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INDONESIA

REPORTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN IRIAN JAYA

Beginning in August 1983 the Indonesian army and particularly the paracommando elite unit, Kopassandha, undertook a series of arrests in the Jayapura area of Irian Jaya. Among those arrested were two pensioned civil servants, Azer Demotekai and Titus Dansidan, a number of students including John (Gento) Romainum, and on 30 November 1983 Arnold Ap. Arnold Ap had been widely known in Irian Jaya largely through the radio broadcasts of the cultural group Mambesak which he led and had been regarded as a defender of Papuan culture in general which had come to be seen as under threat as a result of Indonesian cultural and "transmigration" policies.

Most were reported to have been arrested without warrant and to have spent periods in incommunicado detention while undergoing interrogation by Kopassandha. Arnold Ap, who had been detained briefly the previous year accused of using his cultural group Mambesak to subversive ends, was said by the local Kopassandha commander to have been arrested on this occasion for having facilitated contact between an American professor and the Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM - Free Papua Movement). On 13 December 1983 Arnold Ap was reportedly transferred to the custody of the regional commander Brigadier General Sembiring Meliala in his capacity as chief of the local branch of the security agency KOPKAMTIB. On 20 January 1984 Arnold Ap was reportedly transferred with four others - John Romainum, Alex Mebri, Agustinus Runtuboi and Octavianus Yantheo - to the police headquarters KODAK XVII where they occupied a common cell. On 25 February 1984 the case of Arnold Ap and the four others was officially handed over to the prosecutor's office in Jayapura. On 27 March, Octavianus Yantheo was released from detention and his place in the cell was taken by Edward Mofu, an employee at the University of Cenderawasih in Jayapura and a member of Mambesak.

A series of incidents beginning on 9 February 1984 appear to have placed the detainees in a position where they feared for their safety. On 9 February, Indonesian soldiers reportedly shot dead at least one Irianese after an argument between Irianese and Buginese migrants in the Hamadi market in Jayapura. In subsequent days, at least twenty-five Irianese soldiers deserted from the army and another attempt was made to raise the Papuan flag outside the provincial assembly building which resulted in the shooting to death of several persons. Following these incidents, both the Indonesian army and the OPM intensified their military operations. Such incidents were reported to have led to the flight of approximately 8,000 people across the border to Papua New Guinea, including Irianese deserters from the Indonesian army or police, local Irianese government officials, and students and lecturers from Cenderawasih University. Among those who fled over the border were a number of persons associated with Arnold Ap, including his wife and children.

Six men - Arnold Ap, Edward Mofu, John Romainum, Agustinus Runtuboi, Alex Mebri, together with a prison guard Pius Wanem - were alleged to have escaped from detention from the Jayapura police headquarters (KODAK) during the night of 21 April 1984. The body of Edward Mofu was found on 23 April 1984 on a beach near Base G, Tanjung Suaja, outside Jayapura. His body was reportedly bloated with water and had been heavily bruised, and his feet had reportedly been bound. The corpse of Arnold Ap was reportedly brought to Aryoko hospital in Jayapura on 27 April, bearing three bullet holes in the stomach, rope marks on the wrists and severe bruising behind the right ear. His body was later buried on 27 April at a public funeral reportedly attended by about five hundred people. The Indonesian authorities have reportedly since claimed that Ap was shot while trying to escape being apprehended on 27 April. John Romainum reportedly surrendered with the prison guard Pius Wanem to the police on 1 May. AI has received a report that Agustinus Runtuboi had earlier surrendered to the district commander for Irian Jaya, Brigadier General Sembiring Meliala, and had subsequently been detained in the prison at Abepura (Lembaga Pemasayarakatan Abepura) on the outskirts of Jayapura. The other member of the group of detainees, Alex Mebri, is reported as missing, his fate is unknown.

Since February 1984, there have been other reports of widespread arrests, of torture and deaths in detention, and of massacres in Irian Jaya. Most of these reports have been general in nature and AI has been unable to confirm them. There have also been more specific reports, among them a report that Titus Dansidan, Azer Demotekai and four other prisoners detained either Abepura prison or at the military police barracks

(POMDAM XVII) taken by members of Kopassandha on separate occasions between 13 and 25 February have not been located since. AI received reports that these persons were tortured while in custody at Kopassandha and that Demotekai died as a result. Aside from Azer Demotekai and Titus Dansidan, the other four persons taken by Kopassandha are reported to have been, Joel Waroumi, Jeremias Suwai, Tuan Samaduda and Demianus Toto.

AI has also received the names of a number of persons arrested after the alleged escape of Arnold Ap and the others on 21 - 22 April. These are:

Jonas Rajau, student at Cenderawasih University and a member of Mambesak;

Yan Pieter Ap, teacher and member of Mambesak;

Danny Mandowen, member of Mambesak;

Bob Suwela, recent graduate of Cenderawasih University.

AI is concerned for the safety of these persons in view of the reported fate of other detainees in Irian Jaya.