

**PAPUANS
BEHIND BARS**



Papuans Behind Bars

QUARTERLY

UPDATE

January–March 2026

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Cover: Suara Awam Katolik Regio Papua held a demonstration at St Francis Xavier's Cathedral in Merauke on
25th January 2026, before the demonstration was broken up and the demonstrators were arrested. (Stenly
Dambujai/Human Rights Watch)

Papuans Behind Bars

Quarterly Update

January–March 2026

Summary

In the first quarter of 2026, we documented at least 144 cases of arrest, almost all of which were arbitrary. Of these, 101 people have since been released, whilst the remainder either remain in detention, or there is no information to suggest that they have been released. Nine of those in detention are facing further legal proceedings in court. Of these cases, at least 26 victims were minors, and there were 62 cases of arrest involving torture or other ill-treatment, resulting in one death.

During this period, there were at least four court rulings concerning individuals who had been arrested in previous periods. One person was acquitted of all charges on the grounds of being a minor; two were found guilty of possessing ammunition and sentenced to between 18-30 months in prison; and another was found guilty of assault and sentenced to 30 months in prison.

At the time of writing, we documented at least 62 West Papuan political prisoners serving sentences in prison. In addition, ten people are detained and are currently on trial – one at the Timika District Court and nine at the Wamena District Court, three of whom are believed to be minors.

Background

Indonesia has continued to suffer worsening economic conditions mainly due to global markets' negative reaction to the economic policies of President Prabowo Subianto's administration. The deteriorating economic situation has sparked widespread public discontent, prompting activists to stage protests that ultimately led to their arrest. President Prabowo has persisted with his free meals policy (*Makan Bergizi Gratis*/MBG) that has used a significant portion of the national budget, and has also pursued another plan to launch the state-led cooperative project (*Koperasi Desa/Kelurahan Merah Putih*).

Indonesia's economic situation worsened with the start of the US and Israel's war with Iran in mid-February that immediately caused an oil price hike. Indonesia has long maintained a policy to subsidise fuel prices despite being an oil importer. In the first quarter of this year,

Indonesia's currency, the Rupiah, reached an all-time low against the US Dollar.¹ In early January, Indonesia's Stock Exchange (BEI) had to be halted temporarily, twice, after a drastic drop in trading,² triggered by negative forecasts of several economic think tanks. Despite worrying economic forecasts, the Government of Indonesia still boasted that they had recorded the highest economic quarterly growth of 5.61 per cent (year-on-year) in recent years; a figure that has been disputed by many economic analysts.

In January, President Prabowo announced that he had signed the so-called Board of Peace Charter³ in Davos, Switzerland, a sign that he wanted closer ties with the US President, Donald Trump. In February, Prabowo attended the first Board of Peace meeting in Washington DC and while there, signed the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) between Indonesia and the USA.



Image 1. Prabowo and Donald Trump shake hands after signing the BoP Charter in Davos, Switzerland, on 22nd January 2026. (Setkab.go.id)

In January, the new Criminal Code (KUHP), passed in 2023, came into force.⁴ The new KUHP provides a new definition of treason or *makar*. Article 160 of this new KUHP stipulates that “treason or *makar* is an intention to carry out an attack that has been realized by preparing

¹ US\$1 was equal to IDR 17,300, compared with the previous year (first quarter of 2025) when US\$1 was equal to IDR16,300.

² See the Indonesia Stock Exchange's (BEI) press statements: <https://www.idx.co.id/en/news/press-release/2543> and <https://www.idx.co.id/en/news/press-release/2546>.

³ Cabinet Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia, press statement, 22nd January 2026, available at <https://setkab.go.id/en/president-prabowo-signs-board-of-peace-charter-affirms-indonesias-active-role-in-safeguarding-implementation-of-two-state-solution/>.

⁴ For detailed *makar* articles in the new KUHP, see Papuans Behind Bars Annual Overview 2023, p. 6, available at <https://papuansbehindbars.org/annual-overview-2023/>.

the act.”⁵ This means that a person can be charged with *makar* articles if s/he intentionally commits crimes. Papuans Behind Bars (PBB) have recorded that no one had been charged with the treason or *makar* provisions under the new KUHP during this quarter.

In early January, the UN Human Rights Council elected Indonesia’s representative as the president of the body whose role was to lead any forum in 2026. Indonesia was elected 2026 President of the UN body after no other state within the Asia Pacific region came forward during nominations.⁶ At the domestic level, this role was exaggerated, with inflated claims being made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that this amounted to the international community recognising Indonesia’s international role in human rights promotion and protection.⁷

In mid-March, Andrie Yunus, the Deputy Director of KontraS (the Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence), one of the most prominent human rights NGOs, was attacked with acid by two people on a motor cycle in Jakarta. Andrie Yunus was known for his actions of storming a closed parliamentarians meeting where the amendment to the Military Law in 2025 was under discussion. He had also been involved, a few weeks before, in a press conference about the involvement of the military intelligence services (Badan Intelijen Strategis, BAIS) in the nation-wide August 2025 uprising. Andrie suffered very serious injuries, including the potential loss of the sight in one eye.

Initially, the police conducted the criminal investigation and managed to identify dozens of people involved in the acid attacks. However, the police’s investigation was handed over to the military internal oversight unit prematurely by the order of the government’s top cabinet.⁸ Subsequently, the military internal oversight unit detained and named four suspects who were all members of the BAIS. The police and military investigations identified different perpetrators. Andrie Yunus’s case was part of a series of ongoing attacks against Indonesian human rights defenders and critical voices against many regressive policies under Prabowo administration with regards to democracy, human rights and environmental justice.⁹

On the other hand, in early March, the Central Jakarta District Court acquitted four human rights defenders and pro-democracy activists—Delpedro Marhaen Rismansyah, Muzzafar Salim, Syahdan Husein and Khariq Anhar—who had been charged with incitement of violence under the repressive Internet Law (Undang-Undang Informasi dan Transaksi

⁵ The original text in Bahasa Indonesia: “*Makar adalah niat untuk melakukan serangan yang telah diwujudkan dengan persiapan perbuatan tersebut.*”

⁶ United Nations, Press Statement, Human Rights Council elects Indonesian candidate President for 2026, 8th January 2026, available at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/01/1166720>.

⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press Statement, ‘Indonesia Menjadi Presiden Dewan HAM PBB Tahun 2026’, 8th January 2026, available at <https://kemlu.go.id/berita/indonesia-menjadi-presiden-dewan-ham-pbb-tahun-2026?type=publication>.

⁸ In Indonesia, allegations of any criminal offences, including serious human rights violations committed by military personnel, can only be dealt with through the military’s internal oversight mechanism. Criminal investigations, prosecutions and trials are all carried out by military personnel.

⁹ Joint global CSOs press statement, ‘Investigate and Fully Prosecute the Perpetrators of the Acid Attack Against Andrie Yunus!’, 19th March 2026, available at <https://tapol.org/publications/investigate-and-fully-prosecute-perpetrators-acid-attack-against-andrie-yunus>.

Elektronik, UU ITE) during the August 2025 uprising. The four activists were among almost 1,000 people named as suspects in the August 2025 uprising.¹⁰



Image 2. Delpedro and his colleagues sang the national anthem before the hearing with the agenda of the reading of the verdict at the Central Jakarta District Court on 6th March 2026. (Kompas TV on YouTube)

In early February, the Communion of Christian Churches in Indonesia (PGI) —a national association of 150 Protestant Church Synods in Indonesia—issued a statement to reject the food and energy estates, a Strategic National Project (PSN) in Merauke, Papua Selatan Province. The statement aimed to support the local indigenous West Papuans' struggle to claim their land rights.¹¹ In mid-February, a joint statement issued by the Papuan Council of Churches and CSOs also called for the rejection of all Strategic National Projects in West Papua (including in Merauke, Yahukimo, Biak, Sorong, Wamena, Fakfak, Manokwari, Timika, Intan Jaya, Nduga and elsewhere in West Papua), called on the government to demilitarise the region, and to address ongoing armed conflict, and to open up access for international observers as well as to follow up on the promise to invite the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to West Papua.¹²

In mid-February, an armed pro-independence group in West Papua (Tentara Nasional Pembebasan Papua Barat, TPNPB) claimed that they shot dead two pilots of a small commercial flight at a small airport in Korowai Batu, Yanimura, Boven Digoel Regency in

¹⁰ Komisi Pencari Fakta, 'Operasi Pembungkaman Kaum Muda Terbesar sejak Reformasi, Fakta di Balik Demonstrasi Agustus 2025 dan Eskalasi Kerusuhan, Penjarahan, dan Perburuan Aktivis', p. 75, 18th February 2026, available at <https://kontras.org/laporan-komisi-pencari-fakta-operasi-pembungkaman-kaum-muda-terbesar-sejak-reformasi-fakta-di-balik-demonstrasi-agustus-2025-dan-eskalasi-kerusuhan-penjarahan-dan-perburuan-aktivis/>

¹¹ PGI (Press Statement), 'PGI Tegaskan Penolakan terhadap PSN di Merauke dan Militarisme dalam Penutupan Sidang MPL 2026', 2nd February 2026, available at <https://pgi.or.id/news/warta-pgi/pgi-tegaskan-penolakan-terhadap-psn-dan-militarisme-dalam-penutupan-sidang-mpl-2026-di-merauke-273>.

¹² The then President Joko Widodo promised this when he met the then UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in early 2018. See Jubi, 'Dewan Gereja Papua dan KO MASI di Tanah Papua serukan pernyataan sikap kepada pemerintah', 21st February 2026, available at <https://jubi.id/polhukam/2026/dewan-gereja-papua-dan-ko-masi-di-tanah-papua-serukan-pernyataan-sikap-kepada-pemerintah/>.

Papua Selatan Province. They claimed that the flight company sometimes carried military personnel or illegal gold miners.¹³ There has been no report for decades of armed clashes happening in the Boven Digoel region.

The first quarter of 2026 witnessed Indonesia grappling with interconnected crises—economic deterioration, political repression of activists and human rights defenders. In West Papua, there were escalating tensions over development projects while conflict reignited where it had been long dormant. This situation further undermined democratic principles and social stability under the Prabowo administration.

New Cases

From the 144 new cases that we documented during the first quarter of this year, 125 cases regarded West Papuan prisoners who had been accused of being members of TPNPB or their collaborators. Out of those 144 new cases, 62 cases came from Yahukimo Regency in Papua Pegunungan Province. Yahukimo Regency is one of the hotspots of armed conflict in West Papua. Most cases in Yahukimo that we included in this period were about people being arrested or those who had been detained for being allegedly linked to the armed pro-independence groups.

On 4th January, military personnel from the Task Force Yonif 732/Banau arbitrarily arrested five Papuans in Jambul Village, West Beoga District, Puncak Regency. One of them, MKU, was 14 years' old. They were arrested whilst returning from church, accused of being affiliated with the TPNPB on the basis of wearing clothing bearing the Morning Star emblem and sharing political content on social media. They were released on the same day after being forced to sing the national anthem and swear allegiance to Indonesia. The mainstream media reported that they had surrendered voluntarily.¹⁴

On 17th January, a joint Indonesian military and police patrol arbitrarily arrested nine people,



Image 3. A scene showing the burning of Bintang Kejora insignia and flags prior to the release of Iyan Wandagau and his companions by the Indonesian army. (Detik.com)

¹³ BBC, 'Dua Pilot Smart Air ditembak di Boven Digoel, apa hubungan peristiwa ini dengan tambang emas ilegal dan konflik bersenjata di Papua?', 12th February 2026, available at <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/articles/cd03g3544jro>.

¹⁴ Detik.com, '5 Anggota OPM di Puncak Papua Tengah Berikrar Kembali Gabung NKRI', 5th January 2026, available at <https://www.detik.com/sulsel/berita/d-8293456/5-anggota-opm-di-puncak-papua-tengah-berikrar-kembali-gabung-nkri>.

some of whom were students, in Dekai City, the capital of Yahukimo Regency. They were arrested at 7:20 pm, while sitting and talking at the residence of Oskar Payage on Paradiso Route near the Bonto River. The security forces reportedly carried out the arrest without reason, before forcing them into a riot police vehicle and taking them to the Yahukimo Regional Police headquarters. With the exception of Yunius Heluka, who remained in custody, they were all released in the early hours of the following morning.

On 17th and 18th February, personnel from Satgas Damai Cartenz and Satgas Habema conducted raids at several locations in Dekai City, Yahukimo Regency. During the operation, four residents, some of whom were minors, were reportedly arbitrarily arrested. According to reports we have received, the raid is believed to be related to the shooting incident involving a Smart Air aircraft that killed two pilots on 11th February 2026 in Korowai, Boven Digoel. The distance between Dekai and Korowai is actually very far. The four people arrested were Mira Silip, EK, NS, and SK.¹⁵ They were arrested in the early hours of 18th February at Kilometer 5, Dekai City. At the end of the reporting period, our source said that they had been released. Before the four of them were arrested, on the evening of 17th February, it was reported that two young men had also been arrested in the Block B shopping area, near their homes, for carrying lighters and knives. The two were then accused of being the main perpetrators of the pilot's shooting.

In the early hours of 18th February, a joint military and police (TNI-Polri) force reportedly arbitrarily arrested dozens of residents in Holomama Village, Sugapa District, Intan Jaya Regency. Intan Jaya Regency has also been location of some of the most intense armed clashes in the last few years. The arrests were made after the forces reportedly received information that all residents of Holomama Village were members of the TPNPB. At least seventeen people were arrested, including three children aged 12 and 14. Among them were: Jaubega Sani, Sepanus Tipagau, Okto Sani, Enos Sani, Herman Sani, Yairus Sani, Doni Bagau, LTS, SPS, APS, Melek Bagau, Januarius Bagau, Sayaki Bagau, Just Bagau, Opius Bagau, Joni Bagau, and Sanius Bagubau. They were ordered to kneel, raise their hands, and march to the military post at Waitigi Luapa. They were interrogated whilst being submerged in a pool for four hours. After several women and community leaders visited the military post, the 17 were released, soaking wet and suffering from psychological trauma.

On 18th March, joint police and military personnel arrested dozens of residents of Tamberauw, Papua Barat Daya Province. During the arrests, these residents were subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. The arrests were carried out without a warrant. The arrest of these residents took place following an attack on four healthcare workers by unknown assailants, in which two of them died on 16th March. Security forces raided several villages, entering residents' homes and forcibly dragging the occupants out. During the operation, police fired their weapons, causing panic among the residents and prompting them to flee. On 20th March, eight people were released. Three days later, four more were released. As of 25th March, a total of 14 people had been released, whilst one had been named as a suspect.

¹⁵ The use of initials indicates that the individuals are minors.



Image 4. Several people were made to lie face down at the Tambrau Police Station after being arrested by security forces on 18th March 2026. They were all subsequently released as no evidence of wrongdoing was found. (Human Rights Monitor)

On 23rd March, joint Indonesian security forces arbitrarily arrested and tortured Yenus Mohi, a 19-year-old Indigenous West Papuan from the Yali tribe, together with two other young men in Dekai District, Yahukimo Regency. They were arrested whilst travelling along a road in Dekai District, without a warrant. Around ten officers pointed their weapons at them and forcibly took them to a detention centre. Personal belongings such as *noken* (traditional West Papuan woven bag), a mobile phone, bracelets and a hat were confiscated. Yenus was released on 27th March and taken home in critical condition in two tactical vehicles. His body was badly bruised from being kicked and beaten with iron and wooden sticks. Yenus even admitted that he had briefly lost consciousness due to the torture he endured.

In this first quarter report, we also documented several new cases that were not linked directly to the armed conflict situation. On 25th January, police personnel arrested eleven activists from Suara Awam Katolik Regio Papua (Catholic Public Voice of Papua) in front of St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Merauke, Papua Selatan Province. The activists were arrested at around 10 am while staging a silent protest. They were released in the evening after being questioned. These activists have regularly staged protests in front of the church. One of their main demands in this demonstration was for the Archbishop of Merauke, Mgr. Petrus Canisius Mandagi, to apologise to the Malind indigenous community affected by the National Strategic Project. Archbishop Mandagi has been seen as supporting the PSN in the South Papua area.



Image 5. Injuries on Yenus Mohi's back. During his three days in the custody of the security forces, Yenus was allegedly tortured by being kicked and beaten with iron and wooden sticks. (Human Rights Monitor)



Image 6. Members of Suara Awam Katolik Regio Papua held a demonstration at St Francis Xavier's Cathedral in Merauke on 25th January 2026, before the demonstration was broken up and the demonstrators were arrested. (Human Rights Watch)

On 10th February, Indonesian military members reportedly tortured Kristo Gonus Okui Kaize, an indigenous Papuan labourer from the Malind Maklew tribe, at the PSN Wanam site in Ilwayab District, Merauke. The soldiers reportedly beat him with metal objects, pulled out his toenail with pliers, and threatened to kill him, without prior questioning. Kaize suffered head wounds, broken teeth, bruises, and rib injuries before escaping and later receiving medical treatment in Wanam Village. Villagers later found Kaize unconscious and brought him to a local health centre for treatment.

On 13th March, dozens of Indonesian Air Force personnel reportedly tortured a young Papuan man in Merauke. The young man, Bernadus Eusebius Ndawe, a member of the Kimam tribe, was accused of theft. In fact, he was intoxicated at the time; he had picked up a sandal thrown by a friend into the Indonesian Air Force mess area and fallen asleep there. Around 30 military personnel woke Bernadus, intimidated him, and beat him on the head, face and body, causing injuries, including a laceration to his lip. During the torture, he was stripped and his hands and feet were tied.

Ongoing Case Updates

On 26th February 2026, judges at the Wamena District Court found **Ami Sobolim** guilty of assault and sentenced him to two years and six months' imprisonment, based on Article 351(1) jo. Article 55(1) Criminal Code. Ami was accused of stabbing a water vendor on Poros Logpon Road KM 4, Dekai, Yahukimo Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province, on 2nd May 2025. However, he had earlier been accused not only of assault but also of much more serious offences. On 26th July 2025, the police arrested Ami along with two other people at

Nop Goliat Airport, Yahukimo.¹⁶ The police accused Ami of being a member of an armed group involved in the murder of a resident on 30th January 2025 on Jl. Gunung, Yahukimo, and the assault of the drinking water seller.¹⁷ During the assault, the police alleged that Ami also stole the victim's mobile phone.



Image 7. Portrait of Ami Sobolim. (Satgas Damai Cartenz via Detik.com)

In court, the prosecutor brought multiple charges: assault causing grievous bodily harm, committing an act of violence against a person or property resulting in injury, and robbery with violence. There was no charge of murder in relation to the case, which was said to have taken place on 30th January 2025. Only one witness was called; he was likely the owner of the car the victim used to sell water, but he was not at the scene at the time of the incident. Neither the stabbing victim nor his friend—who was reportedly with him at the time—were present in court. The evidence presented consisted only of a T-shirt, four river stones, a copy of the car's registration certificate, a broken wing mirror and its shards, and an Android mobile phone. The prosecutor had asked the judge to sentence Ami to five years' imprisonment, and stated that he was guilty of criminal damage—not assault, nor robbery with violence as originally alleged.¹⁸

On 10th March 2026, judges at Nabire District Court found **Hugon Gire** guilty of the criminal offence of attempting to obtain ammunition illegally, based on Article 306 jo. Article 20 C of the 2023 Criminal Code. For this offence, the judges sentenced him to one year and six months' imprisonment, in line with the public prosecutor's request. Hugon was arrested by the Satgas Damai Cartenz personnel on 29th September 2025 in Karubate Village, Muara District, Puncak Jaya Regency, along with another man, Erek Enumbi. They were accused by the police of supplying ammunition to an armed group led by Terus Enumbi, alias Tesko, which was operating in Intan Jaya Regency.¹⁹

At the time of the arrest, the police witnessed and recorded the ammunition transaction. In a widely circulated video, filmed at a motorbike taxi rank in Muara District, Hugon is seen handing over a sum of money to two men who in turn handed him a plastic bag containing a dozen or so rounds of various types of ammunition.²⁰ However, the police did not arrest

¹⁶ Human Rights Monitor, 'Police officers arbitrarily detain three Papuans at Dekai Airport, Yahukimo', 29th July 2025, available at <http://humanrightsmonitor.org/news/police-officers-arbitrarily-detain-three-papuans-at-dekai-airport-yahukimo/>.

¹⁷ Detik.com, 'Anggota KKB Wanggol Sobolim Penganiaya-Pembunuh Warga di Yahukimo Ditangkap', 27th July 2025, available at <https://www.detik.com/sulsel/hukum-dan-kriminal/d-8031244/anggota-kkb-wanggol-sobolim-penganiaya-pembunuh-warga-di-yahukimo-ditangkap?page=2>.

¹⁸ See Ami Sobolim on Case Tracking Information System of Wamena District Court, https://sipp.pn-wamena.go.id/show_detil/enRwVklKRTg1VW1lanMyRnp2VENwb2dPTzZWZ01IMIZFQ0k3ZnFDakpzNENab0ZSYjJlMkIEQ2U4TUxYWpheUhl1p1SzFEb2s2RGluTU1Ma05UTHc9PQ==.

¹⁹ Kompas.com, 'Satgas Ops Damai Cartenz Bekuk Jaringan Pemasok Amunisi KKB', 30th September 2025, available at <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2025/09/30/21545641/satgas-ops-damai-cartenz-bekuk-jaringan-pemasok-amunisi-kkb>.

²⁰ Tribun Papua on YouTube, 'Detik-Detik Aparat Tangkap Tangan 2 Jaringan KKB Saat Transaksi Pembelian Amunisi Dengan Warga', 1st October 2025, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEQHA7m1Ftl>.

these two men, who, according to the indictment, are identified as members of the Indonesian National Armed Forces' Strategic Intelligence Agency (BAIS).²¹



Image 8. Hugon Gire at the time of his arrest by Satgas Damai Cartenz personnel in Puncak Jaya Regency, Central Papua Province, on 29th September 2025. (Polri via Kompas.com)

On 12th March 2026, judges at the Jayapura District Court found **Yopi Balingga** guilty of the criminal offence of illegally possessing ammunition, based on Article 1 (1) of the 1951 Emergency Law. For this offence, the judges sentenced him to two years and six months' imprisonment. Yopi is a student from Yahukimo who was studying at a university in Biak-Numfor Regency, Papua Province. According to the indictment, Yopi reportedly found 16 rounds of ammunition buried in the ground whilst clearing the grounds of the BTN Complex in Yafdas Village, Biak-Numfor, not far from his dormitory, and subsequently stored the ammunition in his dormitory room. In mid-July 2025, needing money for his tuition fees, he intended to sell the ammunition to someone in Jayapura.²² On 17th July 2025, Satgas Damai Cartenz personnel arrested Yopi moments after he disembarked from a ship at Jayapura Port. Speaking to the media, the police claimed that Yopi was a member of an armed group.²³

²¹ See Putusan PN NABIRE Nomor 110/Pid.Sus/2025/PN Nab, available at <https://putusan3.mahkamahagung.go.id/direktori/putusan/zaf1478bb069ad7c8dfc313433343331.html>.

²² See Yopi Balingga on Sistem Informasi Penelusuran Perkara (SIPP) PN Jayapura (Case Tracking Information System of Jayapura District Court), available at https://sipp.pn-jayapura.go.id/show_detil/YndyRjhCME96NllzdkpuMi8ws2s2OG5YZU02cGFJUzA3TElubFpkSEY3Qi9vNOV2TTRNUFIHUKF4US9JbVN0bVJvVFhrUk1EZUprdnIDMDZyZ1NOeVE9PQ==.

²³ Antara Papua, 'Kaops Damai Cartenz: Kasus anggota KKB Yopi Belingga diserahkan ke Kejari Jayapura', 24th October 2025, available at <https://papua.antaranews.com/berita/754109/kaops-damai-cartenz-kasus-anggota-kkb-yopi-belingga-diserahkan-ke-kejari-jayapura>.

On 12th March, judges at the Wamena District Court dismissed the prosecution's case against **AA**. Previously, in an interim ruling dated 15th December 2025, the judges had dismissed the prosecution's charges and ordered the immediate release of AA from custody, as it transpired that he was still a minor.²⁴ The prosecutor claimed that AA was 21 years old, whereas, based on statements from the family and evidence submitted by PAHAM Papua's lawyers, the defendant's legal advisers, it emerged that AA was still only 15 years old at the time the case was being processed. This misidentification is said to have originated during the investigation by Yahukimo police. "This error in identification has serious implications as it determines whether a person is tried as an adult or as a child in conflict with the law," said one of his lawyers.²⁵

AA is a minor who was arrested by the police in Dekai, Yahukimo Regency, on 10th May 2025. The police accused AA of being the ringleader of an armed group and of being involved in various criminal cases, including the murder of a police officer.²⁶ In court, AA was charged with the murder of a truck driver which took place on 5th November 2024 on the Wamena–Jayapura Trans Road, Hobakma Village, Elelim District, Yalimo Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province. Using Article 340 jo. Article 55 (1) Criminal Code and Article 351 (3) jo. Article 55 (1) Criminal Code, the indictment states that AA was involved in the case, alongside Aske Mabel and Nikson Matuan. The latter two are named as the main executors. However, in the same court proceedings, both men were found guilty of other offences—specifically, theft and the possession of firearms and ammunition—rather than murder.²⁷

Issues of Concern

During this period, we documented other related human rights violations when a West Papuan was arrested or detained by the Indonesian authorities. The most prevalent other human rights violations were torture or other-ill treatment and arbitrary arrests or detention against a minor or person aged below 18 years. Furthermore, we also documented one case where the victim was deprived of his life.

On 9th January 2026, military personnel from the Marine Corps and Taipur (Combat Reconnaissance Unit) of the Army arrested six West Papuan men in Dekai District,

²⁴ See Anus Asso on Sistem Informasi Penelusuran Perkara (SIPP) PN Wamena (Case Tracking Information System of Wamena District Court), available at https://sipp.pn-wamena.go.id/show_detil/dFIBSExyZ3J5WW81NGdBY0srMk5KYjU4YkEwbmVKd2pJTmdIQXFtalY3aUIwbktSZExIcVNPMTdVdnMwVGNwWlQzWC85UzBTaktQbjRPNGoZOWx2NGc9PQ==.

²⁵ Adhyaksa News, 'Anus Asso Bebas Murni, PN Wamena Tegaskan Perlindungan Hak Anak Dalam Proses Peradilan', 17th December 2025, available at <https://adhyaksanews.com/anus-asso-bebas-murni-pn-wamena-tegaskan-perlindungan-hak-anak-dalam-proses-peradilan/>.

²⁶ Serambinews.com, 'Pentolan OPM Anus Asso Ditangkap Tim Gabungan, Terlibat Pembunuhan Briptu Iqbal Anwar Arif', 11th May 2025, available at <https://aceh.tribunnews.com/2025/05/11/pentolan-opm-anus-asso-ditangkap-tim-gabungan-terlibat-pembunuhan-briptu-iqbal-anwar-arif>.

²⁷ See Aske Mabel on Papuans Behind Bars, <https://tapol.uwazi.io/en/entity/w0rvc2khmypo>, and Nikson Matuan, <https://tapol.uwazi.io/en/entity/gqc40zdifbg>.

Yahukimo.²⁸ They were arrested in the morning and taken to the Marine post near Nop Goliath Airport while on their way to Dekai City, accused of being part of an armed group. The six young men—**Eko Ussu, Alesa Busup, Usan Ossu, Hengki Ossu, Asam Ossu** and **Timeks Busop**—were interrogated at the Marine post. Military personnel reportedly tortured and forced three of them to confess to being members of the TPNPB. They were released the following afternoon after their families, community leaders and church representatives visited the Yahukimo Police Headquarters and protested the arrests. Three of them—Timeks Busup, Eko Ussu and Asam Ossu—suffered injuries to their faces, foreheads, necks, thighs and backs because of torture using blunt objects.



Image 9. Injuries to the backs of two of the six victims arrested by the Indonesian army in Yahukimo on 9th January 2026. (Human Rights Monitor)

On 4th February, Indonesian military and correctional officers allegedly shot and killed **Zet Tare**, a 32-year-old prison fugitive, in Kaimana Regency, Papua Barat Province. Military and prison officials reportedly fired several shots at Tare and subjected him to physical violence, resulting in his death. According to a witness, prior to his death, Tare had been apprehended by security forces as a fugitive after escaping from prison in December 2025. At the time of his arrest, a witness said that Tare offered no resistance, contrary to the official account.²⁹ Tare's body was under close guard by security forces and prison officers from the time it was examined at the hospital until it was buried.

On 22nd February, joint security forces arrested four civilians in the Old KPU Complex in Dekai City, Yahukimo. The four individuals were **Menggel Soma**, a local KNPB leader, **Melkim Selak, Kutrom Suhun** and **Hilang Suhun**.³⁰ In addition to arresting them, the forces

²⁸ Human Rights Monitor, 'Six Papuans arbitrarily detained and tortured during military detention in Dekai', 15th January 2026, available at <https://humanrightsmonitor.org/case/six-papuans-arbitrarily-detained-and-tortured-during-military-detention-in-dekai/>.

²⁹ Human Rights Monitor, 'Security forces allegedly shot dead prison fugitive in Kaimana Regency', 16th February 2026, available at <https://humanrightsmonitor.org/case/security-forces-allegedly-shot-dead-prison-fugitive-in-kaimana-regency/>.

³⁰ Menggel Soma's statement can be read in a post shared by the KNPB Yahukimo and is available via the following link <https://www.facebook.com/reel/932230329298803>.

also confiscated several tools, including axes, machetes, kitchen knives, arrows and even a child's school bag. On 24th February, at 22.30, the police released the KNPB Solbi Sector Chair, Menggel Soma, and the other three individuals. Soma claimed that his arrest was not accompanied by a warrant. He claimed he was beaten and kicked until he felt dizzy in the interrogation room at Yahukimo District Police Station, and was pressured to admit being a TPNPB member.

On 22nd March, at around 5:00 pm, military personnel from the Marine Corps reportedly arrested seven Papuan teenagers in Sinak District, Puncak Regency, Papua Tengah Province.³¹ They were **Meri Murib** (aged 18), **YSM** (10), **Tendis Tabuni** (17), **Urundi Murib** (18), **NKM** (17), **ERM** (17) and **Ois Tabuni** (18). They were arrested whilst travelling to Gigobak village to sit school exams the following day. They were taken to a location by joint security forces. On 25th March, NKM, ERM, and Ois Tabuni remained in custody whilst the other four were released.

Conclusion

In the first quarter of 2026, the documentation of 144 arbitrary arrests, 62 cases involving torture or ill-treatment, the arrest of at least 26 minors, and one death, demonstrates a pervasive pattern of state violence concentrated predominantly in West Papua where 125 of the 144 cases involved accusations of TPNPB affiliation. The geographic concentration of violations in highly militarised regions such as Yahukimo Regency, coupled with systematic torture practices and the targeting of children, reveals a deliberate pattern of abuse and undermining fundamental rights and the rule of law.

³¹ Human Rights Monitor, 'Arbitrary detention of seven pupils in Sinak, Puncak Regency', 8th April 2026, available at <https://humanrightsmonitor.org/case/arbitrary-detention-of-seven-pupils-in-sinak-puncak-regency/>.

Papuans Behind Bars aims to provide accurate and transparent data, published in English and Indonesian, to facilitate direct support for prisoners and promote wider debate and campaigning in support of free expression in West Papua.

Papuans Behind Bars is a collective effort initiated by Papuan civil society groups working together as the Civil Society Coalition to Uphold Law and Human Rights in Papua. It is a grassroots initiative and represents a broad collaboration between lawyers, human rights groups, adat groups, activists, journalists and individuals in West Papua, as well as Jakarta-based NGOs and international solidarity groups.

Questions, comments and corrections are welcomed, and you can write to us at info@papuansbehindbars.org

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