



# **tears of the oppressed**

**...a Christian human rights organisation**

PO Box 188, Calwell ACT 2905 Australia  
Phone + 61 2 6260 3315 Fax +61 2 6260 3245  
[www.tearsoftheoppressed.org](http://www.tearsoftheoppressed.org)

## **SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA ON THE FRAMEWORK FOR SECURITY COOPERATION**

February 23, 2007

### Contents:

1. Introduction
  2. Our framework for analysis
  3. Tears of the Oppressed's response to the agreement
  4. Concerns about the National Interest Analysis
  5. The agreement as a "benchmark"
  6. Comments on Article 2 – unclear consequences
  7. Separatism as a misnomer
  8. A theological note about dhimmitude
  9. Recommendations
- Annex – Tears of the Oppressed Position Paper on West Papua

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**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 *Tears of the Oppressed* is an interdenominational Christian human rights organisation. Its primary focus is religious freedom, particularly religious freedom for minority Christian communities suffering severe religious persecution in other parts of the world. For more information about our organisation, please go to [www.tearsoftheoppressed.org](http://www.tearsoftheoppressed.org).
- 1.2 *Tears of the Oppressed* expresses its warm thanks to the Australian Government and the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties for the opportunity to comment on the Framework for Security Cooperation, known also as the Lombok Agreement.

**2. Our framework for analysis**

- 2.1. In accordance with our organisation's charter, we seek to analyse the security agreement with the following groups in mind:
- § Christians throughout Indonesia, who have suffered/are suffering at the hands of Islamic extremists and local authorities alike, due to their Christian affiliation or identity,
  - § West Papuans, particularly clergy and prominent church representatives,
  - § Australians engaged in human rights and/or church work in and with Indonesia, and
  - § The Australian Government more generally.

**2.2 The Indonesian Christian community**

- 2.2.1 We take an interest in the outcome of the treaty due to our association with churches and individuals who have suffered discrimination and oppression in Indonesia. Christians are a minority of some 10-12% of the Indonesian population. On the whole, they are very conscious of living in a Muslim-majority society and at times face considerable prejudice and feel themselves treated as second-class citizens.
- 2.2.2 We are aware of the involvement of military, police and security forces, as well as local civilian agitators within Indonesian communities, who are responsible for human rights violations against Christians and other non-Muslim peoples. These violations, often motivated by religious (Islamic) zeal, include:
- § closure of churches, forcing restrictions on freedom of worship
  - § church buildings attacked, damaged, sprayed with gunfire, or burned to the ground
  - § challenges to the celebration of Easter and Christmas in local churches
  - § false accusations levelled against Christians, resulting in charges against them
  - § attacks on and killing of Christians (clergy, community leaders, lawyers, church members, children), in the name of Islamic jihad
  - § confiscation of Christian homes by Muslim mobs
  - § harassment of Christian clergy and their families
  - § Excessive surveillance of Christian clergy and their families
  - § Threats and intimidation
  - § Terrorist/ jihad warrior attacks on Christian-majority villages
  - § Christian disaster victims prevented from receiving aid assistance
- 2.2.3 Note, too, that these violations are not limited to the province of West Papua, which has been the focus of much media attention over the past 12 months. Muslim-Christian relations have been tense elsewhere, particularly in Central Sulawesi and West Java over this same period and in years previously. The Committee needs to be aware that

these violations are ongoing, and that the involvement – or lack of intervention – by police and military is a serious human rights issue for Indonesian Christians. While there is evidence of some improvements in some places in the past 12 months<sup>1</sup>, the Committee must be fully informed about the fact that many members of Indonesia's security forces are engaged in such practices. Any cooperative security agreement entered with Indonesia must occur with the knowledge that there are serious problems of corruption, lack of discipline, collusion with extremists, and double standards within the Indonesian security forces. We hope that Australia's cooperative approach with Indonesian forces intends to address these things. If not – and there is no evidence in the National Interest Analysis nor the treaty itself to recognise that these issues even exist – the Australian Parliament should not even consider ratifying the treaty. We urge the Committee to consider how cooperation with Indonesia's corrupt military and police forces may affect Australia's international standing and ultimately, Australia's human rights record.

### **2.3 The Australian Christian community**

- 2.3.1 We include, for the Committee's review, *Tears of the Oppressed's* position statement on Papua in the annex of this paper. The situation in West Papua has been documented in many ways in recent years; the allegations alone are alarming. But as the province is closed to journalists, human rights monitors, and many non-government organisations (who could otherwise provide aid and assist with Papuan development), it is difficult to judge whether any recent improvement has taken place. Indeed, the Indonesian Government will frequently say, "Human rights abuses have occurred there in the past, but we are putting a stop to them now" or "they are no longer happening now". If this is truly the case, then Indonesia should be willing to open up the province for the world to see the noble paradigm of harmony it has achieved.
- 2.3.2 Among the Australian Christian community there is substantial concern that the Australian Government has turned a blind eye to the situation in Papua for the sake of achieving the broader security agreement. The indigenous, Melanesian people of Papua are majority Christian, and correspondingly, Australian Christians feel a good deal of empathy for them as our like-minded, near neighbours who are experiencing poverty and distress. (You will find a good many Australian, practising Christians supporting human rights and development in West Papua through various organisations and churches.)
- 2.3.3 Likewise, many Australian churches have links with Indonesian churches throughout the archipelago – as they do with churches all around the world. These church members are equally concerned about what is happening to their fellow believers in these places. For example, Australia-Indonesia church partnerships have been instrumental in peace-building and development in places like the Maluku Islands, following the Muslim-Christian violence of 1999-2001.

### **3. Tears of the Oppressed's response to the agreement**

- 3.1 *Tears of the Oppressed* supports in principle the formalisation of security arrangements with Indonesia, particularly given the diplomatic row of 2006. On this level, the agreement is a significant achievement and defines relations between Australia and Indonesia more clearly. We acknowledge a number of very positive aspects of the treaty, including:

§ An undertaking to settle disputes by peaceful means – Article 2(4)

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<sup>1</sup> For example, we recorded a case late last year where police stepped in and prevented the closure of a church in West Java – previously almost all our reports from the area noted that police or military had been observed standing by when Muslim mobs attacked churches to close them down. In another example, some security forces were instrumental in protecting Christian congregations meeting for worship over Christmas.

- § A commitment to jointly eradicate extremism at its roots and causes – Article 3(8): when implemented at the local level in Indonesia, this ought to improve the lives of Christians who are suffering for their faith at the hands of Muslim extremists
- § A commitment to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and WMD - Article 3 (16)
- § A commitment to joint disaster relief – Article 3 (18,19)
- § A commitment to civil society interaction between the two countries – Article 3(21): This clause could be used to argue for continued interaction and new initiatives between Australian and Indonesian churches, NGOs and charities, especially those who are supporting the oppressed and marginalised who may be facing significant human serious security issues (e.g. Christians and other religious minorities who are being persecuted for their faith, victims of disaster, development concerns).

3.2 However, it needs to be said that we have serious concerns about the practical implications of some elements contained within it. In essence, these are:

- § the bias towards territorial concerns and the absence of an explicit human rights awareness in the treaty
- § the fact that this approach (i.e. the absence of human rights) might be duplicated in treaties with other nations
- § the unknown consequences of Article 2(3), and the seeming lack of protection for human rights workers, church leaders with a relationship with Indonesia, and others engaged in addressing difficulties within Indonesian society
- § the appearance that the treaty caters to Indonesian demands and priorities as the expense of Australia's values and reputation.

#### 4. Concerns about the National Interest Analysis

4.1 **Insufficient analysis:** In our view, the National Interest Analysis of the treaty is weak. Rather than offering useful analysis on what has been called a significant, “benchmark” treaty, it ultimately achieves little more than the restatement of items in the agreement.

4.2 Despite the agreement's genesis some years ago, it is now impossible to view the treaty without reference to the diplomatic upsets of 2006, following Australia's acceptance of the Papuan asylum seekers. Yet the National Interest Analysis fails to comment on any aspect of this most recent episode in our bilateral relations, nor the implications for our near-neighbour, West Papua, and those in Australia who have an existing relationship with West Papua. And yet West Papua is specifically mentioned at point 11 in the National Interest Analysis, quoting the Parties' determination to recognise Indonesia's territorial sovereignty over the province (which we note the Australian Government has always done publicly, in any case). We can only assume that

- a) the document is deliberately downplaying the issue, or
- b) the analysis is highly inadequate.

4.3 Either way, we feel the lack of substance in the analysis runs the risk of misleading the Committee as to the impact of the agreement.

#### 5. The agreement as a ‘benchmark’

5.1 According to the Hon. Alexander Downer's letter to the Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties,<sup>2</sup> this agreement with Indonesia will set the benchmark standard for other agreements in the region. This word ‘benchmark’ is also used in the National Interest Analysis to describe the agreement's significance, in terms of contributing to the stability and prosperity of both countries, in the light of traditional and non-traditional security threats.

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<sup>2</sup> Downloadable at the JSCOT parliamentary website.

- 5.2 We contend that the application of the word 'benchmark' is somewhat inappropriate, even disturbing, given the agreement's lack of emphasis on human rights concerns. Although the agreement deliberately sets itself within a UN/international legal framework, in terms of it being an expression of the Parties' desire to live in peace with one another, and while the treaty does not *exclude* human rights as such, the text does not specifically address human rights as being relevant to the cooperative security efforts described within the agreement.
- 5.3 This is very important with regard to a treaty with Indonesia. We are two culturally different – and culturally diverse – nations. We have seen this clearly in recent times over Indonesian cartoons, criminal punishments, law and justice, refugee issues, and of course, over Indonesia's use of the death penalty. Australia and Indonesia are culturally very different, with different values derived from our vastly different religious and social heritages.
- 5.4 In this context, human rights must be upheld as a universal value system according dignity to human beings. When values conflict, both Australia and Indonesia can point outwards to internationally accepted human rights standards. Insistence on a stronger emphasis on human rights will offer greater protection to Australia under the treaty.
- 5.5 We note with concern, however, that Indonesia is a Party to both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights<sup>3</sup> and the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural rights<sup>4</sup> but not a signatory. In each case its declaration concerns territorial integrity. The underlying attitude displayed here reflects Indonesia's continued adherence to its well-known, long-term, nationalistic goals. In our view, the Lombok agreement also reflects a bias towards Indonesia's territorial concerns - rather than Australia's interests – and certainly over and above human rights for all. There is no attempt in the National Interest Analysis to explain Indonesia's suitability as a partner in a security agreement with Australia, in terms of Indonesia's compliance with international law; rather the agreement assumes Indonesia's compliance since it "recognises" the principles and Charter of the United Nations. We would therefore like to see specific language in the treaty that will induce Indonesia to adhere to human rights principles.
- 5.6 In terms of security, a human rights emphasis is no more important than when Indonesian military, police and associated security forces are known to be perpetrating human rights abuses and indeed, are victims of human rights violations themselves<sup>5</sup>. If,

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.ohchr.org/english/countries/ratification/4\\_1.htm](http://www.ohchr.org/english/countries/ratification/4_1.htm). Indonesia has accession status and its declaration on the covenant is as follows: "With reference to Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia declares that, consistent with the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation Among States, and the relevant paragraph of the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action of 1993, the words "the right of self-determination" appearing in this article do not apply to a section of people within a sovereign independent state and can not be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent states."

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/english/countries/ratification/3.htm>. Indonesia has accession status and its declaration on the covenant is as follows: "With reference to Article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Government of [the] Republic of Indonesia declares that, consistent with the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States, and the relevant paragraph of the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action of 1993, the words "the right of self-determination" appearing in this article do not apply to a section of people within a sovereign independent state and can not be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent states."

<sup>5</sup> Part of the reason why the military is so deeply engaged in money-making in Papua – through extortion, providing security services to mine companies, involvement in the illegal logging industry, etc –

under the security agreement, Australia will be assisting the Indonesian military with technology development and transfer – will Australia be merely equipping Indonesia to become a more effective human rights abuser? Since human rights standards are not explicit in the agreement, this question needs to be asked. On the other hand, if certain human rights standards for the transfer were stated in the text, we would be far more comfortable with Australia's part in cooperative security efforts of this nature.

- 5.7 If this treaty is in fact considered a benchmark treaty – a precedent for other treaties - our concern is that the conspicuous absence of human rights in the security context might be duplicated in our relations with other nations in Asia and the Pacific. We wish to alert the Committee to this fact and advocate the explicit inclusion of human rights implementation in this and other bilateral security agreements from now on.
- 5.8 It needs to be said at this juncture that human rights violations – whether they be civil and political, or economic social and cultural – are a grave concern throughout our region, and indeed affect the stability and prosperity of several nations close to Australia. *Any regional security treaty heralded as a “benchmark” should surely demonstrate a strong awareness of human rights and consciously work towards their implementation.*

## **6. Comments on Article 2: Unclear consequences**

- 6.1 We wish to alert the Committee to the fact that Article 2 (3) has been a serious subject of discussion amongst human rights advocates like ourselves because of the ambiguity of the text and what it may mean for us in our work. We feel that Article 2(3) is not only referring to those who may openly or violently advocate the independence of certain provinces within Indonesia, but also intends to target those who seek to highlight human rights abuse committed in Indonesia.
- 6.2 Of great concern to us is the fact that Australian citizens working in ministry with churches or with other organisations as human rights defenders, as well as Indonesian activists and refugees residing in Australia, may be at risk if Australia pledges non-interference.
- 6.3 Indeed, there are a number of Indonesian human rights workers and clergy – both from West Papua and other parts of Indonesia - who have found asylum in Australia over the years, and who may still wish to speak out about the news they are receiving from people on the ground in Indonesia. For everyone's sake, it is morally right and just that they have the freedom to do so. Before the signing of the agreement, there was no question that they had this freedom. But the text of the agreement and the conclusion of the National Interest Analysis raises significant concerns.
- 6.4 We note that at point 19 in the National Interest Analysis, DFAT makes the claim that Article 2(3) of the agreement “would not prevent peaceful demonstrations in accordance with the law, political commentary, or free speech from occurring.” However, no evidence or example is offered to support this claim. This *is*, exactly, what we fear would be prevented by the wording of the current agreement. Read in association with Article 2(3), which says,

*The Parties, consistent with their respective domestic laws and international obligations, shall not in any manner support or participate in activities by any person or entity which constitutes a threat to the stability, sovereignty, or territorial integrity of the other Party, including by those who seek to use its*

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is that Indonesian soldiers are not properly paid and conditions are poor. Their basic rights as workers are denied them; this is contributing to the abuse of others' rights as they try to compensate for their own lack and look to the “get rich” schemes available to them. Higher standards in this regard, accompanied by regulations regarding their involvement in these schemes, is part of the solution to the oppression of the Papuan people.

*territory for encouraging or committing such activities, including separatism, in the territory of the other Party*

the National Interest Analysis would seem to be asserting the exact opposite of the treaty itself, since the Parties appears to pledge a commitment *not* to support those who engage in “activities” that threaten the other Party. It would seem to us that the clause violates international law – on the one hand committing the Parties to uphold the law, and on the other, excluding the exercise of certain recognised rights, such as the right to self-determination, freedom of association and movement, and freedom of speech. Moreover, those “activities” and “threats” mentioned are not defined and require clarification. What Indonesia culturally perceives as a threat may be no threat to Australia at all; but would Australia be forced to carry out repressive action of any sort against its own people – be it closing down a demonstration, deporting refugees, or publicly condemning individuals who speak out about Indonesia - if Indonesia called on the treaty commitment to do so? The National Interest Analysis does not even begin to address these important questions.

## **7. Separatism as a misnomer**

- 7.1 The fact that the word “separatism” has been used in the agreement at all is a deliberate attempt to address the independence issue in West Papua, in the wake of the East Timor experience. No doubt there are real, live “separatists” for whom this title is appropriate. But in relation to West Papua, “separatist” is a word that has been applied by Indonesian authorities to any person whose support for West Papua is seen as an insult or a threat, in attempt to stigmatise them. “Separatism” immediately implies association with the violent OPM independence movement of the past. “Separatist” is also used in a derogatory way to discredit those who are perceived to tarnish Indonesia’s national image in some way – such as by pointing out flaws in Indonesia’s governance of West Papua, the negative behaviour of the military, and so forth.
- 7.2 While many Papuan Christian clergy would like to see relief from the oppressive Indonesian military presence in Papua, most are not “separatists” as such, nor even advocate for independence. Instead, there has been a strong unifying move amongst Christians to proclaim Papua as a ‘Land of Peace’, and many Christians are working hard to that end instead. In recent times there has been a strong emphasis on non-violent responses to oppressive actions, conflict resolution, and peace-building in the Papuan churches.
- 7.3 Even so, accusations of “separatism” still seriously affect the lives and work of Christian clergy and churches in West Papua *and* in Australia. Several Australian church denominations, including the Uniting Church of Australia, have sister churches in West Papua and assist with the development needs of Papuan communities through church channels. In the past year, at least one highly respected Australian clergyman was labelled “separatist” by Indonesian government people speaking to the Indonesian media. We were saddened to hear of this allegation as the Christian minister in question is above reproach in every way, and has had significant input into lifting the spirits of the churches in Papua, facilitating development, and contributing to peace in Papua over many years – and to our knowledge, has never advocated Papuan independence.
- 7.4 Papuan clergy who speak out against the oppression of their people are frequently stigmatised in this way. Those who speak out usually find themselves under constant surveillance and harassment by local security forces and paid informers. This is the experience of a number of clergymen, from various Christian denominations, known to us. We wish to stress to the Committee that speaking out against injustice and working towards justice and peace is part of the Christian calling and theology; it is not a question of whether clergy and church members can avoid the consequences by “quietening down”. They will continue to act as they feel compelled to do, by nature of their calling and commitment to their principles.

- 7.5 We are therefore wary of the inclusion of the word “separatism” in Article 2(3) since it is so liberally and frequently applied to those who do not deserve the title. It would be devastating if the Australian Government were committed to non-intervention on so-called “separatist issues”, and an Australian church worker visiting Indonesia was labelled a “separatist” and detained while on Indonesian soil. Such a person would then be at the mercy of the Indonesian justice system. It is self-evident that the Indonesian justice system does not operate with the same values as the Australian justice system; the potential for mistreatment of Australian human rights defenders, peace workers, and church members under Indonesian law is considerable.
- 7.6 The National Interest Analysis fails to take into account Indonesian notions of “separatism”, and their potential impact on those Australians and Indonesians working to address the injustices that exist within Indonesian society.

## **8. A theological note about dhimmitude**

- 8.1 In the event that members of the Committee have not been previously acquainted with the Islamic concept of “dhimmitude”, we wish to draw it to the Committee’s attention as a point of consideration in any discussion of Australia-Indonesia relations.
- 8.2 “Dhimmitude” is the status proscribed for non-Muslims in classical Islamic thinking. In essence, it involves the Muslim expectation that non-Muslims will assume a subservient status to Muslims and comply with Muslim wishes. Historically, the “dhimmis” were the Christians and Jews vanquished by Muslim oppressors. The dhimmis were those who, following jihad, were allowed to live – provided they continued to serve Muslim interests and pay tribute taxes (jizya). Effectively, dhimmis assumed a lowly status in all their dealings with their Muslim overlords, in order to save their lives.
- 8.3 To quote “Dhimmi Watch”<sup>6</sup>, a website recording and monitoring the application of dhimmitude around the world today:  
 Dhimmitude is the status that Islamic law, the Sharia, mandates for non-Muslims, primarily Jews and Christians. Dhimmis, "protected people," are free to practice their religion in a Sharia regime, but are made subject to a number of humiliating regulations designed to enforce the Qur'an's command that they "feel themselves subdued" (Sura 9:29). This denial of equality of rights and dignity remains part of the Sharia.
- 8.4 Although the Government of Indonesia is not under Sharia law as such, our monitoring of the situation for Indonesian religious minorities has shown that this superior attitude towards non-Muslims is prevalent in Indonesia’s culture – as it is in many Muslim-majority countries - despite the Pancasila. It is simply a way of life, and entrenched attitude passed down from generation to generation. The concept of dhimmitude – while it may not be practised in Indonesia in its historical sense – can still pervade and influence relations via the expectation that non-Muslims ought to comply with the demands of Muslims.
- 8.5 In modern relations between Islam and the West, a dhimmi mentality can expose itself in a manner of relating: in refraining from criticising Muslims, their Holy Book, their Prophet, or their behaviour and activities – for fear of offending and causing an excessive reaction. Amongst non-Muslims, it can unconsciously manifest itself in a kind of self-deprecation whereby Muslims and their culture are praised by Westerners over and above anything the democratic West has to offer. Conversely, criticism by non-Muslims is received by Muslims as an insult to their religion – whether or not the criticism is actually directed at their religion. Ultimately, through the pressure of Muslim expectations and threats, the non-Muslim is forced to comply and appease the Muslim.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.jihadwatch.org/dhimmiwatch/#>

<sup>7</sup> Bat Ye’or is perhaps today’s leading expert in this area of ‘dhimmi’ research and she has written a considerable amount of material on the subject, if the Committee wishes to undertake further study.



We have observed this kind of behaviour in many countries where Christians who are oppressed try to please their oppressors.

- 8.6 During the events of 2006, there was some public concern that Australia was taking overly painful steps to appease Indonesia following the recall of the Indonesian ambassador (after Australia had made an independent and sovereign decision to grant asylum to the Papuan refugees). At the time, it did occur to members of our staff that Australia may have unthinkingly behaved like a “dhimmi” in its relationship with Indonesia, setting the course for a treaty whereby Australian interests are deferred in favour of Indonesian priorities.
- 8.7 We have already highlighted the fact that some values held by Indonesians differ from those generally held by the Australian community; it is also important to recognise that dhimmitude is alive and well throughout the world in various forms. We provide this information to the Committee for its reasonable and unbiased assessment as to whether there is in fact any element of dhimmitude in Australia-Indonesia relations, particularly in the light of the security treaty, its contents, and the significant elements that are missing.

## 9. Recommendations

- 9.1 *Tears of the Oppressed* recommends that the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties review and resolve the following issues before recommending ratification of the security agreement:

1. *That the Committee commission a second National Interest Analysis, addressing:*

- a) the effect of the treaty on Australians with an existing relationship with West Papua (e.g. individuals, refugees, Papuan migrants, churches, non-government organisations and even agencies like AusAID)
- b) the full impact of Article 2(3) in terms of the civil and political rights of Australians
- c) how the Australian Defence Forces intend to remain above reproach when cooperating with the Indonesian Forces, given the corruption, extortion, double standards and other problems which are endemic to the Indonesian Forces
- d) the impact on Australia’s international standing and reputation, following a cooperation pact with the Indonesian armed forces (since their imperfections are widely known);

2. *That the security agreement include an explicit commitment to human rights standards in the following ways:*

- a) That “human rights” be included in the preamble in the following paragraph:

Determined to comply in good faith with their obligations under generally recognized principles and rules of international law, *in particular, with regard to the implementation and maintenance of human rights.*

- b) That Article 2(3) be struck out of the agreement and replaced with an explicit commitment to the human rights of each nation’s citizens, for example:

While recognizing the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each Party, and in understanding that the Parties are democratic societies, the Parties shall respect and uphold the right of their citizens to exercise free speech, freedom of association, and freedom of conscience within each society,

in accordance with international law, with respect to actions taken by each Party under this agreement;

3. *That the committee reflect on possible scenarios where Australia's commitment to non-intervention on the grounds of "separatist" action – and the inappropriate use of the word "separatist" - may cause harm to Australians here and on Indonesian soil;*
4. *That Australia consciously resist the dhimmi mentality in its dealings with Indonesia, and review any dhimmi attitudes that may have contributed to the absence of certain elements in the agreement.*

23 February, 2007

## ANNEX: Position paper on West Papua – TEARS OF THE OPPRESSED

The 'Act of Free Choice' plebiscite of 1969, which was intended to give Papuans the right to secede from Indonesia, reinforced Indonesia's right to rule the province. However, it has since been shown by historical research and eyewitness accounts that the vote was conducted in a questionable manner, and the outcome of the vote was unrepresentative of the views of the majority of Papuans at that time.

Tears of the Oppressed acknowledges that an underlying desire for independence continues to inform Papuan politics to this day. However, Tears of the Oppressed has never played any deliberate role to support or promote independence for West Papua. In this sense we are neutral on the subject of independence. Our efforts are instead focused on bettering the immediate situation of the Papuan people, which, as it stands, is under Indonesian rule into the foreseeable future.

In this light, Tears of the Oppressed endorses the following:

- 1) **Dialogue with Jakarta.** Tears of the Oppressed upholds the value of ongoing, open dialogue between church and community leaders and the central Indonesian Government, to ensure the issues of the Papuan people are acknowledged and addressed.
- 2) **Demilitarization of Papua.** The removal of all non-organic troops from Papua will significantly alleviate the anxiety of the Papuan people. Evidence suggests that the military is responsible for many serious human rights abuses and illegal activities, including rapes, killings, beatings and the harassment and mistreatment of the indigenous population. Given the small population of Papua, the intense military presence of some 50,000 troops is provocative and unnecessary.
- 3) **Reopening of the province to foreign NGOs and journalists.** To date, Papuans have been deprived of many social and economic rights, such as the right to adequate food and water, sanitation, and education. Non-government organisations from around the world, if allowed to return, can begin to address these needs quickly, alleviating suffering and meeting needs have not been met by the Indonesian Government. Likewise, if journalists are allowed to reenter the province, faith in the transparency of the Indonesian Government, and its intentions, would be restored.
- 4) **The protection of human rights defenders.** Human rights workers have reported ongoing harassment and intimidation, and heavy surveillance by police and military. In the case of Papuans seeking to improve human rights in the province, Tears of the Oppressed endorses and will work towards the rights contained within the 1998 *Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, and urges the Indonesian Government to do likewise.
- 5) **The implementation of safeguards to protect the indigenous people.** The transmigration of people from other regions of Indonesia, particularly Java, has significantly altered the demography of West Papua. Tears of the Oppressed advocates that the status of the indigenous and tribal Papuan people should be recognized in accordance with international covenants, and as such, special measures should be taken to safeguard their rights, institutions, property, labour, culture, and environment. With the increasing Islamization of the province, protective measures should also be implemented to ensure that the Papuan people can retain their right to freely practise their Christian faith.
- 6) **Papua as a 'Land of Peace'.** Church leaders have declared Papua a Land of Peace and are concentrating their efforts on peace-building and developing social cohesion. Tears of the Oppressed supports such activities in principle and does not condone violence of any kind.