



MAKE WEST PAPUA SAFE

About the Paniai Case

In the evening of December 7th 2014, a group of young people gathered at a small roadside chapel in Enarotali's Ipakiye neighbourhood. Building and maintaining these chapels during Advent is a popular tradition in Paniai. Sometime after sunset a military vehicle operated by Special Team 753 drove passed the group without its headlights on. The children yelled at the driver of vehicle, telling him to turn his lights on. Moments later the occupants of the car returned, accompanied by a truck full of soldiers. The soldiers got out of the truck and chased the group, catching and beating 11 of them. One of the children, Yulianus Yeimo, sustained serious injuries after the soldiers attacked him rifle butts and bayonets.

The following morning a rumour circulated that Yulianus Yeimo had died. People noticed the vehicle that had been involved in the incident the previous night parked in town and confronted police in Enarotali, demanding an explanation for the attack. The police ordered everyone to leave, striking them with batons and sticks when they did not move, and discharging a firearm into the air. According to a witness six or seven Indonesian security personnel then chased members of the crowd into a nearby field. The police and military personnel fired live ammunition onto the crowd. According to witnesses who gave evidence to the Indonesian National Human Rights Commission, police officers shot dead one child after he had fallen to the ground. Four children were killed that day: Simeon Degei, Alpius Youw, Yulian Yeimo, and Otianus Gobai. A fifth child, Yulianus Yeimo, who was beaten at the roadside chapel on 7 December, died of his injuries in early 2018. Seventeen people, including women and children were hospitalised with serious wounds.

Failure of the Indonesian Justice System

Several weeks later, on the 27th of December, at a national Christmas celebration in West Papua, the newly elected President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, committed to bringing those responsible for the killings to justice as soon as possible. "I want this case resolved as soon as possible so it will not happen again in the future. We truly want Papua to be a land of peace" said the President. The Indonesian police and military set up their own internal investigations into the incident. Not surprisingly, they found they had no case to answer. In March 2015 Papuan church leaders and human rights defenders formed an independent investigation team who successfully persuaded the Indonesian National Human Rights Commission (KomNasHAM) to take on the case. The Commission acknowledged that what happened was a serious case of state violence and publicly committed to investigating the case. Senior Papuan and Indonesian Human Rights Defenders were included in the National investigation team. But when the Coordinating Ministry for Politics and Law failed to provide the necessary resources to carry out the investigation the National Commission lost interest in pursuing the case. Consequently, all the Papuan members of the ad hoc investigation team all resigned in protest. The case has now stalled. Papuan and independent Indonesian human rights defenders argue that both KomNasHAM and the Indonesian government do not have the political will to pursue the case. The Australian Government – and other foreign governments – have been silent about what happened. They continue to train and arm the Indonesian police and military, including D88, Brimob and Kopassus, the worst human rights offenders in West Papua. They have imposed no conditionalities or human rights benchmarks on the multi-million dollar training packages and material aid provided to the Indonesian security forces. That has to change.



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