



Solidarity for Indigenous Papuans response to the call for submission by the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls on young women's and girls' activism

Introduction

1. The Solidarity for Indigenous Papuans (SIP) is a network of CSOs and individual activists aspire to address human rights and environmental issues experienced by the indigenous people of West Papua. Our members are mostly women and young girls who dedicate their lives to addressing issues of concern in their respective communities regardless of the circumstances they face in their daily activities as women activists.
2. Our women and girls go through some unthinkable experiences as activists under the hands of state apparatus, cultural orientation of masculinity, and lack of support from the wider community. West Papua is among one of the toughest places to be a woman activist due to: (1) the existing armed conflict between West Papua National Liberation Army and Indonesian Military, (2) humanitarian crisis caused by the armed conflict, (3) state backed land grabbing and environmental destruction by international corporations, and (4) heavy military build-up in the region.
3. Our case is based on experiences of Ms. Adolfina Kuum from Timika Papua province of Indonesia who is the director for Lembaga Peduli Masyarakat Mimika Timur-Jau (LEPEMAWIL) focus on addressing environmental and human rights issues caused by the Freeport Mine within the Mimika regency of Papua province.
4. Current humanitarian concerns in West Papua include: (1) continuous armed conflict between Indonesian Military and West Papua National Liberation Army, (2) IDP crisis in six regencies, people are still displaced most of the victims are women, children, girls, people with special needs and elderly people, (3) land grabbing issues lead to human rights violation occurring in almost all parts of West Papua, and (4) kidnapping, disappearance, rape and murder due to heavy military build-up.
5. West Papua's women's and girls' activists face both offline and online abuses. Offline abuses include; (1) intimidation and threat posed by State military apparatus, (2) underestimation by the community due to patriarchy culture, (3) lack of financial support for women's run organizations, (4) stigmatization as terrorists, by the state (5) racial discrimination, and (6) sexual abuse. Online abuses are countless, obvious ones are; (1) displaying of West Papua women images as sex objects on all social media platform, (2) in-boxing threatening messages and threats, and (3) funny memes on West Papuan women and girls designed and spread by bots mostly controlled by Indonesian state intelligence.

Discrimination against young women's and girls' activists in West Papua: Case of Adolfina Kuum

6. Ms. Adolfina Kuum is among many of the West Papuan women's activists currently active in West Papua focus on environmental destruction and human rights abuses caused by the Freeport Mine in the surrounding communities.



1. What problem are you working on? How did you choose it, why is it important to you?

I am working on addressing environmental and human rights issues focused on Eastern Timika area where the tailings from the Freeport Mine are destroying our peoples' livelihoods and environment. As a local woman experiencing the adverse effects of how mining induced environmental crisis can affect the peoples' livelihoods, I have no choice but have to take the lead in my community to address the issues. The mine has been in operation since the late 1960s and our men folks fought and died just to be recognized as land owners of the mine and for the company to play its corporate social responsibility well so that our people can also benefit from it. I decided to take up the challenge because if we remain silent who will speak for us? Our men have fought and died for it, all we have is women, girls, orphans, and people with special needs.

It is important to me personally because we see land as our mother that provides everything for us, seeing our mother being destroyed without recognizing our presence by the companies is really unjust for us. I take the challenge to maintain our people's struggle for recognition, to continue the advocacy through NGO networks for our voices to be amplified so that the company and the Indonesian government can recognise our rights. My focus is to advocate for the communities in the 3 Districts and 23 villages affected by Freeport's tailings waste. My friends and I founded LEPEMAWIL 8 years ago to document, research, campaign, and mediate for and on behalf of our people. Our goal is for Freeport and the Government to see the impact of the mine in the environment and our communities. Our rivers, forests, and swamp lands are being destroyed, also disrupting people's livelihoods and culture. They have a responsibility to rehabilitate the damage they have caused and continue to cause in our peoples' lives.

2. Are you part of an organization or network? What type of organization or network do you belong to? How are you organized?

At the local level, I am one of the leaders in the LEPEMAWIL a local NGO group we established in 2014 to advocate for our issues. I was instrumental in establishing the organization in 2013 and was appointed as the Director of the organization to lead since then. I am still holding the director position at the moment. I am also a member of the Solidarity for Indigenous Papuan a Provincial level CSO network that aspires to advocate for indigenous issues in the province. At the national level I also have working relationships with national NGOs in Jakarta.

3. Do some of your activist actions require financial support? How are you financed?

Finance is vital in every organization from small to big organization. We lack funding in our organization, most of our community programs are done on voluntary basis. Programs that need funding at the moment are; Mangroves planting program, community awareness program, research program and our daily running of the organization. We are self-funded organization without financial support from any institution. We collect money through mandatory membership fees and list donations as well as fundraising to run our programs. It is not always enough to fund our programs.

4. What are your main areas and levels of engagement (local community, national or international level), with which actors and political authorities do you most often engage? What influences your choice of actors and spaces and are you considering expanding your engagement to a different level?

The main areas of my engagement are at the local level for all our programs but we engage with the provincial and national NGOs and network for advocacy purposes. Our main programs at the community level include; awareness to communities on environmental risks, planting mangroves, research and engage with local authorities. Our problem is one of the issues of concern internationally so our focus is to ensure our voices reach the international level by whatever means possible.

I have a network with NGOs nationally, local and international, the goal is to campaign for the problems of indigenous peoples in 23 villages affected by the disposal of industrial tailings waste and also to campaign for the support of regular donors for our community work in Papua.

5. Are your activities mostly done online or offline or both? What influenced your choice?

Our activities are carried out offline and mostly in villages there are also online but that is with network friends in certain events and advocacy purposes.

6. Do you work with other individuals and organizations, how and why?

We are independent and do not cooperate with any individuals or institutions. We engage with our networks for advocacy purposes.

II. The motivation and impact of your activism

1. What motivated you to become an activist? What is your vision, your goal?

My motivation comes from my own experiences as a woman from Amungme and Kamoro tribes who have been oppressed and neglected by the State and Freeport Mine, did not recognize us as human beings but fauna.

My vision is to ensure that my peoples' rights are respected and they be compensated in full by the Freeport Mine for all the damage it has cause to our environment and livelihoods.

I assisted in establishing LEPEMAWIL to empower in villages affected by Freeport's wastes. My goal is that I want the Amungme and Kamoro to live with dignity, respect and fulfil their basic rights as human beings and be able to enjoy the natural wealth of Timika which is their right.

3. What factors encourage you to continue your activities?

The factor that drives me is this is about the calling of the homeland as a woman who gave birth to life on earth. I feel pain seeing the injustice around me and my heart cries and screams to help others.

4. What did your activism bring, how did it change your life?

What changed my life as an activist was living independently, being strong in facing problems, being brave, committed, responsible, living freely even though exiled from home, relatives and always prioritizing the interests of others over myself.

5. What are the main successes of your activism?

I'm still struggling and have not succeeded but I managed to see and hear people appreciate my efforts and trust me to advocate for the problems faced by women, youth, indigenous peoples and even common people in my work area.

6. To what extent does your activism influence State authorities, including policies and laws? Why and in what specific way?

Our activities are not that influential because the state considers us as enemies of the state. We appear to be influential on the local authorities but with the provincial and national authorities, we are just another separatist campaigning for independence of West Papua in another form. It is hard to predict whether our advocacy is being heard by the authorities because all we know is military and police everywhere, and things keep worsening.

Supporting factors and good practice

1. Are there any factors/individuals/entities that facilitate your work? How?

I work with lots of my staff and other friends in my network to advocate for our issues. The organization I am running has a small working space where we work mostly do admin work.

2. What/who is the main source of support? Why and how do they support your work?

There is no main source I run on the support of prayers from the community affected by the impact of waste disposal. We do not have any source of funding, all our activities are not funded, and we do it on voluntary basis.

3. What is your network of solidarity and support? And what is the role of activists young and old?

My network of solidarity and support comes from women and girls as well as our tribal people and my staff and their families. I also have support from my network connections and friends from local, provincial and national NGOs.

4. Are there specific issues and platforms of your engagement that receive special attention and support from government agencies? Give some real examples and positive practices.

The water pollution problem was serious. We held meetings with the government and companies but after that they never spoke to us again. When we went to get further information, they used many excuses and refuse to provide concrete explanation as to why fish in the rivers and sea near the mouth of the polluted waters are still dying.

The second case of mass fish deaths occurred in 2016 the government called the CSOs and the local parliamentarians (DPR) to verify the sources of the cause of death. We provide a report after our investigation under the Special Committee that we formed. The company hired their own experts to investigate the incident but they did not publish the result of the investigation. The company and the government cooperated to silence the information by blaming the cause of death to natural phenomenon. They said that fish died because they came to the shallow waters where they have not used to live. However, the fish keep on dying since 2016 up to date. Our people are still not satisfied with how the Freeport and Indonesian government hide scientific information from the public.

5. Are there state-supported local structures for children and youth (eg children's parliament, youth leagues, etc.)? To what extent do you take part in this structure and why?

There is nothing of such structures existing in West Papua. Indonesian government sees every activist that speak against its development policies are enemies of the state in West Papua. It has been like this since West Papua was annexed in 1962.

6. Do you feel that the national legal/policy/institutional framework adequately supports, protects and supports your work? Why and in what specific way?

There is a national law on environmental management, but it has not been implemented while local regulations have never had regulations that support our work here.

7. What positive/good practices and innovative initiatives do you see in promoting and protecting your work?

The activists in West Papua work best in the interest of the indigenous Papuans but the government see us as enemies of the state. We enjoy what we do, our initiatives are good for our people but the government see it is promoting separatism.

IV. Structural challenges and barriers

1. What challenges do you face in your job?

General Challenges include; (1) Do not have an office to work, (2) Having no funding in our advocacy work we work on mandatory donations and community member contributions, (3) Our geographical location and distant villages do not have sea transportation facilities, (4) State stigma against human rights activists and environmentalists as separatists, (5) Community stigma as a woman activists due to existing patriarchy culture, and (6) Security threats, terror, and intimidation.

2. Do you feel you have been discriminated against for being a woman and more specifically, a women's activist? Do you see which groups of girls and young women are most affected?

Special Challenges;

Stigma in the cultural context of the Amungme Tribe by the Community

As a female leader in a patriarchal society, I have lots of experience of stigma, such as “she is only a woman,” She does not have the power and knowledge to do things and other such talks.

Society in general: women are underestimated, view as second class citizens, our voices are not often heard, women are not respected, the rights to freedom of association, the rights to political freedom, the rights to freedom of speech, the rights to participate in public affairs, women are not involved most of the time in anything with the government or companies that enter operations in our area. Gender equality has not been maximized and finalized, the majority of the male group always assumes that the kitchen, washing, and bathing the children are women's work, they as the head of the household are obliged to earn money, while they are not aware that what about widowed women and orphans are they not the head of the family? who feeds them.

The impact of Patriarchal Culture which is still rooted in the Papuan community is one of the challenges for women activists and grassroots leaders among the Papuan people.

Stigma and special labels against Papuans by the Indonesian government, they labelled us as separatists, terrorists, rebels, left and right groups.

Internal impact:

In 2014 we had a secretariat where our Community members gathered in our community and work, but now we don't have a secretariat. There was a case of our secretariat being destroyed by Indonesian military, they broke down the windows of the house and stole all the documents and took all the secretariat's computer and camera equipment. The military used one of our own employees; he was bribed by the military to show them our secretariat.

External impact

- The government, companies, traditional institutions, private institutions and local political elites in Timika, who think that our presence has interfered with their interests.

- Terror, intimidation, threats are monitored, our activities are monitored with the power of the security forces to silence all our struggles.

- NGOs and traditional institutions in Timika are not independent because their work program is funded by the Freeport Company, so it is difficult for them to argue about the injustice of the natural and environmental damage that has occurred here.

The Freeport company is aware and doesn't want to care about what is going on. The impact of waste disposal into the Ajikwa river has extended to the Arafuru Sea, meaning that areas that are not concessions are also affected today, such as the Agimuga District, Jita District and other coastal areas. We advocate for this community. Indigenous people who live in 23 villages in the area are directly affected. They promised in April 2014 to come with us to go down to 23 villages to meet community victims in 3 districts, but it did not happen. Freeport committed fraud against us. The company and the government operated the mining project without involving us the indigenous people. Our community have been demanding for justice for the last 10 years.

3. Did you face any special obstacles related to your actions? Examples include prejudice based on gender and age, restrictions on freedom of expression, speech, assembly, liberty, etc., legal restrictions on your capacity to give legal consent, legal age for marriage, etc.

Yes, as a woman, patriarchal culture is still strong among the Papuan people

4. Have you encountered laws, policies, and practices that hinder your participation, activism or collective action?

All laws and regulations made by the State and local governments are only to legalize their interests, so for us the law is used to oppress the small people. Laws are good but they are toothless when it comes to dealing with common people, looks like the laws in Indonesia is written for the Asians and not the Melanesian people of West Papua.

5. Have you encountered any groups, institutions, or technologies that hindered your participation, activism, or collective action?

Especially for my area, Papua, the Freeport district, so the traditional institutions and NGOs here do not give us support because they are afraid that Freeport will not fund the program from their institution. Papua in general, we face internet shut down most often when the conflict between West Papua National Liberation Army and Indonesia Military is high or when there is a protest by the CSOs.

1. Have you ever been threatened (in any way: directly or indirectly, anonymously, online, etc.), prosecuted, or punished for your activism, participation, or defense of a particular issue? If so, will you be able to access justice?

Yes, I have been threatened directly many times. They terrorized me through the both online and offline especially through media, our website was hacked, our accounts were blocked and hacked. In 2014 my secretariat was destroyed, they took our flash drives and computers, CPUs, and stole our data. We were monitored and followed every move; we were even arrested in public several times.

7. Have you ever felt that your family, your community, the State, human rights groups and other actors do not support or respect your evolving capacities and interests? Why?

We have no support because the other groups are funded by the Freeport and they do not speak about injustice in fear of their budget being cut. We feel alienated because we are the only ones talking about the negatives but everyone is happy about the current treatment.

2. What is pan for COVID to affect your work? In what ways was that impact felt in your work?

It really affects all roads being closed, we can't access a problem or news that is happening, or even our activities are limited so it's difficult to do advocacy to the community. The government and companies are using this pandemic situation and don't want to serve people's complaints in offices.

We can't hold meetings, discussions or protests; we are disbanded and silenced because of covid 19.

V. Recommendations/way forward

1. The UN needs to establish some funding opportunities for women activists like us, for me I feel like no assistance coming from all directions because I am an indigenous women leading an organization in a male dominated environment.

2. Legal protection for us activists is another requirement

1. What will help you in your work?

For now, funding support for building offices and our community work is our need because when we build our office, military come and destroy and loot everything we have. UN needs to talk to Indonesian leaders about the behaviours of their military in Papua. We are not animals; we are human beings, we only want our freedom and our own environment to be enjoyed by us. For Indonesian government to treat us like animals on our own land is not right at all.

2. What recommendations would you have for other countries and politics?

Indonesia's human rights record is negative; I wish that the other countries and the international corporations should look at human rights record as well when considering investments, because their investments fuel conflicts in local communities.

3. What actions do you think are needed from various actors (State, civil society, private sector) to better enable you to influence decision-making?

Campaign support and pressure from foreign countries to the government of Indonesia

VI. There's more you want to share

(see attached report for further information on our work).