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Submission No 93



Inquiry into Australia's Relations with Indonesia

Enclosed is a copy of the report referred to at the hearing on Monday last about the continuing immigration of Indonesian into West Papua. The questions came from Senator Tim Dwyer. I have been unsuccessful in recovering a copy of the report sent to Dwyer's office about the departure of Border Voluntary Force Papua New Guinea.

Organisation: Australian West Papua Association, Central Highlands

The points made in the message were as follows:

Contact Person: Sr Rita Hayes (Chair)

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- 1/ The people of the highlands in the western district of New Guinea established themselves into small villages on the point of land provided to each group. They have preserved their culture and their sophisticated gardens and in this way they have their own food. The main problem now is that the soil has become depleted and they have no knowledge or resources to remedy the matter.
- 2/ With the Indonesian occupation these people have had a change in their food and Indonesian military personnel are stationed right along the border. The result is to face extreme danger and almost certain death.
- 3/ If only at the hands of the military they had not been they would have had a great experience and possible result through lack of basic resources.

I ask that you give your serious consideration to the plight of these people and until such time as there is political stability in West Papua that they be helped to live their lives with adequate facilities in the established border villages.

Signed – (Sr) Rita Hayes

Chair

Australian West Papua Association - Central Highlands

Please let me know if there is any more information I need to send and thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rita Hayes".

(Sr) Rita Hayes

Courier Mail (Australia)
Migrant influx sparks Papua fears
Greg Poulgrain
22may02

THE Indonesian army is secretly funding a massive influx of Javanese migrants into the province of West Papua, despite the Jakarta Government in January this year granting autonomy to the province, formerly known as Irian Jaya.

This rapid boost in transmigration is designed to quell Papuan nationalism, according to a high-level document leaked from Jakarta three months ago.

The document outlined several options to quell Papuan nationalism, including assassination, increased intelligence operations and the sending of transmigrants in unprecedented numbers.

The transmigration program, which operated in the 1990s, was funded by the World Bank and focused on resettling families but now the arrivals are mostly young men.

They are arriving on ships, seven ships each week, with each vessel carrying up to 1000 new arrivals. The cost of passage is paid for by the army.

After disembarking at one of the 10 main coastal cities in West Papua, the young men are given motorbikes, to be used as two-wheeled taxis. So the new arrivals have instant employment and accommodation also is arranged.

This flood of young male immigrants from Java, and sometimes Sulawesi, will destabilise the current 60-40 ratio between Papuans and non-Papuans.

Although Papuans comprise the majority of the province's three million population, they will become a minority in two years if the influx from Java is not stopped. More ominous is the possibility these young men will provide a ready-made militia in the event of social unrest.

A contingent of radical Muslim Laskar Jihad is also included among the transmigrants. According to reports from human rights sources in February, more than 3000 armed Muslims were present in two coastal towns in the most western reaches of the province.

In April, West Papuan church leaders held an emergency meeting on how to deal with this crisis.

One of the options discussed was the example of Batam, the Indonesian province adjacent to Singapore. Visitors to Batam must pay a levy of about \$50 and their stay is limited to three months.

Indeed, the central government appears only half-committed to granting autonomy to its outer islands as in the case of Batam it is now planning to resume control over the airport and seaport to generate more income for the central government.

In Papua, the reaction to the boats from Java bringing thousands of immigrants has been to accuse Jakarta of deliberately undermining the program of autonomy. The original purpose in granting autonomy - to defuse the desire for the outer regions in many areas of Indonesia to break away from the central government is being undermined by Jakarta.

-- Dr Greg Poulgrain lectures in South-East Asian history at the University of Queensland