks Across the Central Highlands

In his role as operational commander of the TPNPB, Lekagak Telenggen developed a stronger capacity for mobile operations across multiple *kabupaten* in the central highlands, despite a steadily increasing TNI presence. In 2019, he circumvented multiple military checkpoints to move hundreds of fighters between Puncak and Intan Jaya. On 25 October 2019, his group killed three motorcycle taxi drivers (*tukang ojek*) in Intan Jaya, which marked the first reported TPNPB attack there.²³ Attacks on non-Papuan migrants and clashes with security forces became a regular occurrence thereafter, even as the military continue to deploy more and more troops. Telenggen also made an unprecedented incursion to the Freeport office complex in Tembagapura in March 2020.²⁴ In May 2020, he sent some of his men to Paniai to raid a security post as ‘payback’ for the weapons he lost in Tembagapura.²⁵

The incursion of the Lekagak Telenggen group into Puncak in early 2021 triggered a new wave of violence, primarily against migrants, starting with the murder of an *ojek* driver on 9 February 2021.²⁶ In April, the TPNPB launched sporadic attacks against civilians in the *kabupaten* capital Ilaga, and Beoga *distrik*. The victims include two teachers from local elementary and junior high schools in Beoga on 8 April 2021.²⁷ Houses belonging to the local high school headmaster and a local legislator were set on fire. Less than a week later, TPNPB fighters killed a junior high school student in Omukia *distrik* but later issued an apology acknowledging that the student was mistaken for a TNI informant.²⁸

Violence in Puncak continued to intensify throughout 2022. In January 2022, TPNPB militants launched a deadly attack in Gome *distrik*, killing two soldiers. The militants then waited for a few hours until a TNI evacuation team arrived and attacked them as well, killing another soldier.²⁹ The incident highlighted disciplinary issues among military troops deployed in Papua when an internal investigation revealed that the soldiers were attacked while on an unauthorized mission to guard a private sand mining company.³⁰ The commander of the unit was discharged, and the military announced that there would be no more personnel guarding any projects except if ordered by the regional commander directly.³¹ On 2 March 2022, the TPNPB killed eight workers at a telecommunication tower in Ilaga.³² The incident occurred in a remote location that security forces were able to reach a few days later by helicopter.

²³ “KKB Papua Kembali Berulah, Bunuh Tukang Ojek di Intan Jaya, Korban Ditembak di Kepala dan Dibacok”, *tribunnews.com*, 26 October 2019.

²⁴ IPAC, “COVID-19 and Conflict in Papua,” Short Briefing No.2, 13 April 2020.

²⁵ The group led by Anton Tabuni raided a police post in *distrik* Bogobaida and managed to steal one AK-47, two Pindad assault rifles SS-1, and one Chinese AK rifle before returning to Tembagapura. “Anton Tabuni Ungkap Klaim Motif Serangan ke Pospol Ndeotadi Paniai,” *seputarpapua.com*, 17 May 2020.

²⁶ The last reported TPNPB-related violence in Puncak before Lekagak Telenggen returned was on 26 September 2019 with the killing of two *ojek* drivers.

²⁷ “KKB di Beoga Bakar Sekolah dan Rumah Kepala Suku, Ini Penjelasan Polisi”, *kompas.com*, 17 April 2021.

²⁸ “Lekagak Akui TPNPB Tembak Mati Siswa SMA di Puncak Papua,” *suarapapua.com*, 16 April 2021.

²⁹ “Kronologi Baku Tembak TPNPB-OPM dengan TNI di Distrik Gome Papua,” *tempo.co*, 27 January 2022.

³⁰ “Jenderal Andika Beberkan Kejanggalaan Kronologi Gugurnya 3 Prajurit TNI di Distrik Gome Papua,” *tribunnews.com*, 21 March 2022.

³¹ “Kami Terpaksa Melumpuhkan! Prajurit Kopasgat TNI AU Tertembak,” *Puspen TNI, Youtube.com*, 23 March 2022.

³² “PTT bangun Tower Telekomunikasi di Papua Demi Proyek Tol Langit”, *liputan6.com*, 5 March 2022.

New violence also erupted in Keerom, a *kabupaten* with a dominant migrant population adjacent to Jayapura.³³ In December 2019, an armed group under Orelek Jikwanak launched a cross-border attack across the Papua New Guinea border, killing one soldier and wounding another.³⁴ In February 2020, the same group attacked a military convoy in Arso Timur *distrik*, injuring two soldiers. These incidents are significant because Keerom had been relatively quiet since the 1990s when an aggressive counterinsurgency campaign forced rebel leaders, along with many civilians, to flee to Papua New Guinea.³⁵ According to a source in Papua, this group is not part of the TPNPB structure centred in the highlands but coordinated by OPM leaders from its base called Markas Victoria (OPM Marvic) in Bewani, Papua New Guinea.³⁶

Pegunungan Bintang, a highland *kabupaten* that had not seen significant OPM activity for more than two decades became another site of violence. A TPNPB group led by Lamek Alipky Taplo announced the discovery of a military helicopter that had crashed in Oksop *distrik*, in June 2019.³⁷ Taplo claimed to have shot it down. All twelve passengers were killed, but Taplo and his men took weapons from the bodies after finding the crash site. In January 2020, Taplo announced the formation of a new regional TPNPB command known as KODAP Ngalum Kupel. Shortly afterwards, in March 2020, his group attacked a TNI convoy in Oksop, followed by attacks on 19 May 2021, wounding four soldiers and on 28 May, killing one police and stealing three firearms.

Most attacks in Pegunungan Bintang occurred in Kiwirok and Serambakon *distrik*.³⁸ On 13 September 2021, Taplo's unit launched multiple attacks in Kiwirok, with one group involved in shootouts with TNI forces and another that set fire to government facilities and expelled dozens of medical workers. Three migrant nurses who were found trying to hide were tortured and thrown into a ravine. One nurse died but two others survived and were later rescued.³⁹ Non-violent pro-independence activists in Papua strongly condemned the attack. TPNPB spokesperson Sebby Sambom initially denied that Taplo group attacked health workers and stated that the death of a nurse was an accident.⁴⁰ But later, he backtracked, saying that the attack was justified, accusing public servants working in a remote and conflict-ridden like Kiwirok of being undercover security

³³ An armed OPM group led by Lambert Pekikir operated in Keerom in the mid-2000s. The group was allegedly responsible for raising the Morning Star flag and shooting soldiers patrolling in Arso *distrik* on 1 July 2012. Lambert was never arrested and continues to live in Keerom as 'a retired OPM commander'. In December 2021, Lambert made a statement supporting General Andika Perkasa's new security approach in Papua. See "Lambert Pekikir Dukung Panglima TNI hingga minta 10 Kasus Korupsi di Papua Diungkap," *papualadalamberita.com*, 7 December 2021.

³⁴ "OPM Bertanggung Jawab di Baku Tembak yang Tewaskan TNI di Keerom," *tirto.id*, 30 December 2019.

³⁵ Otto Ondawame, "West Papuan Nationalism and the Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM)/ Free Papua Movement," PhD thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, 2000, p. 139.

³⁶ IPAC interview with a Jayapura-based NGO activist, 10 December 2021.

³⁷ "TPNPB-OPM Klaim Temukan Helikopter TNI yang Hilang di Pegunungan Bintang Papua," *voaindonesia.com*, 7 February 2020.

³⁸ IPAC counted four clashes between the TPNPB and security forces that took place in Serambakon *distrik* from March 2020 to May 2021. There have been six TPNPB attacks in Kiwirok *distrik* since 13 September 2021.

³⁹ A nurse named Gabriela Meilan died because of the torture she sustained before she was thrown into the ravine. The evacuation team assigned to retrieve Gabriela's body was also ambushed and one soldier was killed. "Teror KKB di Pegunungan Bintang Meluas," *Kompas*, 14 September 2021.

⁴⁰ "TPNPB-OPM Bantah Serang Nakes di Distrik Kiwirok," *kbr.id*, 21 September 2021.

agents and therefore legitimate targets.⁴¹ Such a sweeping generalisation, needless to say, renders meaningless TPNPB's stated commitment to Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions.

Facts surrounding the violence were further clouded after an investigation team sent by the Papuan People's Council (Majelis Rakyat Papua, MRP) a body set up under the 2001 Special Autonomy Law to protect the interests of indigenous Papuans, found the incident was partly motivated by local political rivalry.⁴² Through interviews with several local witnesses, the MRP team alleged that not all 30 attackers in Kiwirok were TPNPB members. Some locals were disgruntled for not attaining positions in the Kiwirok public clinic because they had chosen the losing *bupati* candidate in the 2020 regional election.⁴³ Another motive was Lamek Taplo's punitive action against the local community, who tipped off the TNI about two suspicious men carrying weapons crossing the PNG border on a boat.⁴⁴ The botched smuggling attempt cost Lamek Taplo Rp.850 million (USD 59,000).⁴⁵ Some local elites in Pegunungan Bintang believe that the underlying tension among local communities was exploited by the TPNPB.⁴⁶

Yahukimo also saw increased attacks in 2021. In May 2021, several Papuans raided a military post in Kali Brasa, killing two soldiers and stealing two SS-1 automatic rifles.⁴⁷ In June, the same group, now armed with the two rifles, attacked dozens of non-Papuan construction workers from the Papua Cremona Ltd company in Seradala *distrik*.⁴⁸ Four workers were killed, and a local village chief was wounded. Fearful of being caught in a crossfire with security forces, hundreds of people fled to Dekai municipality for temporary shelter.⁴⁹ In December 2021, some 50 TPNPB fighters attacked the *distrik* military post (Koramil) in Suru-Suru. The TNI had to send helicopters with a door gunner to repel the attackers and evacuate its casualties: one soldier who was killed and another who was critically wounded.⁵⁰

Insurgent attacks also took place in Maybrat, West Papua province. On 10 May 2021, unknown assailants shot at a police convoy in Aifat Timur Jauh *distrik*.⁵¹ On 2 September, dozens of people armed with traditional weapons attacked a TNI post in Aifat Selatan, killing four soldiers, wounding two, and stealing their weapons.⁵² Three days later, attackers targeted a joint military-

⁴¹ Sebby Sambom said one of the doctors pulled out a gun and shot first, see "TPNPB-OPM Beberkan Alasan Membunuh Tenaga Kesehatan di Pegunungan Bintang," *indikatorpapua.com*, 18 September 2021.

⁴² Majelis Rakyat Papua, "Kiwirok, Sudah Aman Kah?" Jayapura, November 2021.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁴⁴ "Personel Koramil Batom dan warga amankan KSB beserta lima senpi," *antaranews.com*, 8 September 2021.

⁴⁵ Direktori Putusan Mahkamah Agung Republik Indonesia, "Verdict of Yulian Uopmabin and Kapol Uopmabin, Decision No. 81/Pid.Sus/2021/PN Wmn, p.5.

⁴⁶ Incumbent bupati Spey Bidana, accused the former bupati, Constan Oktemka, who lost his second-term chance in 2020, to be the person responsible behind the Kiwirok attack. "Konflik bersenjata Papua: Kisah bocah yang jadi korban tembak, bom mortir, dan pihak ketiga," *bbc.com*, 30 November 2021.

⁴⁷ "Kronologi Dua Anggota TNI Diserang OTK di Yahukimo, Papua", *merdeka.com*, 19 May 2021.

⁴⁸ "Kepala Suku Selamat, Polisi Pastikan 4 Orang Tewas ditembak KKB, Evakuasi Korban Pakai Helikopter," *tribunnews.com*, 26 Juni 2021.

⁴⁹ "KKB Buat Teror, Kampung Bingki Yahukimo Kosong Ditinggal Warga Mengungsi karena Ketakutan," *papua.inews.id*, 26 June 2021.

⁵⁰ "Dua Anggota TNI Korban KKB di Yahukimo Dievakuasi," *Kompas*, 4 December 2021.

⁵¹ "Kronologi KKB Tembaki Rombongan Polisi di Distrik Aifat Timur", *papua.inews.id*, 11 May 2021.

⁵² "OPM Akui Serang Pos Koramil Yang Tewaskan 4 Anggota TNI," *tempo.co*, 2 September 2021.

police team but there were no deaths.⁵³ The Indonesian government claimed that the attackers were not the TPNPB but members of the Aifat branch of the West Papua National Committee (Komite Nasional Papua Barat-KNPB), a pro-independence advocacy organisation that increasingly serves as the political front of the OPM and claims to be non-violent. However, OPM spokesperson Sebby Sambom refuted KNPB's involvement and attributed the attack to the commander of TPNPB's KODAP IV Sorong Raya, whom he identified as Deny Mos.⁵⁴

TPNPB attacks in and around Nduga continued to escalate in 2022 as Egianus Kogoya's group obtained more sophisticated firearms. On 26 March 2022, the group attacked a marine post in Kenyam, killing two soldiers and injuring eight.⁵⁵ On 22 April, the rebels launched another attack on a marine post in Kalikote *distrik*, killing one soldier and injuring two others.⁵⁶ Egianus Kogoya also claimed to have coordinated an attack in neighbouring Wamena *distrik* in Jayawijaya, during which his fighters killed a Papuan paramilitary police (Brimob) officer and brought back several looted rifles to Nduga.⁵⁷

D. New Sources of Funding, Better Access to Weapons

The growing strength and expansion of the TPNPB coincide with an increasing number of factory-made (as opposed to homemade and traditional) firearms that it has seized by raiding military or police units in the central highlands. In May 2021, the police claimed that the six-armed groups operating in Puncak under Lekagak Telenggen's command possessed 70 firearms, most of which were government-issued weapons that were either stolen or purchased illicitly from rogue military or police officers.⁵⁸ These include Indonesian-made SS-1, M4 and M16 guns produced by the national munitions company, PT Pindad. But some independent estimates put the number of firearms collectively possessed by multiple TPNPB groups across Papua as high as 400-450.⁵⁹

Reports of illegal arms purchases by the TPNPB have been making headlines since 2020.⁶⁰ One high-profile case took place in February 2021, in which a soldier and two policemen in Ambon were arrested for attempting to sell weapons to the TPNPB.⁶¹ The investigation revealed a broader picture of how three firearms and 600 bullets reached the central highlands. Those purchases from Ambon entered Papua via three *kabupaten*: Nabire, Mimika and Jayawijaya. Ambon has been a source of weapons because during the sectarian conflict from 1999 to 2004, many government

⁵³ "KKB Tembaki Rombongan Danrem 181/PVT dan Pasukan Raider di Maybrat Papua Barat," *sindonews.com*, 6 September 2021.

⁵⁴ "Brigjen Deny Mos Mengaku Tanggungjawab Atas Penyerangan Pos Koramil yang Sebabkan 4 Prajurit TNI Gugur," *Gatra.com*, 2 September 2021.

⁵⁵ "Dua Anggota Marinir Gugur dan 8 Terluka, Dari Mana KKB Egianus Kogoya Dapat Pelontar Granat GLM?" *aceh.tribunnews.com*, 27 March 2022.

⁵⁶ "Kronologi Kontak Tembak KKB dengan Tim Trisula Satgas Kodim Mupe Yonif 3 Marinir di Nduga Papua," *sindonews.com*, 23 April 2022.

⁵⁷ "Senjata Api yang Dirampas Ada di tangan KKB Egianus Kogoya," *republika.id*, 21 June 2022

⁵⁸ "Peta Kekuatan KKB Lekagak Telenggen, Kapolda Papua: Mereka Punya 70 Senjata Api," *iNewsPapua.id*, 25 May 2021.

⁵⁹ IPAC interview with an official from a private company in Papua with military sources, 1 February 2021.

⁶⁰ Papua is not the only site of illegal arms sales in Indonesia. For past incidents involving illegal sale of government issued weapons by rogue officers in other parts of the country, see International Crisis Group (ICG), "Illicit Arms in Indonesia", *Asia Briefing N° 109*, 6 September 2010.

⁶¹ "2 Polisi dan 1 Prajurit Terlibat Penjualan Senjata dan Amunisi ke KKB, Ini Kata Para Pimpinan," *kompas.com*, 24 February 2021.

arms were illegally obtained by combatants.⁶² Ammunition has been procured by stealing the items reserved for shooting practice.⁶³ Weapons and ammunition stolen in this way are either delivered by rogue officers who use their counterinsurgency assignment in Papua as an opportunity to carry them or hand them over to buyers who can transport them to Papua via sea routes.⁶⁴

Once the weapons reach conflict regions in the central highlands, the price for each item skyrockets. In 2021, a single 5.56 mm bullet in Papua cost Rp.100,000 (US\$7), compared to Rp. 2,500 (US\$ 0.17) per bullet, the original price in Ambon.⁶⁵ The price for one automatic rifle ranged from Rp.300-500 million (US\$ 20,000 – 41,000).⁶⁶ The maximum penalty for police or TNI personnel involved in illegal arms dealing is life imprisonment, which was given to Private Demisla Arista Tefbana, convicted in March 2020 of smuggling arms for the TPNPB.⁶⁷ However, the potential for earning hundreds of millions of rupiah in a single trade seemed to outweigh the risk of getting caught, especially when the perpetrators were low-ranking officers with income that often did not constitute a living wage.⁶⁸

Another source of weapons is from Bougainville, Papua New Guinea.⁶⁹ The arrest of two TPNPB members from Pegunungan Bintang on 7 September 2021 illustrates the long journey that can be involved in smuggling weapons to Papua.⁷⁰ In September 2020, Lamek Taplo sent two of his men to PNG to hand over Rp.850 million (US\$ 59,000) to OPM leader Jeffri Bomanak Pagawak.⁷¹ Pagawak and one of Taplo's men went to Bougainville to purchase five US-made assault rifles and shotguns. Two Papuan fighters carried the weapons back by sea to Vanimo, a five-day trip. From Vanimo, they went to the OPM's Markas Victoria. Finally, in early September 2021, Taplo's men took a small river boat to Batom *distrik*, Pegunungan Bintang. They were arrested shortly after their boat's engine broke down and residents reported them to the local authorities after seeing weapons on board.

Given the astronomical firearms prices in Papua, where do TPNPB fighters find the money to purchase them? There are several well-known streams of funding. These include kidnap-for-

⁶² For example, in 2002, Islamists militants raided a police weapons depot in Tantui, Ambon, stealing 893 firearms and 800,000 bullets. Many were never recovered. "Kesatuan Komando Maluku Dipimpin Seorang Mayjen," *kontras.org*, 24 May 2002. Ambon is not the only place where firearms and bullets from the security forces arsenal were sold illegally. See ICG, "Illicit Arms in Indonesia," *op. cit.*

⁶³ "Sederet Fakta Oknum TNI dan Polisi Jual Senjata dan Amunisi ke KKB, Pelaku Terancam Hukuman Mati," *kompas.com*, 24 February 2021.

⁶⁴ "Saat Pasar Gelap Senjata dan Amunisi Menyerbu Papua," *Kompas*, 24 February 2021.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ "Ditangkap, Pemasok Senjata dan Amunisi KKB Egius Kogoya Beli M4 dan M-16 Rp600 Juta", *merdeka.com*, 20 April 2021.

⁶⁷ One month earlier, a military court convicted army sergeant Wahyu Insyafiadi and sentenced him to life imprisonment for selling thousands of bullets for TPNPB. "Jual Amunisi ke Separatis, Total 2 Prajurit TNI yang Dipenjara Seumur Hidup," *detik.com*, 13 March 2020.

⁶⁸ A Brimob member who was arrested in October 2020 revealed that he already made six trades in Papua. He was caught when attempting to sell two rifles, M-16 and M4 in Nabire. "Oknum Brimob Jual Senjata Api Kepada KKB Papua, Berikut Asal-usul Senapan Hingga Pengakuan Pelaku," *tribunnews.com*, 29 October 2020.

⁶⁹ Bougainville had a referendum in 2019 in which the majority of voters opted for independence from Papua New Guinea, but the response of the PNG government was not clear. A secessionist movement in Bougainville fought the PNG government from 1988 to 1998.

⁷⁰ *Direktori Putusan Mahkamah Agung Republik Indonesia*, "Verdict of Yulian Uopmabin and Kapol Uopmabin," Decision No. 81/Pid.Sus/2021/PN Wmn.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

ransom, extortion from local businesses and officials, and donations from sympathetic local officials.⁷² In 2015, TPNPB fighters in Nduga kidnapped eight construction workers and held them hostage for two days until their employer, PT Waskita Karya, paid Rp.500 million (US\$34,000) for their release.⁷³ In April 2021, then Puncak regent Willem Wandik was forced to pay an undisclosed amount of ransom to the TPNPB to evacuate the bodies of two teachers killed in Beoga.⁷⁴

The 2021 trial of Ratus Murib, an arms supplier for Lekagak Telenggen, also shed light on the flow of money from sympathetic local officials.⁷⁵ The police investigation showed that Murib had obtained Rp.1.3 billion (\$90,000) from arms dealings since December 2019. Police traced the money and calculated that approximately Rp.600 million (\$41,500) originated from the Puncak regency treasury. Police also suspected that Rp.370 million (\$25,592) came from the head of Tolikara *distrik* council, Sonny Wanimbo, who denied the allegation.⁷⁶

Another alleged source of TPNPB funding is the Village Fund (*Dana Desa*), a development scheme started in 2015 that allocates a block grant from the central government to all villages.⁷⁷ The total allocation per village can range from Rp.500 million to Rp.1 billion (\$33,000 - \$67,000), depending on the village's population and its Human Development Index score.⁷⁸ In some cases, as reported by the former Papua chief of police, Paulus Waterpauw, village officials are sympathetic to the TPNPB and willingly skim their Village Funds to help armed groups.⁷⁹

In most cases, however, maintaining good relations with TPNPB fighters and sharing a cut of the Village Funds with them is a necessity for village officials to avoid conflict and ensure security of their development projects.⁸⁰ Failure to do so can lead to extortion and violence. For example, the regent of Intan Jaya reported to the media that “they [the OPM] know when the Fund will be disbursed. They wait until the village officials return then threaten them with weapons.”⁸¹ In another incident, on 12 March 2021, a TPNPB group in Puncak hijacked a small commercial plane about to depart from Wangbe *distrik* airstrip and held the pilot, Ian John Terrence Hellyer,

⁷² Anderson notes that a weakness of the OPM/TPNPB has been its inability to use the revenue raised from its extralegal “taxation” to improve the organisation as a whole or provide services in a parallel government that could contest Indonesia government authority. Bobby Anderson, op. cit., p. 36

⁷³ “Setelah Ditebus Rp 500 Juta, OPM lepas 8 Sandera,” beritasatu.com, 14 June 2020

⁷⁴ TPNPB promised that it would not shoot the plane used for evacuating the bodies so that it could land on the Beoga *distrik* airstrip. See “Setelah Tembak Mati 2 Guru, KKB Minta Uang Tebusan Berjumlah Besar jika Ingin Jenazah Dievakuasi,” kompas.com, 12 April 2021.

⁷⁵ Ratus Murib bought the guns from Brimob officers. His arrest likely developed from the arrest of three Brimob members in February 2021.

⁷⁶ “Polda Papua Ambil Alih Kasus Penyuplai Dana ke KKB Diduga Seret Ketua DPRD Tolikara,” merdeka.com, 18 June 2021.

⁷⁷ For a detailed account of how Dana Desa funds flow to TPNPB, see Aliansi Demokrasi Untuk Papua (ALDP) report, “Jejak Perdagangan Senjata Api dan Amunisi Ilegal di Tanah Papua,” 2022.

⁷⁸ For example, in 2017, three local officials from Pegunungan Bintang were arrested for embezzling Rp. 4.1 billion (USD 285,000) of government money. The three officials were able to steal such a large amount by skimming Rp.15 million from the Village Fund from each of 277 villages in Pegunungan Bintang. See “277 Dana Desa di Papua Disunat Buat Beli Pesawat, 3 Pelaku Ditahan,” detik.com, 27 September 2017. See also Undang-Undang Nomor 6 Tahun 2014 tentang Desa; and Peraturan Menteri Keuangan Nomor 205/PMK.07/2019.

⁷⁹ “Kapolda Papua: Ada Indikasi Dana Desa untuk Bantu KKB,” kabar24.bisnis.com, 26 November 2019.

⁸⁰ ALDP report, 2022, op. cit, pp. 35-36.

⁸¹ “Bupati Intan Jaya: KKB Minta Dana Desa untuk Beli Senjata,” cnnindonesia.com.

hostage for two hours. TNI reported that the group were angered because they did not get their cut of the Village Fund.⁸²

III. JAKARTA'S COUNTERPRODUCTIVE SECURITY POLICY

Despite a rapidly changing landscape of violence in Papua and an increasingly aggressive TPNPB, Jakarta continues to respond to the violence with its usual repertoire of ineffective measures. Following every high-profile incident, the government has deployed additional troops, conducted counterinsurgency operations, or announced big policy shifts. This reactive approach to the conflict has failed to check the growth of the TPNPB over the past four years. But the impact of these policies in the form of human rights abuses and civilian casualties from counterinsurgency operations has also proven counterproductive to the government's overall goal of reducing public support for independence.

A. Increasing Troop Deployment

Over the past four years, the government's most frequent response to the worsening security situation in Papua has been to deploy additional troops to the region. There is no official data on how many military and police troops are deployed in Papua. A study published in 2013 estimated that 37,000 military and police personnel were stationed in West Papua and Papua provinces, making it the region with the highest concentration of security personnel in Indonesia.⁸³

A large troop build-up occurred in the aftermath of the anti-racism protests and communal riots that swept across Papua in August-September 2019.⁸⁴ The unrest was triggered by an incident in Surabaya, East Java, where a group of Papuan students refused to raise the Indonesian flag to celebrate Indonesian Independence Day on 17 August.⁸⁵ Local authorities, including the regional army commander and police, used paramilitary groups to coerce the students and ultimately stormed into the dormitory to arrest them. Videos of the commander hurling racial slurs at the Papuan students inside the dormitory went viral and triggered widespread anti-racism protests.

Following the demonstrations, clashes broke out between migrants and indigenous Papuans in several locations, including Jayapura, Deiyai, Wamena, Fak-Fak, and Manokwari. In Jayapura city, mobs burned down several government buildings and shops owned by migrants from elsewhere in Indonesia.⁸⁶ In Deiyai, on 28 August, police opened fire on demonstrators after a soldier was shot by an arrow. Eight Papuans died as protesters demanded a referendum on

⁸² Hellyer, a New Zealander pilot, was allowed to fly the plane two hours later. There was no hostage rescue attempt by security forces. It is not known if any money was exchanged in the process. See "KKB Papua Sandera Pesawat Susi Air karena Tak Dapat Dana Desa," *news.detik.com*, 13 March 2021.

⁸³ With a total population of around 3.6 million in 2013, this estimate puts the ratio of civilian to security personnel in West Papua and Papua provinces at 1:97 compared to the average of 1:296 for Indonesia. Antonius Made Tony Supriatma, "TNI/Polri in West Papua: How Security Reforms Work in the Conflict Region," *Indonesia*, Number 95, April 2013, p. 98.

⁸⁴ "Indonesia Deploys Troops to West Papua as Protests Spread," *aljazeera.com*, 21 August 2019.

⁸⁵ "A Racial Justice Campaign Brought New Attention to Indonesia's Poorest Region. Will It Translate to Support for Independence?" *time.com*, 15 December 2020.

⁸⁶ Although there were testimonies that many protesters were killed during the Jayapura riot, no fatalities were reported by any media or human rights group.

independence.⁸⁷ The worst violence was recorded in Wamena, where an anti-migrant riot resulted in anywhere between 33 and 60 deaths, and more than 15,000 people (mostly migrants) had to be airlifted to safety.⁸⁸

Unable to contain the unrest with an already high security presence in the two provinces, the government deployed Auxiliary Support Forces (*Bawah Kendali Operasi*, BKO) composed of military and Brimob troops brought in from outside Papua. Once stationed in Papua, these so-called non-organic troops are placed under the army's regional command (Komando Daerah Militer, KODAM) for a few months, before being rotated out of Papua or replaced with freshly deployed troops.

Apart from regular infantry, the non-organic troops sent to Papua include various specialized units from different military branches.⁸⁹ Since 2019, the composition of non-organic troops deployed to Papua has been dominated Raider Infantry Battalions (Yonif Raider), the elite infantry unit created during the Aceh insurgency in early 2000s, tasked explicitly with anti-guerrilla and jungle warfare operations.

Between January 2019 and December 2021, IPAC tracked at least 20 announcements by the TNI about an estimated 10,400 soldiers from Raider Battalions being deployed across Papua.⁹⁰ A Raider Battalion typically consists of 400 to 600 soldiers deployed for six to nine months in a particular area, before being recalled or replaced with another unit.⁹¹ One such deployment made media headlines in May 2021 because it involved Raider Battalion 315/Garuda, known as 'Satan Forces', which had a notorious record of human rights violations in the former conflict areas of Aceh and East Timor.⁹²

So far, this troop build-up in Papua has failed to stem escalating insurgent attacks. One reason for this is the limited range of activity that security forces undertake once they arrive in Papua. Although TNI has far superior weaponry and modern equipment, its troops are not adequately trained to undertake operations in rugged mountainous terrain of the central highlands

⁸⁷ "SKP Dekanat Paniai Umumkan Identitas 8 Korban Tewas dan 39 Korban Terluka di Deiyai", *jubi.co.id*, 3 September 2019.

⁸⁸ The number of casualties during the September 2019 Wamena riot is highly disputed. Immediately after the riots the government reported that 33 people had been killed, including eight indigenous Papuans. However, a joint investigation team from the Jakarta Post, Jubi and Tirto.id revealed that the government total was low and the true death toll was at least 42. See "Special Report: Wamena Investigation: What the Government Is Not Telling Us," *The Jakarta Post*, 26 November 2019. A May 2020 database made by the Papua Taskforce (Gugus Tugas Papua) from the University of Gadjah Mada produced a much higher count of 60 deaths, including two soldiers not mentioned in the Jakarta Post report. IPAC uses the Gugus Tugas Papua number because it provides more detailed data, including the total number of injuries from civilians and security forces, damaged buildings, and vehicles. See "Gugus Tugas Papua," *op. cit.* p. 32.

⁸⁹ For example, Combat Engineers Battalions (Zeni Tempur) was sent to carry out the construction of the Trans-Papua highway and the Airforce's elite Rapid Response Force (Kopasgat) to secure airports attacked by TPNPB fighters.

⁹⁰ These figures represent the total number of troops that were sent to Papua on a rotational basis for short tours of duty. The exact total number of soldiers at a given time is not known.

⁹¹ The deployment of Raider Battalions in Papua is not usually disclosed to the public but is labelled as border control security operations (Pamtas) at the Papua-PNG border. But operations involving these troops have occurred in Nduga, Puncak, or Intan Jaya, which share no border with PNG. One way to know where they operate is through news reports about a Raider soldier being wounded or killed in a particular location.

⁹² "Indonesia Deploys Forces to Troubled Papua Region," *The Diplomat*, 5 May 2021.

and remain stationed in population centres to conduct community outreach operations and guard public works projects. In contrast, TPNPB's deep knowledge of local geography allows its fighters to escape detection in the mountains or build bases in remote areas that are only accessible to security forces by air. Another reason for low effectiveness is that TNI's troop deployment is prioritized for protection of vital development projects such as Trans-Papua Road construction, rather than proactively engaging armed groups in their remote strongholds.⁹³

The government has tried to address these challenges by increasing troop presence around strategic areas and building airstrike capacity in remote regions. In March 2020, TNI and Polri augmented their forces in Mimika, site of the giant Freeport copper and gold mine, from 1,000 to 3,000 personnel, to fend off dozens of TPNPB fighters. The latter avoided the tight security cordon, slipped inside Kuala Kencana to attack the Freeport office complex, and escaped with few losses.⁹⁴ In remote *kabupaten* like Pegunungan Bintang, the TNI has resorted to airstrikes from helicopters to attack TPNPB hideouts as only six out of 34 *distrik* can be reached by land.⁹⁵ As TPNPB strength and the number of its firearms grow in the central highlands, attacks against airports have become frequent to try to prevent the government from providing humanitarian relief or military reinforcements.

Escalating insurgent attacks since 2018 suggest that the mounting troop presence in Papua has done little to check TPNPB's growth. However, the growing presence of troops is linked with a string of human rights violations, exacerbating already high levels of public resentment towards Indonesian security forces and prompting repeated calls for their withdrawal by indigenous Papuan groups and national human rights organisations.⁹⁶

The abuses committed by troops deployed in Intan Jaya illustrate the harm caused. Soldiers from 400/Banteng Raider battalion (Yonif Raider 400/BR) arrived in Hitadipa, Intan Jaya in early September 2020.⁹⁷ As there was no existing army post in the area, they took over local school buildings and began using them as a preparatory sub-district military command (Koramil Persiapan Hitadipa). The move created tensions between the soldiers and local residents as hundreds of students were not able to attend school.⁹⁸

Hostilities grew when a Christian pastor, Yeremia Zanambani, demanded information about the whereabouts of his two nephews from the deputy commander of Koramil Hitadipa. Soldiers from another Raider unit, stationed at the neighbouring Koramil Sugapa, were accused of carrying out the forced disappearance of the two men, who were reported missing on 21 April 2020.⁹⁹

⁹³ On the detailed map on the distribution of security posts in Papua see Ode Rakhman et. al, "Ekonomi-Politik Penempatan Militer di Papua: Kasus Intan Jaya," published by a coalition of Indonesian NGOs August 2021, p. 9. Access: <https://m5.gs/WGNas0>.

⁹⁴ "3.000 Personel TNI-Polri Hadang KKB yang Berkumpul di Tembagapura," *Kompas*, 13 March 2020.

⁹⁵ "Helikopter bombardir 4 kampung di Pegunungan Bintang," jubi.co.id, 25 October 2021.

⁹⁶ "Bertemu Ma'ruf Amin, MRP Minta Aparat Ditarik dari Tanah Papua," merdeka.com, 29 November 2019; "Imparaisal Minta Penarikan TNI Non-Organik dari Papua," cnnindonesia.com, 16 June 2021.

⁹⁷ They were deployed from the Central Java Regional Army Command (Kodam IV/Diponegoro).

⁹⁸ "Gedung Sekolah Dipakai TNI Jadi Markas, Ratusan Anak Papua Tak Bisa Belajar," suara.com, 20 November 2020.

⁹⁹ Full chronology of the incident is described in Haris Azhhar and Victor Mambor, "Duka dari Hitadipa: Laporan Tim Kemanusiaan untuk Kasus Kekerasan Terhadap Tokoh Agama di Kabupaten Intan Jaya," October 2020.

Tensions escalated further when a soldier was killed in Sugapa on 17 September in a TPNPB raid, and his rifle was stolen. On 19 September, the deputy commander gathered residents at the Koramil Hitadipa and threatened to launch a military operation to kill all suspected collaborators if the rifle was not returned.¹⁰⁰ Within a few hours, TPNPB groups attacked Koramil Hitadipa and killed another soldier. Members of the 400 Raider BR tried to chase the attackers but failed. Instead, they turned to Yeremia, who had not attended the gathering earlier that day, and murdered him at his home.¹⁰¹ After the killing, eight soldiers, including three from the Raider 400/BR, burned down the official residence of a local health department employee near the Koramil. They were later found guilty of arson.¹⁰²

The murder of a revered religious figure generated widespread condemnation of military build-up in Papua by church and civil society organisations.¹⁰³ The TNI initially tried to shift the blame to the TPNPB, falsely accusing rebel groups of staging Yeremia's killing to attract international attention from the UN General Assembly session held in the same month.¹⁰⁴ To respond to public pressure, the government sent an investigation team composed of academics, TNI, police, and intelligence.¹⁰⁵ Although team members announced that the details would not be disclosed to the public, they admitted that it was indeed a soldier who killed pastor Yeremia.¹⁰⁶

While the investigation of Yeremia's killing was still ongoing, security forces in Intan Jaya shot two more church workers. On 7 October, a Raider 400/BR soldier shot a Catholic catechist named Agustinus Duwitau in Sugapa, claiming his posture and hair matched that of a suspected TPNPB fighter.¹⁰⁷ Agustinus survived his injuries and later ran away from the hospital in Nabire, where he was under observation. On 26 October, a joint TNI-Polri unit shot and killed another catechist named Rufinus Tigau in Jalai village, Sugapa *distrik*, after accusing him of giving food to the TPNPB. Soldiers at the scene ordered villagers to bury Rufinus' body in a shallow grave.¹⁰⁸ The Indonesian Catholic Bishop's Conference rejected security forces' claims that the victims were TPNPB affiliates and met with the Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs, Mahfud MD to express concern over the shootings.¹⁰⁹

In December 2020, the fate of Yeremia's two nephews was revealed. Army Provost commander Lt. Gen. Dodik Widjanarko reported that the two had been tortured to death by members of Para Raider 433/Julu Siri, posted at Koramil Sugapa. Their bodies were burned, and

¹⁰⁰ The deputy commander of Hitadipa regional command declared in front of local residents that pastor Yeremia Zanambani, along with four other locals, was his enemy. "Komnas HAM: Yeremia Disiksa dan Ditembak," *republika.id*, 3 November 2020.

¹⁰¹ KOMNAS HAM found convincing evidence that the deputy commander, Alpius Hasim Madi, was the person who killed pastor Yeremia. No legal proceeding was taken by the government, however, to prosecute him. See "Komnas HAM Ungkap Temuan Dugaan Keterlibatan TNI dalam Kematian Pendeta Yermias," *tempo.com*, 2 November 2020.

¹⁰² "8 Prajurit TNI AD Jadi Tersangka Kasus Pembakaran Rumah Dinas Kesehatan di Intan Jaya, Papua," *kompas.com*, 12 November 2020.

¹⁰³ "Rakyat Papua Desak penembak Mati Pendeta Yeremia Disidang di Pengadilan HAM," *suara.com*, 16 November 2020.

¹⁰⁴ "TNI Sebut Pendeta Tewas Ditembak KKB Papua," *cnnindonesia.com*, 20 September 2020.

¹⁰⁵ "Pemerintah Bentuk Tim Investigasi Gabungan Penembakan di Intan Jaya Papua," *tempo.co*, 1 October 2020.

¹⁰⁶ "Hasil TGPF Intan Jaya: Aparat Diduga Bunuh Pendeta Yeremia," *tirto.id*, 21 October 2020.

¹⁰⁷ "5 Anggota TNI AD Diperiksa Kasus Penembakan Gembala Gereja di Sugapa, Korban Disebut Kabur dari RS," *tribunnews.com*, 13 November 2020.

¹⁰⁸ "Beda Suara TNI-Gereja Usai Penyergapan ke Warga Diduga KKB," *cnnindonesia.com*, 27 October 2020.

¹⁰⁹ "Killing of catechist alarms Indonesia's Catholic bishops," *heraldmalaysia.com*, 14 Nov 2020.

the ashes were thrown into a river to erase the evidence.¹¹⁰ As of June 2022, the nine perpetrators had not been prosecuted.¹¹¹

Yonif Raider 400/BR unit posted in Hitadipa was sent home early in February 2021, halfway through their scheduled nine months' tour of duty.¹¹² Nine soldiers died during that time, including five in road accidents and four killed by the TPNPB. One soldier, an ethnic Papuan named Lucky Matuan, who was angered by the atrocities committed against civilians in Intan Jaya, defected in early 2021 to join the rebel group under Undius Kogoya.¹¹³ He is now serving as a TPNPB military trainer.¹¹⁴

In July 2021 the school buildings in Hitadipa were finally vacated by the TNI after the bupati (head) of Intan Jaya allocated a 1,250 square meter plot of land for the construction of a permanent Koramil post, which is currently underway.¹¹⁵

B. Counterinsurgency Operations

Since 2018, the military's counterinsurgency operations have been often conducted in populated areas in response to high-profile attacks by the TPNPB. While these operations have been largely ineffective in dislodging armed groups from their bases in the jungles, they have resulted in civilian casualties and mass displacement, adding to a growing sense of insecurity among Papuans and resentment towards the security forces.

The most egregious example was in Nduga, where the TNI launched a major operation following the killing of the construction workers in December 2018. At least four battalions (around 1,500 soldiers) comprised of elite Raiders and combat engineers (Yonzipur) were mobilised in early 2019 to pursue the Egianus Kogoya group responsible for the attack and resume the Trans-Papua Road construction.¹¹⁶ Deadly clashes between insurgents and government forces occurred in areas where the Kogoya group was firmly entrenched. These included the *distrik* of Mbua, Mugi, Yigi and Derakma. There were also reports of air assaults by the TNI in impenetrable areas such as Alguru.¹¹⁷

The TNI denied using air attacks, characterising allegations to this effect as “fake news”, especially after Australian media accused it of using white phosphorus bombs. The charge was based on a photograph of a villager from Mbua who sustained severe burn injuries.¹¹⁸ But a local church-led humanitarian coalition reported that air attacks from helicopters were used

¹¹⁰ “Danpuspomad Sebut Ada Prajurit Bakar Jenazah Warga di Papua,” cnnindonesia.com, 23 December 2020.

¹¹¹ “Panglima TNI Jenderal Andika Janji Kawal Kasus HAM di Papua: Hukum juga Komandannya,” merdeka.com, 1 December 2021.

¹¹² “Tiba di Jawa, Banteng Raiders TNI Kehilangan 9 Prajurit di Rimba Papua,” viva.co.id, 17 March 2021.

¹¹³ “Kejar Prajurit TNI yang Gabung KKB, KSAD: Lucky Matuan Masih Ada di Papua,” suara.com, 20 April 2021.

¹¹⁴ “Jubir TPNPB Umumkan Eks Prajurit TNI Kini Jadi Instruktur perang TPNPB,” jubi.co.id, 24 November 2021.

¹¹⁵ “Koramil Hitadipa Dipindahkan, Bangunan Sekolah Kembali Difungsikan untuk Kegiatan Belajar,” beritasatu.com, 4 July 2021.

¹¹⁶ Two raider battalions Yonif 321/Galuh Taruna and Yonif Raider 514/Sabbada Yudha totalling 900 soldiers were sent to Nduga on 7 March 2019. Two more battalions with 600 soldiers, Yonif 431 and Yonzipur VIII, were sent again on 9 March 2019.

¹¹⁷ “Bupati Nduga Papua Minta Aparat Tak Lakukan Serangan dari Udara,” tempo.co, 12 July 2018.

¹¹⁸ “Exclusive: Chemical weapons dropped on Papua,” thesaturdaypaper.com.au, 25 January 2019.

intermittently from 4 December 2018 to 7-8 March 2019 in Mugi, Mam and Yal *distrik*.¹¹⁹ A joint investigation team led by church groups alleged that the military employed scorched earth tactics and air raids to separate the local population from the rebels to deprive the latter of access to food and shelter.¹²⁰

The impact of this operation on Nduga's civilian population was catastrophic. The humanitarian coalition reported that 17 civilians were killed during the counterinsurgency operations,¹²¹ and at least 37,000 residents fled Nduga as fighting intensified, leaving the kabupaten virtually emptied.¹²² There are competing accounts about the humanitarian impact of this mass displacement. According to NGOs, an estimated 161 people (including 52 children) died due to sickness, starvation and the lack of medical aid while hiding in the forest or camps for the displaced.¹²³ Government estimates were much lower: 53 dead, of whom 23 were children.¹²⁴ Fear of the military caused thousands of the displaced stranded in Wamena to reject government aid from the Ministry of Social Affairs because it was delivered personally by the TNI regional commander.¹²⁵ Eventually, the refugees accepted assistance from the government, but they did not accept any food given by the military.¹²⁶

Another controversial military operation in a civilian area was conducted in Kiwirok, Pegunungan Bintang, in response to the Lamek Taplo attack on medical workers. In September 2021 TNI forces were reported to have fired machine guns and dropped mortar bombs from helicopters on several villages believed to be TPNPB bases.¹²⁷ Thousands of residents fled to neighbouring *distrik*, and some even crossed the PNG border to seek refuge.¹²⁸ The chief of the Army's Regional Command in Papua admitted that his troops had dropped the mortar bombs using rocket launchers to "shock" the TPNPB but denied the use of air bombing in the attack or the targeting of civilian areas.¹²⁹ The TNI refused to allow the National Human Rights Commission (KOMNAS HAM) to enter Kiwirok to investigate, due to security reasons.¹³⁰

¹¹⁹ Tim Kemanusiaan Kabupaten Nduga, "Laporan Dugaan Korban Kekerasan Pelanggaran HAM Kabupaten Nduga Tahun 2018-2019," August 2019.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² "Nestapa Nduga Selama 2019: 37.000 Orang Mengungsi, 241 Orang Tewas," Tirto.id, 30 December 2019.

¹²³ Tim Kemanusiaan Kabupaten Nduga, op. cit.

¹²⁴ One reason why NGO estimates are significantly higher than figures released by the government is that the NGOs counted deaths among the displaced for a longer period of time, since the fighting started in December 2018, while the government figures counted deaths since March 2019. "Pengungsi Nduga Tolak bantuan, Indonesia Akui 53 Orang Meninggal," *Republika*, 31 July 2019.

¹²⁵ IPAC interview with Pater Yohanes Joga, Wamena, August 2019. The displaced residents in Wamena accepted the relief aid weeks later after the delegates from Social Affairs Ministry pressed them to accept and promised not to involve the military. "Kemensos harapkan bantuan Nduga tidak ditolak lagi," *antaranews.com*, 8 October 2019.

¹²⁶ "Kisah Pengungsi nduga Papua, Tak Punya apa-apa dan Ingin TNI Ditarik Agar Bisa Kembali ke Desa," *kompas.com*, 2 August 2019.

¹²⁷ "Amuk Kiwirok," *Tempo Magazine*, 15-21 November 2021.

¹²⁸ It was not clear as of June 2022 how many had fled as KOMNAS HAM's request to enter Kiwirok was still rejected by the security forces. "Konflik bersenjata Papua: Kisah bocah yang jadi korban tembak, bom mortir, dan pihak ketiga," op. cit.

¹²⁹ "Serbian Mortar in Kiwirok," *Tempo Magazine*, 15 November 2021

¹³⁰ "Dua kali kirim tim, Komnas HAM Papua tak bisa tembus ke Kiwirok," *jubi.co.id*, 19 November 2021.

In March 2022, a report by the independent Conflict Armament Research claimed that the mortars used in the Kiwirok operation were purchased from Serbia by the State Intelligence Agency (Badan Inteligen Negara, BIN).¹³¹ According to the report, manufacturer's markings on the undetonated mortar bomb that local resident photographed and shared with the media match those listed in the Serbian purchase documents, in which BIN is identified as the end user. The mortars were later modified in Indonesia to be dropped from air.¹³²

BIN issued a vaguely worded denial about involvement in the Kiwirok attack, referring reporters to the Regional Commander's statement confirming that the mortars were used by the TNI.¹³³ The statement neither denied, nor confirmed whether BIN was involved in the procurement process. Given that BIN is identified as the end user in the purchase documents, this suggests that BIN either made the mortars available to the TNI or they were used by the TNI without BIN's knowledge. In either case, this raises serious questions of accountability, especially since the purchase was not disclosed to the parliamentary committee that oversees BIN.¹³⁴

C. Terrorist Label for Insurgents

The Jokowi government reacted to an increasingly bold TPNPB by repeatedly changing the official designation of pro-independence groups. Following the armed groups' occupation of three villages in Tembagapura in 2017, the then Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs, Wiranto, announced a change in the designation of OPM from Armed Criminal Group (Kelompok Kriminal Bersenjata, KKB) to Armed Criminal Separatist Group (Kelompok Kriminal Separatis Bersenjata, KKSB).¹³⁵ This policy changed again on 30 April 2021, when Wiranto's successor Mahfud MD announced a new designation for OPM as Terrorist Separatist Group (Kelompok Separatis Teroris, KST), in response to TPNPB's assassination of the head of intelligence in Papua, Brig. Gen. I Gusti Putu Danny.¹³⁶

Equating "separatists" with terrorists had been under discussion ever since the Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Merdeka Aceh, GAM) bombed the Jakarta stock exchange in 2000. Among the first individuals arrested under Indonesia's anti-terrorism law were members of the GAM team negotiating with the government for a "humanitarian pause" in the conflict.¹³⁷ After a spate of Islamist terrorist attacks in Ambon and Poso, a new rationale emerged. Conservative Muslim groups argued that the 2003 anti-terrorism law had been applied exclusively and unfairly to Muslim extremists despite the fact that many acts of violence in Papua were identical – i.e., shootings or other attacks on police or suspected informers. They demanded that the Papuans responsible also be charged with terrorism instead of ordinary crimes, or in some cases, rebellion.

¹³¹ Conflict Armament Research, "Preliminary Report on Munitions Used in Attacks in Kiwirok on 10 October 2021," London, 17 March 2022.

¹³² "Mystery Surrounds How Munitions Imported for Indonesia's Civilian Spies Were Used in Attacks on Villages," reuters.com, 3 June 2022.

¹³³ "BIN Bantah Impor Mortir Serbia untuk Operasi di Papua," cnnindonesia.com, 16 June 2022.

¹³⁴ Robert Lowry, "How Accountable is Indonesia's National Intelligence Agency," Australia Institute of International Affairs, 29 March 2022.

¹³⁵ "Menko Polhukam Ganti nama Kelompok Bersenjata di Papua Jadi KKSB," liputan6.com, 20 November 2017.

¹³⁶ "Indonesia Classifies Papuan Rebels as Terrorist Group," benarnews.org, 29 April 2021.

¹³⁷ Tgk. Kamaruzzaman, Sofyan Ibrahim Tiba, Amri bin Abdul Wahab and Amni bin Ahmad Marzuki were arrested in September 2003 under Perpu No.1/2002, the emergency regulation that became the 2003 anti-terrorist law. "Empat Perunding GAM Dijerat Perpu Anti Terorisme," tempo.co, 12 September 2003.

Government concerns about international reaction prevented any positive response to these demands. Even without the terrorist label, however, the police counterterrorism unit Detachment 88 had been involved in the killings of OPM commander Kelly Kwalik in 2009 and KNPB leader Mako Tabuni in 2012.¹³⁸ But their role was constrained after public outcry from international human rights groups that demanded that the United States and Australia stop providing training and equipment for Detachment 88.¹³⁹

The killing of a one-star Army general in 2021 renewed calls for harsher punishment of the OPM from both conservative nationalist and Muslim groups.¹⁴⁰ The government responded by announcing the terrorist designation in a hurried press conference, but the decision was not coordinated with various security agencies, which remain divided on the issue. The provincial police in Papua welcomed the decision because the anti-terrorism law provides more tools to prosecute pro-independence supporters, including the use of electronic evidence, which is not allowed in Indonesia's criminal procedure code.¹⁴¹ The National Counter Terrorism Agency (BNPT) used the opportunity to seek additional funding for its deradicalisation programmes in Papua.¹⁴² However, the head of Detachment 88, Martinus Hukum, warned against branding the OPM as terrorists, arguing that it would cause a backlash by further stigmatising Papuans and complicating efforts of the central government to win Papuan support.¹⁴³

Given these concerns, the anti-terrorism law had not been applied against the OPM as of June 2022. But another high-profile rebel attack could tip the balance in favour of those pushing for its application. Such a move could potentially lead to increased targeting of non-violent supporters of independence.¹⁴⁴

Application of the terrorism law to independence supporters in Papua, armed and unarmed, could also trigger operational confusion and competition over funding among various security actors in Papua. Fights between members of different security agencies in Papua have occasionally escalated into full-blown shootouts due to a misguided sense of *esprit de corps*.¹⁴⁵ The concern is

¹³⁸ Jayson S. Lamchek, *Human Rights-Compliant Counterterrorism Myth-making and Reality in the Philippines and Indonesia*, Cambridge University Press, 2019, p. 233.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 234. In recent years, Detachment 88 has conducted several operations to dismantle pro-ISIS networks in Papua. See IPAC, "How a Pro-ISIS Cell Emerged in Papua," Report No. 75, 3 February 2022.

¹⁴⁰ "Pemerintah Tetapkan OPM Sebagai Organisasi Teroris," *cnnindonesia.com*, 30 April 2022.

¹⁴¹ Police Intelligence Chief Paulus Waterpauw presentation at "Webinar Populis: Membedah Polemik Label KKB Sebagai Teroris: Pro dan Kontra," *Youtube.com*, 28 May 2021.

¹⁴² "BNPT Ajak Masyarakat Papua Gelorakan Semangat Cinta Damai," *antaranews.com*, 9 June 2021.

¹⁴³ "Densus 88 Jelaskan Kenapa Tidak Perangi Teroris di Papua, Terungkap Masalah Sebenarnya," *pikiran-rakyat.com*, 18 October 2021.

¹⁴⁴ Paulus Waterpauw has repeatedly asserted that KNPB is collaborating Papuan diaspora, some churches, media, Papuan student senate organisations and TPNPB in the struggle for West Papua independence. See "Penangkapan Aktivis Papua dan Label 'KKB Teroris', 'Kemunduran' Solusi Damai dan Timbulkan 'Eskalasi Kekerasan'," *bbc.com*, 10 May 2021.

¹⁴⁵ "Kopassus Clashes with Brimob in Mimika, Papua," *jpnn.com*, 29 November 2021. Brimob officers also clashed with soldiers in Mamberamo Raya, on 12 April 2020. The dispute was triggered by an argument between a police officer who refused to pay the rent for a motorbike he borrowed from a soldier. The argument soon escalated into a gunfight between dozens of soldiers and police officers, leaving three people killed and two injured. "Ini Kronologi Bentrok Berujung Maut Oknum TNI-Polri di Papua," *kabar24.bisnis.com*, 13 April 2020.

that these turf wars may worsen if counterterrorism detachments from both military and police are deployed in the same region.

Finally, the terrorist designation signals the Jokowi government's unwillingness to find a political solution for the conflict in Papua. After the 2019 anti-discrimination riots that resulted in violence against migrants, the government held a series of highly publicized 'consultations' with hand-picked pro-government leaders from Papua and West Papua. Jokowi's Chief of Staff, Moeldoko even claimed that the government was prepared to meet with separatist leaders, including Benny Wenda, the Oxford-based independence leader. Jokowi confirmed this possibility, but the idea went nowhere after Wiranto ruled out such a meeting.¹⁴⁶ Far from engaging with pro-independence groups, the Jokowi government sidelined even those reformist groups in Papua that sought improved implementation of special autonomy provisions.

IV. CREATION OF THREE NEW PROVINCES

In April 2021, the government steamrolled cuts to Papua's autonomy through the new Special Autonomy (Otsus) Law for Papua despite mass protests.¹⁴⁷ One of the Law's most contentious provisions allowed the government to unilaterally carve up Papua into new administrative units.

In April 2022, the DPR initiated a law to create new provinces in Papua, despite strong opposition from the Papuan governor, Lukas Enembe, provincial legislature and the MRP. As was the case in the lead up to the revision of the Otsus law, Jokowi invited only pro-Jakarta Papuan leaders to confirm their support for the plan to divide Papua.¹⁴⁸ On 30 June 2022, the DPR passed the law, creating three new provinces: South Papua, Central Papua and Papua Central Highlands.

Jakarta has justified the creation of new provinces in terms of bringing government closer to the people. But historically, division of Papua has been used as a security measure to create further splits among Papuans and at the same time provide incentives to the Papuan elite to side with the government in hope of political spoils.¹⁴⁹ Indeed, Papuan politicians' response to the decision is divided along ethnic-regional fault lines.¹⁵⁰ Elites in the central highlands, including Governor Enembe, have staunchly opposed the move as it diminishes their political dominance and control over resources. Meanwhile, politicians in coastal areas, who have long demanded their own provinces, support the division, expecting appointments in the new provincial administrations and dividends from government projects and foreign investments.

Predictably, the TPNPB condemned the division of Papua as a "catastrophe" and threatened more violence.¹⁵¹ In February 2022, TPNPB's spokesperson, Sebby Sambon noted that the issue had become a "special concern" and warned that its fighters stood ready to "shoot and

¹⁴⁶ "Untuk Ketemu ULMWP, Wiranto Beda Pendapat dengan Jokowi dan Moeldoko," suarapapua.com. 2 October 2019.

¹⁴⁷ IPAC, "Diminished Autonomy and the Risk of New Flashpoints in Papua," Report No. 74, 23 December 2021

¹⁴⁸ "Majelis Rakyat Papua Bertemu Jokowi, Klarifikasi Simpang Siur DOB," detik.com, 20 May 2022.

¹⁴⁹ IPAC, "Carving Up Papua: More Districts, More Trouble," IPAC Report No. 3, 9 October 2013.

¹⁵⁰ Deka Anwar, "The Costs of Carving Up Papua," East Asia Forum, 11 June 2022.

¹⁵¹ "TPNPB-OPM Surati Jokowi-Ma'ruf Hentikan DOB, Panglima OPM Sindir Kepala Daerah di Papua: Setop Jadi Budak Jakarta," suarasumbar.id, 28 June 2022.

kill” Papuan officials and politicians who support the creation of new provinces.¹⁵² In July 2022, after the passage of the law, Sambom released a video taking credit for the killing of a migrant gold-miner in Sentani, whom he accused of working as a covert intelligence officer. He further warned that unless the government repealed the law, the TPNPB will “kill any migrant who enters Papua.”¹⁵³

The long-term effect of the division on armed conflict remains to be seen. On the one hand, the proliferation of local administrations and recruitment of new bureaucrats that is bound to follow can create more opportunities for the TPNPB to tap into government funds for buying weapons, either by threatening local officials or by eliciting their sympathy. On the other hand, the new 2021 Otsus Law introduces more stringent reporting requirements for local government to receive funds from Jakarta that may make it harder for officials to skim their budgets and siphon funds to armed groups.

In the short term, however, carving up Papua primarily benefits the central government in Jakarta and local government elites. Jakarta can deliver grants and projects more easily and work with smaller provinces and regencies to monitor their implementation. New administrative units would also justify a greater budget for the military and police to build more territorial bases and recruit more personnel.

V. PROMISE FOR A “SOFTER APPROACH” IN PAPUA

In December 2021, Indonesia’s new TNI chief, General Andika Perkasa, who oversaw the massive troop deployment in Papua in his previous role as the Chief of Staff of the Army (Kepala Staf Angkatan Darat KASAD), promised a softer military approach to win the hearts of the minds of Papuans.¹⁵⁴ His strategy calls for relying less on ad hoc deployment of non-organic troops and instead seeks to expand the army’s permanent territorial presence in Papua.¹⁵⁵

This new strategy comes on the back of military expansion and restructuring in Papua over the past five years. In December 2016, the TNI inaugurated the new West Papua Regional Command (Kodam XVIII/Kasuari), splitting it from Papua’s Regional Command (Kodam XVII/Cendrawasih), which previously managed both provinces. In September 2019, the TNI established three Joint Regional Military Commands (Komando Gabungan Wilayah Pertahanan, Kogabwilhan) to improve coordination and interoperability between different military branches across multiple provinces.¹⁵⁶ Papua and West Papua provinces fall under the Kogabwilhan III, headquartered in Mimika.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² “TPNPB Ancam Tembak Politisi Pendukung DOB dan Otsus,” *cenderawasihpos.jawapos.com*, 7 June 2022.

¹⁵³ “Ini Identitas Korban TPNPB OPM, Dua Pembacok Muncul di Video,” *gatra.com*, 5 July 2022.

¹⁵⁴ General Andhika served as the KASAD between November 2018 until his appointment as commander of the TNI in December 2021.

¹⁵⁵ “Lagu Tentara tanpa Senjata,” *Tempo Magazine*, edisi 10-16 January 2022.

¹⁵⁶ Kogabwilhan I located in Tanjung Pinang, Riau (covers regions that share borders with South China Sea and the Strait of Malacca); Kogabwilhan II in Samboja, East Kalimantan (covers the region bordering Indonesia, Borneo-Malaysia, and the Philippines).

¹⁵⁷ The Kogabwilhan is commanded by a three-star general and answers directly to the TNI chief general. It functions as a coordinating body between military branches. Because most of the military operations in Papua are run by the army, the Kogabwilhan III does not seem to impact the day-to-day military operations in Papua but has played a

These changes laid the groundwork for the expansion of permanent territorial commands that is already underway. Since its establishment, Kodam XVIII/Kasuari has expanded into two sub-provincial commands (Korem), established eight new kabupaten-level commands (Kodim) and dozens of *distrik*-level posts (Koramil).¹⁵⁸ At present, eleven out of West Papua's thirteen regencies and cities already have a planned or existing Kodim. In 2020, Kodam XVII/Cendrawasih also announced the expansion of territorial commands in Papua province. Since then, one new Kodim has been inaugurated (Kodim 1703/Deiyai) and eight additional Kodim are currently in various stages of development. This means that 20 out of 29 kabupaten and municipalities in Papua province are already slotted to have permanent army territorial commands.¹⁵⁹

General Andika's plan builds on this expansion in three ways. First, it calls for gradually increasing the total number of Kodim in Papua province to 30 and adding more Koramil at the *distrik* level so that each Kodim supervises at least 10 Koramil.¹⁶⁰ It is not yet clear whether new Kodam will be established to manage the three newly created provinces in Papua, or how their responsibility will be assigned to the two existing Kodam.

Second, these new commands are to be staffed by permanently stationing outside non-organic troops in Papua. The army territorial expansion faces obvious human resources challenges, requiring thousands of soldiers and support staff. Furthermore, the troops must be combat-ready, given the immense security challenges stemming from the armed insurgency and social unrest. General Andika's solution to this manpower shortage is to integrate non-organic troops stationed in Papua for ad-hoc operations, into the territorial commands to serve as 'Organic Unit Taskforces.'¹⁶¹

Finally, the new plan seeks to improve the military's "social communication" by increasing the recruitment of local Papuan soldiers to serve as Community Guidance NCOs (Bintara Pembina Desa, *Babinsa*).¹⁶² This measure builds on existing TNI programs that have recruited over 1,000 Papuans for the Special Autonomy Babinsa (TNI) since 2020.¹⁶³ These cadets undergo military and ideological training in various Kodam across Java.¹⁶⁴ Upon their return to Papua, the *babinsa*

prominent role as the spokesperson regarding insurgent-related incidents in areas around Freeport and Blok Wabu, Intan Jaya.

¹⁵⁸ The army's infrastructure expansion in West Papua was followed by other military branches. In 2018, the Navy started to build its third regional navy command base, Mako Koarmada III, in Sorong. In March 2022, the Air Force began to build a new base, also in Sorong. See "TNI AU Akan Bangun Pangkalan Udara di Sorong, Papua Barat," suarasulsel.id, 16 March 2022.

¹⁵⁹ Eight Kodim in Papua that are still under construction are: Preparatory Kodim Keerom, Preparatory Kodim Nduga, Preparatory Kodim Lanny Jaya, Preparatory Kodim Intan Jaya, Preparatory Kodim Waropen, Preparatory Kodim Puncak, Preparatory Kodim Asmat, and Preparatory Kodim Mappi.

¹⁶⁰ "Panglima TNI Akui Jumlah kodim di Papua Kurang," antaranews.com, 1 December 2021.

¹⁶¹ Unlike the previous deployment with an undisclosed location, the announcement in June 2022 of Raider troop deployment in Papua was transparent. The TNI announced that 400 soldiers from Yonif Raider 321/GT had been tasked to reinforce preparatory Kodim and Koramil in Nduga and Lanny Jaya. "Kasdam XVII/Cenderawasih Pimpin Penerimaan Satgas Organik Baru di Papua," kilaspapua.com, 22 June 2022.

¹⁶² The *babinsa* are widely viewed as the village-based eyes and ears of military intelligence. They are supervised by Kodim, or Koramil in their assigned areas

¹⁶³ The recruitment and training programme for Bintara Otsus in West Papua cost Rp.72 billion (\$4,805,704) which will be covered by the West Papua special autonomy fund. Once the recruits officially become Bintara (NCOs) their salary will be paid by the state. See "Biaya Pendidikan Secaba Otsus TNI AD OAP Butuh 72 M," papakini.co, 3 August 2020.

¹⁶⁴ "Pesan Kasad Bintara Otsus Harus Cinta Indonesia," pauadalamberita.com, 13 June 2022.

are attached to army territorial commands and tasked with performing a range of functions. These include monitoring local communities and gaining trust from local leaders to exchange information about rebel activities. As part of the new ‘softer’ approach, *babinsa* in Papua have also been performing social work in communities, including teaching school and leading cleaning drives.¹⁶⁵

By expanding the permanent military structures that already exist in other parts of Indonesia, General Andika seeks to make Papua “normal.”¹⁶⁶ This is meant to achieve two objectives. One is to improve physical security in the restive region and guard Jakarta’s large-scale infrastructure projects that are now a frequent target for armed groups. The other is to rehabilitate the military’s image with Papuans and improve the ‘perception’ of security. Conspicuously absent from recent announcements are the customary vows to ‘crush’ the armed groups. In fact, General Andika insists that with the planned “normalization” of Papua, security can be improved without causing casualties.¹⁶⁷

While there is broad support for General Andika’s promise to phase out ad hoc deployment of non-organic troops, his plans for permanent military expansion in Papua have received a mixed reaction.¹⁶⁸ Its supporters claim that the plan offers an opportunity to improve discipline for stationed troops to prevent predatory behaviour. Recruitment of Papuan soldiers can also lower language and cultural barriers that have hindered effective communication with local residents.

But Papuan rights activists are sceptical that the plan to increase military presence in Papua can bring about any positive change as long as it ignores the long history of state-led violence and abuse towards indigenous communities.¹⁶⁹ They claim that expanding army presence will only lead to further exploitation of Papuan resources, and an influx of migration, along with government regulation of information and communication in Papua.¹⁷⁰

Critics also fear that permanently stationing non-organic troops with egregious records of human rights violations will exacerbate conflict between indigenous Papuans and security forces, as seen in the 2020 violence in Intan Jaya. Over the past two years, there have been several instances of popular resistance to the construction of new commands. In 2021, hundreds of demonstrators protested the construction of a new Kodim in Tamberauw, West Papua and the deployment of Babinsa in the kabupaten.¹⁷¹ In 2020 and 2021, student coalitions in Paniai and Memberamo Tengah also rejected the construction of new army posts, fearing the potential intimidation and human rights abuse perpetrated by soldiers who are going to be stationed there.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁵ “Minim Tenaga Pengajar, Babinsa TNI Jadi Guru di SD Puncak Jaya Papua,” iNewsPapua.id, 12 February 2021; “Papua Bersih, Aman, Damai dan Sejahtera, Kodim 1709/Yawa Berasama Masyarakat Bersih-Bersih Pantai,” kodam17cenderawasih-tniad.mil.id, 12 May 2022.

¹⁶⁶ “Panglima TNI Menggelar Konferensi Pers Pembentukan Kodim, Lanal dan Lanud Di Wilayah Papua,” Puspen TNI, Youtube.com, 4 December 2021.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ “Imparsial dan Komnas HAM Dukung Wacana Penarikan Pasukan Non-Organik Papua,” tempo.co, 18 December 2021.

¹⁶⁹ “Harapan dari Papua untuk Jenderal TNI Andika Perkasa,” merdeka.com, 8 November 2021.

¹⁷⁰ “Seruan Moral Dewan Gereja Papua, Mensikapi Kondisi Papua, Termasuk Agenda Pemekaran 4 Daerah Otonom Baru,” mediatransformasi.com, 21 March 2022.

¹⁷¹ “Warga Tamberauw, Papua Barat Tolak Kehadiran Militer,” republik.co.id, 15 April 2021.

¹⁷² “Mahasiswa Paniai Tolak Kehadiran Pos Militer di Bibida,” suarapapua.com, 19 November 2021.

New military posts have also become a primary target for attack by the TPNPB. On 2 September 2021, dozens of assailants armed with traditional weapons attacked a preparatory military post in Aifat Selatan, Maybrat *kabupaten*, in West Papua province, killing four soldiers and stealing four firearms. The regional army commander said that the attackers were not TPNPB but locals from Maybrat who were agitated by the presence of TNI soldiers.¹⁷³ A new army post in Suru-Suru *distrik*, Yahukimo, was attacked multiple times from November to December 2021 by a new TPNPB group led by Tendius Gwijangge. This pattern suggests that at least in the short-term, the military's territorial expansion is likely to be accompanied by more violence by armed groups looking for high profile targets and weapons to steal.

Mass recruitment of Papuans to serve as *babinsa*, has been welcomed by indigenous rights groups as a source of youth employment but its implementation warrants caution as it can exacerbate ethnic and tribal tensions.¹⁷⁴ In 2021, a police initiative for recruitment of indigenous Papuans was marred by violent protests from rejected candidates who claimed that majority of accepted cadets were non-Papuan.¹⁷⁵ Even if the military's recruitment process ensures selection of indigenous Papuans, it must also consider the potential for intra-Papuan conflict. Thus far, recruitment has taken place in coastal cities and has thus been biased toward educated Papuans who live there.¹⁷⁶ Assigning Papuan personnel with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds in highland villages where the TPNPB operates may prove counter-productive and reinforce prejudices that coastal Papuans are pro-government while the highlanders are pro-independence.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Since 2018, the TPNPB has unleashed an unprecedented level of violence in Papua. Their attacks have become frequent and more deadly, targeting of civilians has increased and the geographic coverage of TPNPB activity in the central highlands has expanded to regions that had seen little insurgent violence in the past. There also has been a qualitative shift in TPNPB tactics. In the past, their attacks on security forces were limited to opportunistic ambushes; they are now actively engaging Indonesian security forces in battle over territorial control in clashes that last for days.

The single most important factor enabling increased aggression by TPNPB fighters is their ability to acquire more weapons by raiding and stealing from a growing number of army posts, cross-border trafficking and illegal sale of government-issued weapons from rogue security officers. Armed groups fund these expensive weapons purchases by extorting local government officials and private companies with threats of violence and by skimming local development funds with the help of officials sympathetic to their cause. These access points for TPNPB's funding are likely to increase with the proliferation of local governments and administrators that is bound to take place due to the creation of three new provinces.

The government has responded to the rapidly deteriorating security situation by trying to improve the optics of control in Papua rather than by implementing a well-planned

¹⁷³ "Motif Penyerangan Pos Koramil Kisor Papua: Gerah Ada TNI," cnnindonesia.com, 7 September 2021.

¹⁷⁴ "Ketua MRPB Harap Penerimaan Bintara Afirmasi Otsus Terus Berlanjut," gardapapua.com, 25 January 2022.

¹⁷⁵ "Tak Lulus SIP 2021, Anggota Polri OAP Protes di Mapolda dan Rumah Wagub Papua," iNewsPapua.id, 13 March 2021.

¹⁷⁶ "Enam Bintara Abit Dikjurba Otsus TNI AD Untuk Papua Barat Melaksanakan OJT di Kodim 0721/Blora," blorakab.go.id, 6 August 2021.

counterinsurgency strategy to pursue and apprehend armed groups in their jungle strongholds. High-profile attacks by the TPNPB are met with ad-hoc troop deployment, large-scale military operations in heavily populated areas or changing the official designation of armed groups.

So far, this strategy has proven counterproductive. The mounting presence of inadequately trained soldiers assigned to Papua on short tours of duty has done little to check TPNPB's growth. Instead, it has resulted in a string of human rights violations, exacerbating already high levels of public resentment towards Indonesian security forces.

The TNI chief's new security approach for Papua seeks to address past failures by reducing reliance on outside troops and building a permanent military presence in the region through local recruitment. But it is based on a flawed assumption that replicating in Papua the military structures and functions that exist in the rest of Indonesia will generate the same level of popular support for the TNI.

Given the history of violence and abuse by security forces towards indigenous communities, tasking armed soldiers with teaching school and sweeping roads is unlikely to dramatically change the popular perception in Jakarta's favour. If the new plan is to have any chance of success, the government needs to demonstrate its commitment to ending impunity for past abuses and preventing future harm against civilians in Papua.

To this end, investigations on gross human rights violations have to be prioritized, if not fast-tracked, particularly for high-profile cases, such as the murder of pastor Yeremia Zanambani and his two nephews in 2020. Those who are proven guilty, including soldiers and their commanding officers, need to be prosecuted and punished to the fullest extent of the law. The government also needs to work with local officials to return internally displaced residents to their homes. In doing so, the government should use civil-public institutions to provide aid and assistance rather than relying on security forces.

Moving forward, measures need to be put in place to improve accountability and training of military troops stationed in Papua. The TNI should be asked to make the substance and timing of its planned expansion transparent to the Indonesian public, including in Papua, through open hearings in the parliament. Pre-deployment briefings for soldiers assigned to Papua should be improved by including input from those who have already served there as well as from independent actors such as local NGOs and Papuan cultural organisations. There is also an urgent need to ensure that soldiers deployed in Papua are adequately paid and well equipped to prevent predatory behaviour against local residents that has long been a source of conflict and resentment.

These military measures must also be accompanied by a broader government effort to stem the flow of weapons to the TPNPB. This involves improving supervision of the use of public funds at *distrik*-level governments and the Dana Desa to prevent local officials from siphoning funds to the TPNPB and facilitate the purchase of firearms; and stricter monitoring of illegal weapons sales by rogue security officials and cross-border arms trafficking from PNG and the Philippines.

Finally, in response to TPNPB's efforts to be taken seriously as a political organisation, international human rights groups should hold it to account on its stated commitment to uphold Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and call for it to end the targeting of civilians in Papua.

INSTITUTE FOR POLICY ANALYSIS OF CONFLICT (IPAC)

The Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) was founded in 2013 on the principle that accurate analysis is a critical first step toward preventing violent conflict. Our mission is to explain the dynamics of conflict—why it started, how it changed, what drives it, who benefits—and get that information quickly to people who can use it to bring about positive change.

In areas wracked by violence, accurate analysis of conflict is essential not only to peaceful settlement but also to formulating effective policies on everything from good governance to poverty alleviation. We look at six kinds of conflict: communal, land and resource, electoral, vigilante, extremist and insurgent, understanding that one dispute can take several forms or progress from one form to another. We send experienced analysts with long-established contacts in the area to the site to meet with all parties, review primary written documentation where available, check secondary sources and produce in-depth reports, with policy recommendations or examples of best practices where appropriate.

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