



Medical Association for Prevention of War (Australia)

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Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties

From:

The Medical Association for the Prevention of War

Concerning:

The Agreement between Australia and the Republic of Indonesia on the Framework for Security Cooperation.

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Our representatives would be pleased to speak to the Committee.

Overview of submission

In principle the Medical Association for the Prevention of War (MAPW) supports a treaty with Indonesia in the interest of good relations between neighbours. However we are very concerned about a number of issues in the treaty.

This submission focuses on two articles of particular concern. They are:

- 3.2, covering defence cooperation with the Indonesian military; and
- 3.17, concerning strengthening bilateral nuclear cooperation.



1. Article 3.2: Defence cooperation and human rights

MAPW is encouraged by the reforms in Indonesia and its move towards democracy. However the Indonesian Government appears incapable of, or unwilling to, reform the Indonesian military.

In support of this argument we draw attention to the following matters:

Past human rights abuses by the Indonesian military in all areas of the archipelago are well documented, but MAPW is concerned that these abuses are ongoing, particularly in West Papua. As recently as January of this year, reports from church leaders, human rights defenders and the Indonesia media have highlighted a military operation in the Puncak Jaya region of West Papua. This military operation has caused up to 5000 people to flee to the bush for their safety (*Jakarta Post*, 30 January 2007). Many of those who fled also face starvation as they are afraid to return and work in their food gardens. The *Jakarta Post*, 19 January 2007, reported that:

“Four Papuan refugees who were among thousands fleeing their village have reportedly died of illness. The residents fled to Ilamburawi village in Yamo district, Puncak Jaya regency, on January 16 following a security personnel manhunt for rebels who had earlier hoisted a separatist flag on Mount Kimibaga. Many refugees were in a severe state due to food shortages and suffered from various illnesses such as malaria and hepatitis.”

The US State Department's 2005 Human Rights report on Indonesia states:

“Security forces continued to commit unlawful killings of rebels, suspected rebels, and civilians in areas of separatist activity, where most politically motivated extrajudicial killings also occurred. There was evidence that the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) considered anyone killed by its forces in conflict areas to be an armed rebel. The government largely failed to hold soldiers and police accountable for such killings and other serious human rights abuses in Aceh and Papua”.

More broadly, the MAPW notes the serious costs to life and health that have been suffered by the people of West Papua because of the protracted conflict arising from incorporation into Indonesia. The most conservative estimates suggest 100,000 deaths among indigenous West Papuans, without considering other health effects; or health effects or death among transmigrants or military personnel. We urge the Australian Government to use the opportunity of the treaty to support a flexible approach to negotiations with a view to settling to this long-running conflict with its unacceptable costs to health.

MAPW believes that before the treaty with Indonesian is ratified there should be a commitment by the Indonesian Government to allow human rights monitors free access to West Papua. MAPW would also encourage the Australian Government to send a Parliamentary fact finding mission to investigate human rights in West Papua.



2. Article 3.17: Nuclear cooperation

In relation to article 3.17, concerning strengthening bilateral nuclear cooperation, we are concerned that supplying nuclear technology to Indonesia could encourage Indonesia to build nuclear power stations in various areas of the archipelago. In addition to our concerns regarding the increased health risks resulting from the development of nuclear power (documented at www.energyscience.org.au and www.mapw.org.au), there are additional geological risks specific to Indonesia. The archipelago is geologically unstable with earthquakes, volcanic activity and the threat of tsunamis. MAPW believes the risk of a nuclear accident and the effect of such an accident on the region is too great a risk, and that Australia should discourage Indonesia from going down the nuclear path.

MAPW sees substantial benefits to be gained in co-operative projects aimed at the development of satisfactory radioactive waste management and efficacious de-commissioning of nuclear reactors. The emphasis here should be on minimisation of waste by reducing its generation at source. A good example would be reducing reliance on nuclear reactor based radio-isotope generation, for example by co-operatively exploring potential for cyclotron based isotope generation.

However, MAPW opposes the mining and export of uranium and other nuclear materials — including to Indonesia — because of the inextricable link between military and civil applications of nuclear technologies. Exporting nuclear material to Indonesia would be to support nuclear weapons proliferation: although there is no evidence of current Indonesian intention to develop nuclear weapons capability, recent developments in Iran and North Korea amply demonstrate the way in which even NPT-governed 'peaceful applications' can rapidly develop potent military significance.'

