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15th December 2008

Dr John Carter
Sub-Committee Secretary
Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Parliament of Australia
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Carter;

Indonesian Solidarity (IS) appreciates the opportunities provided by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade to make a submission to the public hearing on 6th November in Sydney. I am providing below here some further information as requested by the Chair, Senator Forshaw, regarding the human rights situation in West Papua province and the present of Indonesian troops in Merauke.

Meanwhile we would like to make a correction in the Hansard on page 68 mentioned: *Mr Waluyo - This year, yes. We got confidential information from the police in Merauke about the battalion and they were going to set up the headquarters in the national park, where they were supported by national and international activists. The information was provided by the priest, it was not by the police.*

Human Rights Report

The UN Special Representative on Human Rights, Ms Jailani, visited West Papua province. In the UN media release on 12 June 2007 mentioned: She heard credible reports of incidents that involve arbitrary detention, torture, harassment through surveillance, interference with the freedom of movement and in defenders' efforts to monitor and investigate human rights violations. She was also informed of cases where human rights defenders were threatened with prosecution by members of the police and the military. It was alleged that when defenders have attempted to register

their complaints, this has been denied and the defenders threatened. She is also concerned about complaints that defenders working for the preservation of the environment and the right over land and natural resources frequently receive threats from private actors with powerful economic interests, but are granted no protection by the police. She is particularly disturbed by allegations that when defenders expose abuse of authority or other forms of human rights violations committed by the security apparatus, they are labelled as separatists in order to undermine their credibility. The Special Representative believes that this trend places human rights defenders at greater risk and must be discouraged by the concerned authorities¹.

Dewan Adat Papua (DAP) is a council of Indigenous Papuans, based in Jayapura, the capital of Papua, and has branches throughout Papua. DAP organised a ceremony to mark the UN International Day of Indigenous Peoples at Sinapuk Stadium in Wamena, Papua on the 9th of August 2008. The ceremony ran peacefully, involving around 10,000 members of DAP and visitors, under the strict monitoring of the State security apparatus. After the event Mr. Opinus Tabuni (38) was found dead outside the stadium with a clear wound in his stomach, Mr. Tabuni was a member of the DAP. Although an autopsy and identification of the weapon have taken place, the police have not proceeded with further investigations to this day.

Military Presence in Merauke

As result of creation sub-districts of the district of Merauke into new districts (know as pemekaran) the status of Kodim (Military District Command) became KOREM (the Sub-Region Military Command). The present several military battalions in Merauke such as Battalion Infantry know as Yonif 752/Vira Yudha Sakti with 650 troops replaced the Battallion Infantry 320/ White Rino on 18th November 2008, Battallion Infantry 321/Galuh Taruna, Batallion Infantry 755/Yalet²; the Navi Force Headquarter Command know as Danlanal and the Air Force Headquarter Command know as Danlanud³. Meanwhile the total population of Marauke in March 2007 was 174,685 people.

¹ Special Representative of the Secretary General on the Situation of Human rights Defenders Concludes visit to Indonesia 12 June 2007, <http://www.unhchr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/view01/5B4138C66CE4B53BC12572F8005C4AC8?opendocument>

² On the report title: Hilangnya Rasa Aman (the Loss of Feeling Secure), Father Wempie Fatubun, MSC, The Office of Justice and Peace, Merauke, on page 17 mentioned: In 2006 a member of Kostrad (the Indonesian Army's Strategic Reserve Command) 755/Yalet abused Mr Yulianu Ndimar until death, he came from village of Onggaya, district Merauke. Mr Ndimar was accused a member of separatist organisation by Kostrad.

³ On the Indonesian National Army know as TNI website is mention on Tuesday 18 November 2008 the battalion 752/Vira Yudha arrived on the port of Merauke to replace batallion Infantry 320/ White Rino.

Environment

Out of the 550,000 hectares of forests felled for plantations in Papua, 480,000 hectares had been allocated for growing palm oil⁴. In addition the environmental group, Greenpeace said Palm oil companies are clearing massive swathes of untouched forest in Indonesia's remote easternmost Papua region⁵. In addition the Bin Laden family alone has planned a 500,000 hectare rice plantation near Merauke. Other big plantation investments are proposed⁶.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely



Dr John L Rawson

Director

⁴ Forests losing battle against plantations Jakarta Post - October 30, 2008

⁵ Palm oil clearing swathes of forest in Papua: Greenpeace, Agence France Presse - October 10, 2008

⁶ Kemilau Emas indonesia Timur, 33/XXXVII 06 Oktober 2008,
<http://majalah.tempointeraktif.com/id/arsip/2008/10/06/LU/mbm.20081006.LU128414.id.html>