

THE PACIFIC CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES



SELF-DETERMINATION INFORMATION PACK

WEST PAPUA



WEST PAPUA TIMELINE

1545 (13 JUNE)

Yñigo Ortiz de Retez sailed to, landed and took possession of the Northern coast of the island of New Guinea for the Spanish Crown.

1898

Papua is formally colonized by the Netherlands

1950'S

The Dutch government began preparing the territory for independence, introducing legislation and training of those that would make up West Papua's civil service

1961 (DECEMBER)

West Papua held a Congress declaring West Papua's independence and raising their new flag - the Morning Star

24 JULY 1965

The Papuan Liberation Army (OPM) is founded in Manokwari

1965-1971

Military operations in the coastal areas of Sorong, Manokwari, Biak, Sarmi, Jayapura, and along with the border areas between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea

1970

OPM (Papuan Liberation Army) begins low level war against Indonesia

1977-1978

During this period there were a number of atrocities committed by the Indonesian government in the Central and Eastern Highlands including places like, Jayawijaya, n Wamena, Pyramid, Kurulu, Kelila, Bokondini, Kobakma, and Baliem Valley resulting in an estimated 21,000 deaths.

2000

The Morning Star flag was flown again and a huge public congress was held in the year 2000 with hundreds of delegates from tribes all across Papua. The Congress rejected the result of the 1969 Act of Free Choice and reaffirmed West Papua as an independent nation. Indonesia enacted the Special Autonomy Law as a means to promote Papuan's right to internal self-determination. However, 10 years on, there are no signs that this act has been carried out.

2013

PCC resumes relations with GKI Church

2016

ULMWP Applies to join Melanesian Spearhead group

2020

Baptist and GIDI churches join PCC marking the 4 largest churches as PCC members. West Papua Council of Churches formed, starts issuing pastoral letters to churches. Increased military presence and Church workers killed

FEBRUARY 5, 1855

German missionaries Ottow and Geisler who landed in Mansinam Island, Manokwari. The very key year of the pioneering work for the birth of GKI-TP as an organisation/church institution.

1949

Indonesia became an independent state. Netherlands agreed to recognize Indonesia's East Indies territories with the exception of Papua

1960

US Investors' interest in Papua's natural wealth arose after exploratory surveys, predicting the presence of the largest above-ground copper deposit at that time

1962

After Indonesia showed signs of turning to Soviet Russia for assistance, the United States intervened by engineering the New York Agreement. It gave control of West Papua to the United Nations and one year later transferred control to Indonesia. The Papuans were never consulted. The new Republic of Indonesia launched a military operation for the 'return' of Papua (Then known by Indonesia as West Irian). Conflict broke out between the Netherlands, Indonesia and the Papuans. On August 15th, the New York Agreement is formed. It was Political conspiracy for economic interest over West Papua. The US wanted the wealth of Nemangkawi Mountain in Tembagapura, where Freeport McMorran had been doing the extraction and exploitation. They conspired with the Government of Indonesia and under The Kennedy administration, The New York Agreement was signed to prepare the process of political transfer of power over West Papua from the Netherlands to Indonesia.

1969

Indonesia was mandated to administer a UN-supervised referendum on the future of West Papua. Papuans describe the consultation as an 'Act of No Choice' since the vote was conducted by 1,206 tribal leaders, hand picked by the Indonesian government to vote on cession

1ST JULY 1971

The declaration of West Papua independence by Brigadier General Zeth Rumkorem, the OPM leader at Victoria, in the jungle of the border between Indonesia and PNG.

1998

The Morning Star flag was flown again and a huge public congress was held in the year 2000 with hundreds of delegates from tribes all across Papua. The Congress rejected the result of the 1969 "Act of Free Choice" and reaffirmed West Papua as an independent nation. In July, Indonesian troops massacre civilians at Biak and dump their bodies in the sea

2001

Then, in November 2001, the charismatic president of the Papua Presidium Council (PDP), Theys Eluay, was assassinated by Indonesian soldiers.

2015

Papuan Churches return to PCC

2019

World Council of Churches Delegation visits West Papua Student. In August, Protests over race attacks is met with violent retaliation from Indonesian territorial forces.

2021

Despite opposition by churches, ULMWP, human rights and NGO groups and indigenous Papuans OTSUS, the special Autonomy Law is renewed by Indonesian government. On the 26th of February, 100 people from religious leaders, tribal leaders, youth, and women came to the Palace in Jakarta met with President Habibie.

PARTNERS FOR 60 YEARS

West Papua has been involved in the Pacific Conference of Churches from the inception of the regional ecumenical movement since 1961 in Malua, Samoa. When Pacific church leaders gathered at Malua to discuss the end of the creation of local, autonomous churches, representatives of West Papua were present. The Netherlands Reformed Church was involved in missionary work in Dutch Papua and sent two representatives to Samoa. In line with the Dutch recognition of Papua as separate from its former East Indies (now Indonesia) colony, the Netherlands sent two representatives to meet their Pacific peers. The Papuan representative was Pastor Willem Malaoli who would later become third Ketua (Moderator) of the Gereja Kristen Injili di Tannah Papua. In December 1961, the Netherlands recognised Papua's independence and Indonesia invaded the island, leading to the longest protracted conflict in the Southern Hemisphere. With Australian, United Kingdom, United Nations and United States' acquiescence, Indonesia was granted sovereignty of the resource rich region in 1969. This was achieved by a gerrymandered poll known by the UN and Indonesia as the Vote of Free Choice. Papuans name the same activity – The Vote of No Choice. This refers to the 1500 Papuans hand-picked up by the military and tasked to vote under supervision whether to remain free or join the Indonesian Republic. More than 500,000 Papuans have been killed by security forces since the initial conflict to which the world has turned a blind eye. The Pacific Conference of Churches highlighted the Papuan conflict for over 50 years despite the difficulty in travelling to the area due to Indonesian restriction. Churches in Papua New Guinea offered refuge to Papuans who fled across the border. Recently, the PNG Council of Churches has made renewed efforts to advocate on behalf of the Papuan struggle. The PCC's renewed efforts to address self-determination in Papua began at the World Council of Churches 2013 General Assembly in Busan, South Korea.



THE MORNING STAR FLAG

Designed by Papuan Nicolaas Jouwe, the Morning Star Flag has become the iconic symbol of West Papua's struggle or self-determination. Raised in December 1961 for the first time, its seven blue horizontal stripes represent the customary territories. The white star represents the dawn of a new future and is linked to a Messianic myth of the people of Biak, an island off the North Coast of the Papuan mainland. Red, white and blue are the colours of the Dutch national flag, serving as a reminder of Papua's history as Netherlands New Guinea. Under Papua's 2001 Special Law of Autonomy, Papuans were allowed to raise the Morning Star flag as long as it did not exceed the height of Indonesia's national banner. This signalled a warming of relations between Indonesia and the Papuan freedom movement. Three years later the flag was banned under the presidency of Susilo Bambang Yudhyono and relations took a turn or the worse, culminating in the military bombing of villages in 2017 and attacks on students in 2018. Despite this, the flag remains a rallying point for all who support freedom in Papua.



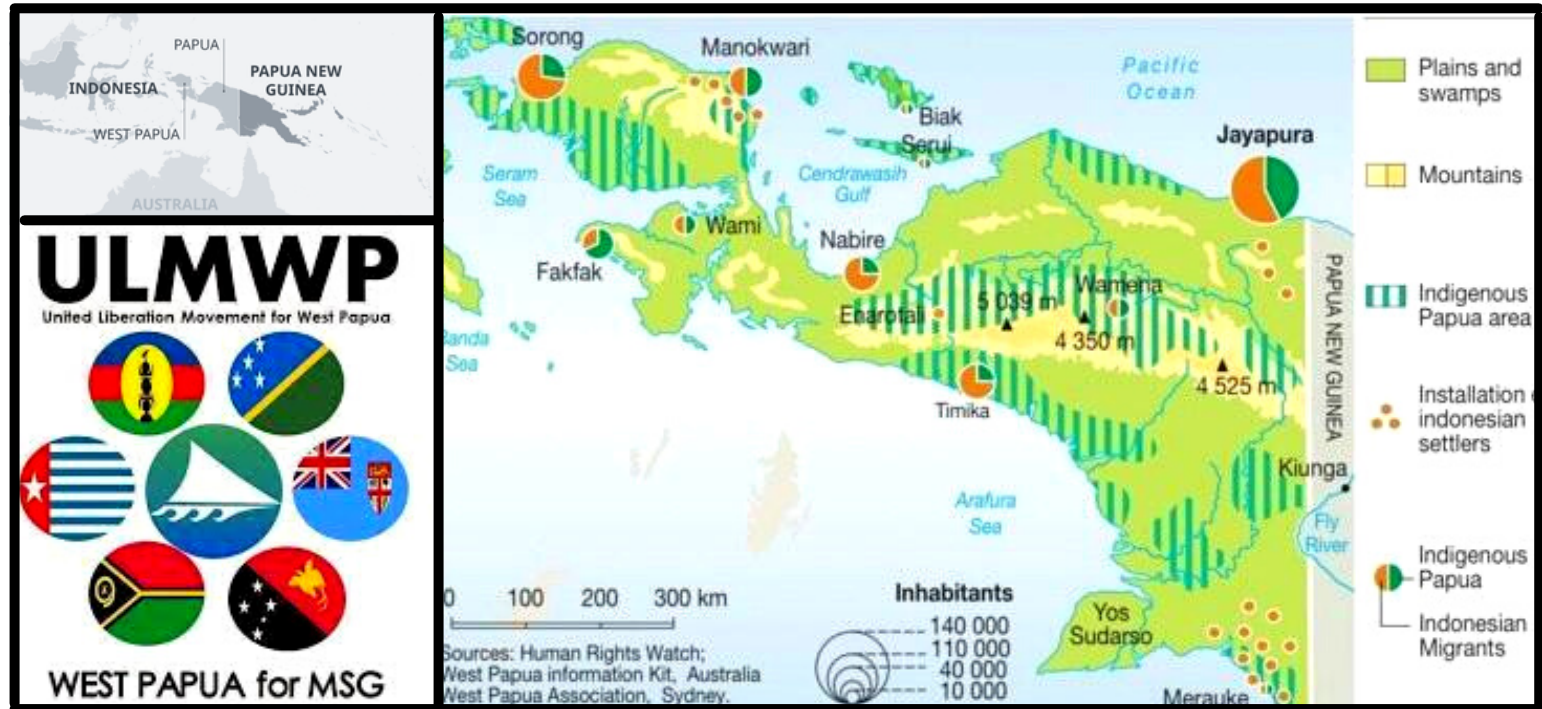
MAN OF FAITH - WILLEM MALAOLI

THE Pacific Conference of Churches noted this year with sadness the passing of Pastor Willem Malaoli, third Moderator of the Gereja Kristen Injili di Tannah Papua. As a young leader of the GKI in 1961, Pastor Malaoli took the arduous journey from the then Dutch East Indies to the British territory of New Guinea to Australia and then Samoa. He was part of the discussions which formed two important regional ecumenical organisations – the Pacific Theological College and the PCC. Identified by missionaries of the Netherlands Reformed Church as a potential leader, Pastor Malaoli was groomed and later became head of the institution. His love of God, mankind and creation was clothed in humility and a deep respect for Papuan values, culture, and relationships. Despite retiring from the ministry, Pastor Malaoli remained an active and respected member of the GKI, frequently receiving visitors at his home in the hills overlooking Jayapura. His wisdom was often sought after by aspiring leaders with whom he would spend hours, patiently explaining the critical role of the church in the lives of the Papuan people. As leader of the GKI synod, he ensured that the church never forgot its responsibilities to the people in the area of human rights and politics; its role to develop theology, evangelism, and mission; the need to create opportunities at all levels of education, including a system of schools; and the possibility of building of a self-reliant institution. Due to political circumstances, Pastor Malaoli was little known outside of his native land. But to members of the worldwide ecumenical community who were privileged to meet this inspirational man of God, he will never be forgotten. Pastor Malaoli did not live to see a free West Papua, but he left a legacy for Papuans and advocates for self-determination. Perseverance in the struggle, while continuing to respect all people were his guiding principles, along with love of God through living in peace with neighbours. Pastor Malaoli's life was a true reflection of the GKI motto taken from Paul's Letter to the Ephesians: "for once you were darkness but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light." Here, indeed, was one who walked in the light as a child of God.



MIGRATION OR GENOCIDE?

Indonesia's national transmigration (transmigrasi) has seen close to one million non-Papuans move into Papua in a State-funded social genocide. Landowners around the resource rich areas of Timika and Sorong where mining and forestry are the mainstay of the economy. Settlements have also been created around the larger cities of ... Jayapura and Merauke to create opportunities for people from the islands of Java and Sulawesi. Next on Indonesia's agenda is a trans-insular highway to open up the previously untouched Central Highlands where the government has issued a mining concession over three million hectares of virgin forest. Villagers in these areas have been accused of subversive activities, their homes bombed, forcing them into refugee camps. Any Indonesian can move to Papua and receive assistance for transportation or to establish farms and businesses. Transmigration has severely limited opportunities for employment of Papuans in private sector activities. Studies show that in many regions of West Papua the indigenous people, forest dwellers such as the Moi and Asmat, have lost their traditional way of life not only to deforestation and mining projects but also to the recently revised Transmigration policy. Transmigration is part of the Indonesian government's stated policy of assimilating indigenous people with the goal of forging a single national identity. Breakout Quote "The rights of traditional law communities may not be allowed to stand in the way of transmigration sites" Clause 17 of Indonesia's Basic Forestry Act, 1967 "... it is not permissible ... for a community based on its traditional rights, to refuse to allow forest land to be cleared on a large and organised scale for the implementation of large-scale projects undertaken in the framework of plans to increase the production of foodstuffs and to shift the inhabitants". Article 2 of the Basic Agrarian Law of 1960



RETURN TO MELANESIA

In 2013 the West Papuan delegation to the World Council of Churches General Assembly in Busan, South Korea, attempted to raise awareness on the human rights issues affecting their people. Tortured and killed by Indonesian security forces, the Papuans had a perfect platform to tell the world and its churches of the atrocities faced and their cry for freedom. But nobody would listen. The Pacific delegation learned first-hand from the Papuans – mostly members of the Gereja Kristen Injili di Tannah Papua – of the difficulties and decided to act in solidarity. Each day in the central arena of the WCC General Assembly, the Pacific Youth performed dances and songs from throughout the region. The captivating performers from American Samoa, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Maohi Nui (French Polynesia), Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu were scheduled for their finale and a crowd was guaranteed. Hasty discussions took place. It was decided that the Pacific would not stand idly by as their brothers and sisters in Papua suffered at home and on the international stage. On the final day as the crowd gathered in anticipation, the Pacific church leaders walked solemnly to the stage to the beat of drums and the chants of their youth and stood before the world. In silence, their ranks parted. The Papuan delegation, resplendent in their yellow batik shirts and cassowary head-dresses emerged and took centre stage. Hands over their hearts, they broke into the haunting strains of Hai Tanakhu Papua (Oh, My Land Papua) – the national anthem banned by Indonesia. Tears flowed freely but in this act of spiritual healing, Papua returned to the organisation it helped form in 1961. On that day, relationships were renewed and the GKI applied for membership in the PCC. In 2015, the PCC Moderator Reverend Dr Tevita Havea attended celebrations marking the 160th anniversary of the arrival of Christianity in West Papua and a year later the GKI assumed full membership. Since then it has been joined by three more churches and this has led to the formation of a West Papua Council of Churches which speaks regularly and forcefully on human rights issues.





THE FIJI CSO AND THE MADANG DANCE

Self-determination and the issue of West Papua have always been on the Pacific civil society agenda. But after the PCC engagement with Papuans at the World Council of Churches, civil society grasped the issue with renewed vigour. Supported by Germany's Bread for the World which funds much of the Pacific's CSO activities, it was decided to meet in Papua New Guinea with Papua on the agenda. Ironically, the meeting took place at Madang. And it was at the madang (Korean court yard) that the fire for involvement in the Papua cause was lit. The Bismarck Ramu Group from PNG with the Pacific Network on Globalisation, Social Education and Empowerment Programme and PCC formed a coalition to work on Papuan issues. A youth group – the Youngsolwara – was born out of that meeting and guided by PANG has been instrumental in raising awareness on Papua among young people throughout the region.



ON THE GROUND IN PAPUA

Through partnerships with the Pacific Theological College and the GKI, the PCC has provided on the ground training and technical support in Papua since 2015. Previously, members of the GKI attended English language training at the PTC's Veitu Campus in Suva, Fiji. When this became difficult due to logistical and security issues, short courses were conducted in Jayapura by PTC and PCC staff. Communication training has also been conducted for the GKI and several of its local partners in Jayapura. English language training is critical to ensure that Papuans can communicate their stories, their suffering in a language understood widely in the global community. It is only when the message of the atrocities in West Papua is heard by wider audiences that the world will take notice. The PCC remains committed to ensuring this message is told and heard. The PCC provided technical support and media coverage through its communications unit for the GKI Synod at Raja Ampat in 2017, ensuring that critical messages from the event reached a global ecumenical audience. Editorial oversight, assistance and training has also been provided for church magazine staff, photographers and executives.



SPECIAL AUTONOMY LAW EXTENDED

This year Indonesia extended its Special Autonomy Law (OTSUS) 21 of 2001 over Papua, without consulting the indigenous people. Originally enacted in 2001, the law allows a number of special provisions for the region, including preferential treatment for the indigenous people, a provincial parliament and a territorial flag. OTSUS Plus has been widely rejected by the Papuans themselves as a way to silence their aspirations for Merdeka (freedom). Programmes and funding under the special autonomy laws have been generally ineffective when it comes to tackling Papuans' basic problems, in particular, the aspiration for independence from Indonesia. The rising number of student protests in 2019 were due in some part to the realisation that Indonesia intended to extend its 20-year OTSUS without consulting the people.

Some of the provisions under OTSUS Plus are:

ARTICLE 4 (1):

The authority of the Papua Province includes authority in all areas of government, except for the authority in the fields of foreign policy, defense and security, monetary and fiscal, religion, and the judiciary as well as certain authorities in other fields as stipulated in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations.

ARTICLE 4 (2):

In addition to the authority as referred to in paragraph (1), in the context of implementing Special Autonomy, the Papua Province and regencies/municipalities are given special powers based on this Law.

ARTICLE 4 (3):

The authority of the regency/municipality includes the authority as regulated in the statutory regulations.

ARTICLE 4 (4):

International agreements made by the Government which are only related to the interests of the Papua Province shall be implemented after receiving consideration from the Governor and in accordance with the provisions of the laws and regulations.

ARTICLE 4 (5):

Papua Province may enter into mutually beneficial cooperation with overseas institutions or agencies in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations.

ARTICLE 4 (6):

The Governor coordinates with the Government in terms of the defense spatial policy in Papua Province.

ARTICLE 4 (7):

Provisions regarding the exercise of authority as referred to in paragraph (1) and paragraph (2) shall be regulated in a Government Regulation. (Provisions regarding the procedure for giving consideration by the Governor as referred to in paragraph (4) shall be regulated by a Perdasus.(special local regulations)

ARTICLE 76 (1):

The division of provinces and regencies/municipalities into provinces and regencies/municipalities may be carried out with the approval of the MRP and DPRP after seriously observing socio-cultural unity, readiness of human resources, economic capacity, and developments in the future. which will come.

ARTICLE 76 (2):

The Government and the House of Representatives may carry out the expansion of provincial areas and regencies/cities become autonomous regions to accelerate equitable development, improve public services, and improve community welfare, as well as elevate the dignity of the Indigenous Papuans by taking into account the political, administrative, legal, socio-cultural aspects, readiness of human resources, basic infrastructure, capacity economy, future developments, and/or the aspirations of the Papuan people.

ARTICLE 76 (3):

The expansion of the provinces and districts/cities as referred to in paragraph (2) shall not be carried out through the stages of preparatory areas as regulated in the Law concerning regional administration.

ARTICLE 76 (4):

The expansion must guarantee and provide space for Papuan Indigenous People in political, governmental, economic, and socio-cultural activities.

ARTICLE 76 (5):

The establishment of an autonomous region shall be carried out in accordance with the provisions of this Law and shall be stipulated by law. Despite the ratification of the law, Papuans remain adamant that it will not be accepted by the people. Papuan advocacy groups continue to seek representation in Pacific regional trade and political blocs, including the Melanesian Spearhead Group.



SOURCE: LOWY INSTITUTE



SOURCE: ASIA PACIFIC REPORT

ULMWP, VANUATU - HEART OF MELANESIA

Vanuatu has long been the champion for self-determination in West Papua, lobbying with Pacific governments to recognise and support the struggle for freedom. In 2016, Papuan movements associated with the fight for freedom came together as a united front after a meeting hosted by the Vanuatu Council of Chiefs and the country's churches. This was the result of years of coordination by the PCC and its Vanuatu members with support from civil society – particularly PANG and the Pacific Island Association of Non-Government Organisations. Vanuatu has stated that it aims to seek membership for Papua, through the United Liberation Movement for West Papua, in the Melanesian Spearhead Group. This is in line with Kanaky (New Caledonia's) FLNKS admittance to the MSG as a full member. The PCC continues to urge its member churches in Melanesia to seek support from governments for the ULMWP to join the MSG as a representative of Papuans.

CURRENT SITUATION

Current Situation Indonesia continues to push its transmigrasi (transmigration) programme, moving thousands of Javanese into Papua to reduce the influence of the indigenous population. It is calculated that if the current trend, Papuans will be only half the population of the island in 2030. The struggle for independence continues, with church, civil society and political groups forming alliances with external partners. This includes the United Liberation Movement for West Papua pursuing entry to the Melanesian Spearhead Group and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat as a representative of the people. Four church groups have joined the Pacific Conference of Churches and their leaders frequently consult and update their peers in the region on matters of importance. The Pacific Conference of Churches has grown its membership in Papua and also helped to form the West Papuan Council of Churches. This group forms the starting point of ecumenical discussions on how Papuans can unite to discuss issues critical to their human rights from a theological perspective. Advocacy on the human rights abuse by members of the Indonesian security forces continues to be an issue for the PCC. Much of the work on the West Papua issue is to create awareness in the region, particularly among churches. The goal is to organise a visit to Papua by the UN Human Rights Commissioner. In its current work, the PCC maintains a spotlight on Indonesia, keeping the issue firmly in the spotlight and ensuring that Indonesia knows the world is watching.



WEST PAPUA: FOUR FACTS ABOUT INDONESIA'S OCCUPATION

It is one of the world's longest-running military occupations.

It is possible that Indonesian rule constitutes a genocide.

West Papuans overwhelmingly want independence.

The Indonesian state is terrified of international exposure.



DO YOU WANT TO HELP?

When it comes to self-determination, everybody can lend a hand, even you. If you'd like to help by becoming an advocate on the issues you've seen here, send us an email at media01.pcc@gmail.com and we'll be happy to put you in touch with our staff to work out a personal plan.

Should you wish to help financially, email us or contact our General Secretary, Reverend James Bhagwan jamesb@pcc.org.fj for details on how you can make a difference.

We also have a limited number of internships available. So email the Programmes Manager, Frances Namoumou, francesn@pcc.org.fj to see how you can join our staff for a temporary position and help in the struggle for Pacific freedom. Thank you for your interest and God bless you!