



AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA
BRUSSELS

No. 197/DB/XII/2018

Brussels, 6 December 2018

Dear Hon. Ana Gomes,

Allow me at the outset to convey my warmest greetings to you.

Further, I wish to take this opportunity to share with you some information relating to the recent developments in the Indonesian provinces of West Papua and Papua, particularly in light of ongoing news and reports about the attacks by criminal armed groups against civilian construction workers on 2 December 2018 in the Nduga Regency, as follows:

1. The Indonesian Government under President Joko Widodo has accelerated development of various infrastructure projects in Papua and West Papua as part of the national priority.
2. Due to the provinces' vast total geographical span of 420,540 km² (approximately 22% of Indonesia's total land area), economic activities in Papua and West Papua are mostly concentrated in a few places that interact relatively little with each other. Most of these are on or very near the coast. In the interior, the mountainous highlands mostly contain scattered, small economic units centered on public administration and subsistence farming.
3. In this regard, strong infrastructure including roads, bridges, power plants, schools, sanitation, seaports and airports are highly important in West Papua and Papua. These facilities will allow greater connectivity, thus freeing remote areas from isolation as well as providing a multiplier effect to increase productivity and robust economic activities, helping to improve socio-economic well-being of the Papuans and eventually lifting the region out of poverty.
4. The Government's continuous efforts to develop infrastructure projects in West Papua and Papua, however, are frequently confronting negative campaigns as well as violent attacks perpetrated by criminal armed groups, often at the expense of local Papuans themselves. Such criminal acts undermine the hard work and clearly run contrast to the noble mission of the Government to bring peace, prosperity and security to the region.
5. Most recently on 2 December 2018, violent attacks were perpetrated by criminal armed group called the West Papuan Liberation Army (WPLA) against civilians at Nduga Regency of the Papua province. The initial media report claimed that the attacks killed 31 innocent civilian construction workers at the Kali Aorak Bridge and Kali Yigi Bridge projects at the Yigi District, Nduga Regency, so far the deadliest of such kind. According to the report by CNN Indonesia on 5 December 2018, some of the victims were hacked to death. **We strongly condemn those criminal attacks and we will bring the perpetrators to justice.**

6. On 4 December 2018, the WPLA leader Mr. Egianus Kogoya claimed responsibility for all the attacks. Further, Mr. Kogoya stated that the motive of the attacks was because the group is against and refuses to allow any development of infrastructure projects made by the Indonesian Government in Papua.
7. Previously in February 2018, the WPLA made a declaration of war against the TNI and had since then been involved in series of deadly gunfire exchanges with the authorities in the Highlands regencies of Puncak Jaya, Nduga, Timika and Lanny Jaya. In October 2018, the WPLA held hostage 15 school teachers and medical workers for two weeks as well as raped one teacher in Nduga Regency. Not only these criminal acts bring misery to the Papuans, it has deprived them of the much-needed economic opportunities for a better living condition.
8. As a response to the December 2 incident, President Joko Widodo immediately instructed the Chief of the National Police as well as the Commander of TNI on 4 December 2018 to carry out an investigation which subsequently confirmed the heinous attack. According to the Chief of the National Police, 20 people were killed including 1 TNI officer. Furthermore, President Widodo has ordered the Commander of TNI as well as the Chief of the National Police to bring to justice all perpetrators of the attack.
9. President Widodo underlined that despite threats from certain groups, the Indonesian Government remains determined to realizing numerous infrastructure developments across areas in Papua and West Papua, for the Papuans.
10. The Kali Aorak Bridge and Kali Yigi Bridge projects are part of the 278.6 km-long Trans Papua segment 5 (Wamena-Habema-Mugi-Kenyam-Batas Batu-Mumugu Port) initiative launched in 2016. In May 2017, President Widodo visited the project to observe its progress and mandated relevant authorities to accelerate its development. This project aims at building 35 bridges due to be completed by 2019. At this moment, the project is already 70% completed. President Jokowi underscores that the Trans Papua project, once completed, would speed up the mobility of goods and people as well as distribution of logistics to reduce logistics and transportation costs.
11. West Papua and Papua are two rapidly growing provinces of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. The two provinces enjoy high economic growth of 8.3% annually over the past 10 years, much greater than the national average growth of 5% per year. Papua has also witnessed positive developments after being granted special autonomy status since 2001.
12. The Indonesian Government also actively pursues affirmative action and promote indigenous entrepreneurship and education for Papuans. Many Indonesian citizens from Papua hold key positions in the Government. Currently in the Joko Widodo administration, the Minister for Women Empowerment and Child Protection Mrs. Yohana S. Yembise is a respectable Papuan woman to assume this job. In the current and previous administrations, native Papuans have also served as Minister for Environment, Minister for Marine and Fisheries, Minister for Empowerment of State Apparatus and Minister for Acceleration of Development in Eastern Indonesia, Governors as well as Ambassadors.

I hope this information will provide you with a better understanding on the developments of this issue as well as on the real nature of criminal armed groups in Papua and West Papua such as the WPLA which keep obstructing national development projects in the two provinces, carrying out criminal and rebellious acts against the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) as well as unjustifiably killing and terrorizing innocent civilians to achieve their criminal goals.

Please accept, Honorable, the renewed assurances of my high consideration.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yuri O. Thamrin', with a horizontal line underneath.

Yuri O. Thamrin

Hon. Ana Gomes, MEP
Chair of Indonesia - European Parliament Friendship Group
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BELGIUM