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# A Peaceful Dialogue between Papua and Jakarta, Indonesia: A Critical Review

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### ABSTRACT

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The political conflict in Papua has persisted since 1969 and has taken a toll in lives and property. Meanwhile, the military approach by the Indonesian government and the sporadic resistance of the Free Papuan Movement have not achieved Papua Tanah Damai (PTD) [Papua, the Land of Peace] for the Papuan people. This academic paper uses a library research method focusing on a literature review that discusses the object of study. With regard to analysis, this study employs qualitative research, consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. In addition, this paper is based on the author's long period of observation to produce a broader perspective on the Papua settlement. Indeed, since the 1998 reformation era, there has been an attempt to resolve Papua through dialogue, which became the policy of each Indonesian President, but with different implementation. However, peaceful dialogue is hard to achieve. This study explains the challenges to carrying out the dialogue through four issues: revisiting the declaration of Papua's Land of Peace; examining the policies of Indonesian Presidents towards Papua and the path of peaceful dialogue after the reform era; exploring a meaning of 'independence' that can contribute to the realization of peaceful dialogue; and explicating the political challenges that become obstacles to the Papua-Jakarta peace dialogue. To conclude, this paper argues that a complete settlement for Papua can only be reached through peaceful dialogue between Papua and Jakarta, Indonesia.

## **Introduction**

This section explains the protracted conflict and conflict between Papuan nationalists and the Indonesian government, especially after the 1969 referendum (Act of Free Choice) was held in Papua. Before the referendum, Papua was a bone of contention between the Netherlands and Indonesia since the Dutch were reluctant to hand over Papua to Indonesia. Various developments between the two countries, including mediation efforts involving the United Nations, are still needed to solve the problem in Papua.

The 1969 referendum in Papua resulted in the region being officially integrated into the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia. The UN acknowledged the referendum, although Papuan nationalists harshly rejected the result, accusing it of being the result of gross manipulation and intimidation. As a result, the issues in Papua remain unresolved. Established in 1965 prior to the referendum, the Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM) [Free Papua Movement] resisted the referendum. This organization gave birth to the rebellion that has been active for decades against the Indonesian government. The Indonesian government has responded negatively by utilizing a military approach. Another source of hatred among the indigenous Papuans toward the government is the marginalization and rampant poverty of Papuans compared to other regions in Indonesia. Moreover, the arrival of large groups of Muslim migrants shifted the demographic balance as several regions became dominated by the Muslim population. Papua, an island once well-known for its Christian-majority population, was transformed into a Muslim-majority region.

Various efforts to find a comprehensive solution to the Papuan problem have yet to yield results. A non-security approach only makes things worse. Infrastructure development to improve welfare since the reformation era in 1998, with the implementation of special autonomy and regional expansion, has not decreased violence. One of the ways that has been fought for up till now is a peaceful dialogue between Papua and Jakarta, Indonesia. However, the path to achieving a peace dialogue has many challenges. In short, the issue of Papua is very complex and efforts to bring about dialogue remain an issue that must be fought for.

Previous studies on Papua focused more on vertical conflicts and human rights violations. In contrast, there are few studies that seek peace dialogue as a solution to the problem in Papua; this study aims to fill this gap and offers a theoretical explanation for resolving the Papua issue through peace dialogue between Papua and Jakarta.

This paper reviews the literature in accordance with the research object. The author

relies on written sources, including articles, books, newspaper clippings, and other relevant sources. A qualitative method was used in analyzing the desk review findings through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion.

The author argues that a complete settlement of the Papua issue can only be reached by means of a peaceful dialogue between Papua and Jakarta, Indonesia. Indeed, since the 1998 reformation era, there has been an attempt to resolve the Papua issue by means of dialogue, which became the policy of each Indonesian President but with different implementation. This paper covers four issues. First, it revisits the declaration of Papua's Land of Peace. Second, it examines the policies of Indonesian Presidents towards Papua and the path of peaceful dialogue after the reform era. Third, it explores a meaning of 'independence' that can contribute to the realization of a peaceful dialogue. Fourth, it explicates the political challenges that become obstacles to the Papua-Jakarta peace dialogue.

### **Revisiting the Declaration of Papua's Land of Peace**

The Declaration of Papua Tanah Damai (PTD) [Papua as a Land of Peace] was made by a number of Papuan religious leaders on 5 February 2003. PTD is a peace framework that embodies a vision to achieve real peace on the island. It is crucial to know its genus to comprehend it fully. The PTD declaration was constructed in a situation where indigenous Papuans had suffered from long-protracted conflict and longed to live in peace. Initially, a youth group, including students, promoted Papua as a 'Zone of Peace' in the hope of attaining a peaceful society. The term 'PTD' was not utilized at that time.

Papua as a 'Zone of Peace' was related to an initiative launched by people in Yapen Waropen. At a meeting in Serui, the capital city of Yapen Waropen, the participants agreed to live peacefully in the region. The author maintains that the willingness for peace related to the New Order regime policy that took a violent approach toward Papuan nationalists, including the Biak massacre on 6 July 1998. The approach was implemented to stop Papuan nationalists from achieving independence. The participants wanted the meeting not to be deemed subversive against the government. After that, in a formal meeting on 17 September 2000, Marthen Tanawane, a tribal leader, declared Yapen Waropen a 'Zone of Peace' (Giay, 2004; Tebay, 2007). The meeting gathered a thousand people from small islands around Yapen. Local government representatives and police also actively participated. The meeting concluded that participants wanted to become peace ambassadors (Giay, 2004).

The Yapen Declaration success was known throughout Papua, and people wanted to

replicate it in the region. According to Giay (2004), the Yapen Declaration encouraged some steps to be taken to achieve peace in Papua. First, the churches needed to collaborate with the Institute for Human Rights Studies and Advocacy (Elsham), an NGO in Jayapura, to actively exchange information on human rights violations toward Papuans. They also must work together to transform violence into a peace culture. Second, religious organizations needed to be united in discussing the peace initiative and integrating it into their programs. Then, through a reconciliation and peacebuilding process in Papua, studies and training in peace reconciliation and human rights could be integrated into theology faculties and university programs in Papua. Third, some seminars and conferences on peacebuilding and reconciliation funded by the Catholic Church and theology faculties should be continuously supported. Fourth, military aid to Indonesia must be stopped since it represented international support for Indonesian policy in Papua through maintaining a culture of violence within the area (Giay, 2004).

The Yapen Declaration resonated strongly in Jayapura, Papua. In 2001, Theo van den Broek and his circle discussed the concept of Papua as a Zone of Peace in Jayapura with 40 civil society organizations, including the local government. At the end of the meeting, they defined freedom as the willingness to free themselves from any oppression (Hernawan, 2013). Dewan Adat Papua (DAP) [Papuan Customary Council] also had serious discussions on the matter as they considered the attainment of peace was paramount. In addition, Elsham initiated a conference on Papua as a Zone of Peace attended by local stakeholders. Papua as a 'Zone of Peace' was chosen and approved as the slogan. This denotes that Papuans desire peace and freedom from any physical and psychological conflicts (Tebay, 2007).

Thus many parties, including religious leaders in Papua, approved the idea of making Papua a 'Zone of Peace'. Conceptually, Nimer (Abu-Nimer, 2003) suggests that religious leaders are pivotal in peacebuilding. This is due to the importance of religion, along with politics and economics, as a source of conflict. Appleby (2000) shares a similar sentiment and maintains that every religion has traditions for legitimating conflict and war. However, at the same time, it can also function as a source to promote peace and conflict resolution.

Religious leaders in Papua, including those of various churches and Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim leaders represented by Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) Papua, fully supported Papua as a 'Zone of Peace' because they saw peace as a hope for the indigenous Papuans and Indonesian migrants to live in communal harmony. However, these religious leaders' belief

in Papua as a 'Zone of Peace' could be misconstrued and misapplied (Tebay, 2007) because some areas in Papua can be categorized as a 'Zone of Peace' and others can be assumed to be a 'Zone of War' instead. Hence, they prefer Papua as a 'Land of Peace' rather than a 'Zone of Peace'.

Undoubtedly, religious leaders' ideas and opinions inspired the Papua Land of Peace declaration. First, Catholic Bishop Leo Laba Ladjar from Jayapura, Papua, proposed a comprehensive peace, which is manifested in humans by harmonious relations with God, humanity, and all humankind. Thus, peace comprises physical health, social relationships, and welfare. These are the components to achieve a dignified life as citizens, members of society, and children of God. Peace now encompasses truth, reciprocity, fairness, and opportunities for growth, going beyond violent conflict. In addition, peace ensures the protection of human rights, justice, and economic and social rights (Tebay, 2007).

A Protestant leader, Herman Saud, asserts that peace is a universal value, while I Gusti Made Sunartha, a Hindu leader, maintains that peace is the hope of all people and the source of happiness. According to Sunartha, the term 'peace' is always included in any prayer in the Hindu tradition as one recites Om Santih, which translates as 'may there be peace'. MUI leader Zuber Hussein believes that Islam fosters peace. This is apparent in the Muslim's greeting assalamu 'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh [may peace be upon you and may you be blessed with the mercy of Allah].

In the early Reformation Era, communal conflict erupted in some regions of Indonesia (Sambas, Sampit, and Ambon). The Ambon conflict (1999–2021) prompted the PTD Declaration. A peace accord was agreed in 2001 in Malino to solve the conflict in Ambon, and the Islamic fundamentalist militant organization Laskar Jihad lost its influence (Hasan, 2006), after which its leader, Ja'far Umar Thalib, reportedly attempted to promulgate a jihad in Papua, exploiting the protracted conflict, notably after East Timor obtained its independence through a referendum (Al-Makassary, 2015).

These religious leaders carefully discussed and considered PTD more practical than the Papua Zone of Peace. Hence, they declared Papua a Land of Peace on 5 February 2023 (Tebay, 2007). Andreas Ayomi, chair of the Communion of Churches in West Papua, maintains that the declaration of PTD makes it everyone's responsibility to achieve peace (as cited in Tebay, 2007). Moreover, PTD aims to be a reminder that, to date, economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR), and civil and political rights (CPR), continue to be denied, through an excessive

military approach, welfare gaps in Papua, and deteriorating houses of religion outside Papua. In a conference commemorating 'Papua Land of Peace' on 4 February 2013, Herman Saud reminded attendees of various contemporary challenges to achieving PTD. These challenges include religious dogmatism, the tyranny of the religious majority, and a lack of interfaith collaboration in the education, economic, and health sectors (Al-Makassary, 2015). In this regard, the PTD declaration resonates with the concept of peacebuilding as a process defined by Lederach (2007). In summary, Lederach argues that there are two dimensions of PTD: peaceful dialogue and maintaining social harmony. PTD, in essence, is a social construct developed by religious authorities that represents the aspirations of peace-loving Papuans to prevent conflict and create peace (Hernawan, 2013).

The conflicts in Papua cannot be resolved through a security and violence approach. To resolve political conflict in Papua, the author maintains that dialogue is the best solution. In order to accomplish this commendable objective, Tebay created a PTD framework through a program called 'Dialogue Between Jakarta and Papua'. He elaborated on components of 'truth and justice' in the Papua Land of Peace architecture by encouraging dialogue to resolve conflict in Papua. Dialogue, for Tebay, is a way to eliminate violent conflict. Tebay published his ideas and created the Jaringan Damai Papua (JDP) [Papua Peace Network] in 2010 to reify his ideas for peace. He collaborated with Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia (LIPI) [Indonesian Institute of Science], chaired by Widjojo at that time (Hernawan, 2013).

JDP has been the leading actor in encouraging peaceful dialogue to solve the problems in Papua. However, JDP is in a dilemma because, on the one hand, their peace activities are viewed as a movement to support Papuan independence, and on the other, OPM suspects that JDP works for the Indonesian government. Hence, suspicions from both parties regarding the JDP's vision and efforts have hindered a peaceful dialogue initiative (Al-Makassary, 2017). In this regard, Tebay (2007) asserts that the Indonesian government normally sees any peace attempt in Papua as a component of the campaign for Papuan independence. Unfortunately, peaceful dialogue to resolve the problems in Papua remains nebulous due to the death of Neles Tebay on 14 April 2019.

### **The Policies of Indonesian Presidents for Papua and the Future of Peaceful Dialogue**

The reformation era began after Soeharto's regime was overthrown by people's power (Aspinall & Fealy, 2003). Papuans endured human rights violations and violent crimes

committed by the Indonesian military during the post-Soeharto period. Those in Papua who lived through these transgressions remember that they experienced *memoria passionis* [memory of suffering]. Theo van den Broek (personal interview, 25 October 2018) popularised this phrase in Papua when he began issuing a series of reports and articles from the Diocese of Jayapura's Sekretariat Keadilan dan Perdamaian (SKP) [Secretariat for Justice and Peace] under the name *Memoria Passionis*. The phrase was borrowed from German theologian Johann Baptist Metz, who used it to describe the Catholic liturgical service encompassing Jesus' death. Slowly, the phrase started to appear often in articles concerning issues in Papua. Until now, SKP still uses *Memoria Passionis* as the series title. SKP Jayapura reports and publications have continued to document incidents of violence and abuses of human rights against Papuans (Ariawinangun & Broek 2000; Broek 2003; Triharyanto 2019; International Crisis Group [ICG], 2002, 2012; Hernawan, 2013).

The 1998 era paved the way for Habibie to become the third president of the Republic of Indonesia, which opened a course for democracy, allowing Papuan nationalists to voice their aspirations. In July 1998, some cities in Papua were in turmoil, where a review of the New York Agreement, demilitarisation, and a new referendum were demanded by many Papuans. A thousand people conducted demonstrations, sang their national anthem, and raised their flags.

President Habibie expressed an interest in resolving the issues regarding Papua through dialogue at the commencement of his presidency. He established a fact-finding team chaired by Abdul Gafur, the vice chair of Indonesia's People's Consultative Assembly at that time. The team reported to Habibie that Papuans were petitioning to replace the name 'Irian Jaya' with 'Papua' and demanding autonomy. The President withdrew the status of Papua as a military operation area in October 1998, nearly thirty years after it was first enforced. He also agreed to open discussions with the Forum Rekonsiliasi Irian Jaya (FORERI) [Irian Jaya Reconciliation Forum], a working group established on 24 July 1998, functioning as a representative of Papuan stakeholders. They submitted three alternatives for Papuans to select from: 1) total independence, 2) broad autonomy within the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia, and 3) the formation of a federal state (Raweyai, 2002).

Habibie and his cabinet met with Kelompok 100 [Group of 100] for a discussion in Jakarta on 26 February 1999. Tom Beanal, the Group leader, read a joint statement in which Papua requested total independence rather than integration into Indonesia. An open

proposition to separate from the Republic of Indonesia was, in essence, one of the meeting's primary points (Maniagasi, 2001). This shocked Habibie and his 21 cabinet members. Despite paying close attention to the expectations of the *Kelompok 100*, he insisted that independence was impossible. The plan to realize national dialogue also came to an end simultaneously. As a result, Indonesia detained the *Kelompok 100* members, forbade them from traveling, and prohibited separatist organizations from gathering to discuss and endorse Papua's independence.

FORERI held its first-anniversary celebration on 23 and 24 July 1999 at Cenderawasih University in Abepura. It was attended by 25 members of *Kelompok 100*. The Group discussed the dialogue's outcomes in each of their regions throughout the event. Fifteen people traveled to Jakarta on 15 August 1999 to meet with President Habibie and share the conclusions of their exchange. Regrettably, no response was forthcoming following the submission to the President.

On 30 August 1999, during his brief administration, President Habibie supported an UN-sponsored referendum on Timor Leste's independence, leading to the separation of this region from Indonesia. The referendum result that granted independence to Timor Leste aroused concerns among members of the People's Consultative Assembly of Indonesia and the Indonesian National Armed Forces about the country's sovereignty. Timor Leste's secession from Indonesia was a significant factor in Habibie's brief presidency. After taking office he had acknowledged that he was a transitional president and pledged to organize an election as soon as feasible in 1999. Habibie's efforts to tackle the issues surrounding Papua through national dialogue ceased when the ruling Golkar Party appointed Akbar Tanjung as their presidential candidate.

Abdurrahman Wahid succeeded Habibie as president on 20 October 1999. Being a democratic and open-minded leader, President Abdurrahman provided Papuan nationalists with a forum for discussion. On 1 December 1999, he initiated a new discourse, permitting the Morning Star flag to be hoisted as long as it was lower than the Indonesian flag (Kirksey, 2012).

A 'General Meeting' and 'People's Congress' (the second in Papuan history) were organized by Papuan nationalists in 2000 in Sentani and Jayapura, respectively. The congress was designed to be a true 'people's meeting', putting forth the political agenda of the Presidium Dewan Papua (PDP) [Papua Council Presidium] along with the people's policies. Nevertheless, Papuan pro-Indonesian nationalists, who received Jakarta's support, opposed



this. Prior to the People's Congress in Jayapura, Papuan Indonesian nationalists assembled in Sorong to state their political stance that Papua is an integral part of Indonesia. From 23 to 26 February 2000, a few weeks after Abdurrahman's visit to Papua, the General Meeting was set to be held. The Meeting elected representatives from among traditional and other community leaders and officially established PDP. Theys Eluay was elected chair. He was a Golkar Party official in Papua and a delegate in Pepera (the 1969 Act of Free Choice which voted for Indonesian control over Papua) who advocated Papuan integration into Indonesia. The Meeting also elected Tom Beanal as vice chair and other members.

Demands were made during the People's Congress in Jayapura from 28 May to 5 June 2000 to reinterpret the history of the integration of Papua into Indonesia. This attracted thousands of indigenous Papuans to attend the congress. The Papuan representatives urged that PDP proclaim the Republic of West Papua. Furthermore, the legislature formally confirmed that the name 'Papua' should replace 'Irian Jaya'. In summary, the People's Congress successfully united the Papuan people behind the idea of independence (Alua, 2000; Raweyai, 2002; Maniagasi, 2001).

Following the congress, the frequency of OPM assaults decreased substantially. Even though they continued using the hit-and-run and kidnapping strategy at times, the PDP desired a peaceful resolution for Papua, including with the organization. As a result, several members of OPM were also recruited, making PDP the primary vehicle for the struggle for independence in Papua. Following the conference, PDP members had difficulty disseminating their ideas to the public. Several deadly incidents happened in Papua as a result of conflicts between pro-Indonesia and pro-Papuan independence forces, which hindered Papua's efforts to attain independence. Moreover, the Indonesian government was predictably opposed to dialogue with Papua. Another issue emerged when an OPM member sealed the PDP office, alleging it was a directive from OPM chief Kelly Kwalik. Kwalik stated that the instruction came from Mathias Wenda, another OPM leader in Vanimo, PNG (Raweyai, 2002).

The Indonesian government's responses toward the Papuan Congress showed inconsistency. Abdurrahman Wahid took an open stance. He helped organize the congress gathering by donating 1 billion Rupiah and allowed the Morning Star flag to be used as a form of cultural expression. He also made plans to meet with Theys Eluay. Nevertheless, the People's Consultative Assembly of Indonesia criticized his decision and rejected his intention to alter the name of 'Irian Jaya' to 'Papua', as they deemed it an ineffective step to resolve

the issues surrounding Papua. Abdurrahman's approach based on dialogue was in contrast with the military's repressive approach, which included restricting the hoisting of the Morning Star flag in some locations (including Merauke and Sorong) and shutting down Papuan protests. In summary, both the Indonesian People's Consultative Assembly and the Indonesian military were apprehensive about losing Papua, much as Indonesia had lost Timor Leste under Habibie's presidency.

The notion of national dialogue faded as Abdurrahman's position eroded due to alleged corruption in the Logistics Affairs Council and his attempt to dissolve the People's Consultative Assembly of Indonesia through a presidential decree. The Indonesian National Armed Forces retook control of Papua using oppressive methods. The PDP's struggle was exacerbated when some of its leaders were arrested on 14 May 2001 for suspected treason, and their cases were tried in court. Eluay was charged with treason for participating in Papuan Congress actions advocating independence for Papua and raising the Morning Star flag.

The PDP's failure to achieve its goal of allowing Papua to determine its own political fate coincides with the Indonesian government's willingness to appease Papuan nationalists by granting the region Special Autonomy status. The history encompassing Papua's status as Special Autonomous Region is exceptionally complicated. The status was granted to Papua some years after Soeharto was deposed and after the Papuan people had been disappointed by the central government's decision to divide the province in two. As a result, many Papuan nationalists advocated independence, believing that Special Autonomy was intended to suppress them from expressing their aspirations to determine their own fate.

Historically, the law on Regional Autonomy was passed in 1999, governing the political and economic decentralization of all regions in Indonesia. The People's Consultative Assembly of Indonesia established various policies for Aceh and Papua in terms of regional autonomy. They emphasized the significance of increased autonomy for Papua at its annual conference in 2000. In the months that followed, Solossa, the Governor of Papua, assembled a committee to draft regulations focusing on the Special Autonomy of Papua. By April 2001, when the draft was virtually finished, it included the transfer of authority to local governments, the allocation of 80% of Papua's earnings to the province level, and provisions for the protection of Papuan culture and values. In October 2001, the proposal was presented to and approved by the House of Representatives.

According to Law No. 21 of 2001, which officially came into effect on 1 January 2002,

Papua was recognized as a region with Special Autonomy. This regulation enables the Papuan people to participate in regional policy formulation, be involved in strategic issues such as upholding justice and respecting human rights, accelerating the economy, and increasing the welfare and progress of the local people by respecting equality and diversity. This further involves the protection of Papua's natural environment and culture. Special Autonomy emphasizes the importance of preserving and respecting culture while also allowing Papuans to exercise their rights in economic and political activities (Report of the Republic of Indonesia, 2004). For the Indonesian administration, this Special Autonomy was the culmination of a protracted discussion to find mutually acceptable resolutions to the conflict in Papua. The administration believed that independence would bring wealth and provide opportunities for Papuans to flourish and establish a better, more peaceful future within the framework of the Indonesian nation state (Purwoko, 2015; Sumule, 2003).

Megawati Soekarnoputri, the daughter of former President Soekarno, was elected in July 2001 after Abdurrahman Wahid was impeached by the People's Consultative Assembly of Indonesia. The administration of President Megawati was adamantly opposed to Papuan nationalism. She apologized for the Indonesian government's treatment of Papuans in a speech on 17 August 2001, insisting on seeking justice for past incidents. She, nevertheless, was opposed to Papuan independence. Megawati also supported military measures to weaken Papuan nationalism and the adoption of Special Autonomy for Papua. Indonesian Special Forces went as far as murdering the PDP leader, Theys Eluay, in November 2001 during Megawati's term in office (King, 2004).

Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, better known as SBY, became Indonesia's president in October 2004. He vowed to apply a non-military approach to ending the conflict in Papua and implement Special Autonomy. The long-delayed Majelis Rakyat Papua (MRP) [Papuan People's Assembly] was officially inaugurated by SBY following a dispute over the division of Papua into two provinces. It had been delayed for four years by the Megawati government because it was thought to be too potent and likely to lead to disintegration. Nonetheless, the MRP's jurisdiction was still restricted to matters involving women, religion, and culture. In a personal interview on 25 October 2018, Theo van den Broek stated that the Minister of Defense curtailed the MRP's authority after the leader of Batch I (Volume 1) declared that Special Autonomy was a failure and needed to be abandoned. SBY disregarded the MRP and forcibly ousted prominent critics within the leadership of Batch II (Volume 2), including MRP's chosen

chair Agus Alua.

In his ten years in office, SBY initiated several projects to improve the infrastructure in Papua to achieve peace. One such project was the Infrastructure Project for Papua and West Papua (UP4B) to stimulate growth in those regions. In addition, the exchange of ideas between Jakarta and Papua continued, and SBY participated in this exchange but preferred to call them 'constructive dialogue'. Unfortunately, SBY was unable to produce meaningful outcomes through this constructive dialogue throughout his tenure as president.

President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) brought new optimism to the national dialogue with the organizations supporting Papuans to decide their own political fate. He committed in December 2014 to make three visits to Papua per year and to utilize diplomacy to end the situation there. He made seven trips to the region between January 2014 and January 2021. As a result, many Indonesian and Papuan citizens saw improvements in their infrastructure, such as roads, markets, and land bridges (BPS Papua, 2020). Regardless, the problem of violations of human rights, which would be addressed, according to the promise he made at the beginning of his presidential tenure, has taken a backseat and remains unaddressed (Chauvel, 2019). This supports Warburton's observation (2016) that Jokowi's government focused primarily on deregulation and infrastructure rather than human rights and political reforms. Furthermore, his offer to name a coordinator to realize a peace dialogue regarding Papua has yet to be fulfilled.

Jokowi's commitment to apply a non-military approach to resolve the issues in Papua remains in question. In his two terms as president (2014-24), he has increased the deployment of Indonesian armed forces for civil and practical assignments which had faded after Soeharto's resignation in 1998. In conclusion, Jokowi has allowed the National Armed Forces to conduct programs at all governance levels, from the central to the urban village, to preserve the nation's stability, including in Papua. In addition to the MOU signed between the civil agencies and the National Armed Forces to conduct these programs, a number of former generals have joined Jokowi's administration (Sebastian et al., 2018; Solihah et al., 2019). Moreover, it currently appears that the military has returned to addressing issues in Papua in an aggressive way. A recent example of this includes the fatal shooting of Pastor Yerima perpetrated by a member of the military on 19 September 2020 (CNN, 2020).

In conclusion, throughout the history of Indonesia, each president of Indonesia had employed a different approach to a comprehensive resolution of the issues in Papua, most

notably using the military to support their policies. President Soekarno used the National Armed Forces to take military action to take control of Papua from the Netherlands. President Soeharto often involved the military in subduing the OPM, civilian resistance, and those supporting pro-Papuan independence. In contrast, President Habibie, who was in office during the 1998 reformation, ordered the military to be Papua's non-violent territorial guardian. A similar approach was also seen during President Abdurrahman Wahid's tenure. His successor, Megawati, prioritized upholding the territorial integrity of the Republic of Indonesia and often used the military to confront Papuan Nationalist Leaders. President Yudhoyono, a military man, took a different approach. Instead of relying on the military to uphold his policies, he strived to empower dialogue channels. President Jokowi, like some of his predecessors, appears to use the military to back his goals by involving military officers in the management of development initiatives, giving crucial positions to military veterans, and absolving aggressive military measures against Papuan Nationalist organizations.

### **A meaning of 'independence' that can contribute to the realization of a peaceful dialogue**

The perception of independence for indigenous Papuans is, in fact, not singular (monolithic). For Indonesians, independence meant to officially obtain sovereignty from the Netherlands in 1949, which was preceded by a physical revolution from 17 August 1945 until the implementation of the Konferensi Meja Bundar (KMB) in 1949. Indonesia commemorates its Independence Day every year in various manifestations, from ceremonial celebrations and cultural attractions to games. Indirectly, the independence that is being fought for by the independent Papuan organizations (OPM, KNPB, ULMWP, etc.) is just like Indonesia's independence from the Netherlands, according to arguments made by Papuan nationalists. However, the meaning of independence for all Papuans is not singular.

Jason MacLeod (2007) describes at least six meanings of the word independence, which overlap and intersect because they are rooted in the long Melanesian cultural resistance of Papuan nationalists and in the politics of millennialism.

First, independence is viewed as a struggle for a sovereign state and independence as a new state. For those who agree with this, independence is often described as a claim for a free Papuan state. For instance, Chauvel (2019) noted that because of the combination of injustice and repression, the call for freedom is more strongly echoed today than in 1961, when the

Morning Star Flag was first raised and the song *Hai Tanahku Papua*, composed by I.S. Kijne, was sung on 1 December 1961. However, Kirksey (2012) wrote that the demand for Independence for Papuans does not indubitably involve the creation of a new state. Some Papuan activists expressed hope for independence "for a new system of government based on a model of indigenous authority that is different from the state."

Second, be independent as *hai*. Some regions of Melanesia have a long history of what anthropologists refer to as "cargo cults" or millenarian movements. Benny Gai prefers the word *hai* used by the Amungme people, which means 'hope' that oppression will turn into justice, peace and well-being, although it is recognized that *hai* has many interpretations.

Third, independence as a theology of the liberation of Papua. For some pastors, independence is part of liberation theology that aims to build a world that values human dignity and justice incarnated in the land of Papua. This can be seen from the role of the church as an institution that is Papuan in color and independent. The question from many religious people is, to what extent do churches and pastors really need to play this role in liberation theology? Do we agree with the movement to fight for an independent Papua in the sense of independence that is based on a new country? How to respond to a priest in the name of a prophetic voice for independence?

Fourth, independence is viewed as restoring local traditions, identity and indigenous forms of government. For those who live in remote areas, independence can be understood as a single indigenous government that restores and restores the form of government, traditions, culture and identity of the community. It implies being able to control one's own identity, resources and traditions. One of the Baliem Valley indigenous leaders stated at a group activity conducted by USAID that they do not care about the political status of Papuans and are more worried about the ability to meet the needs of their groups.

Fifth, freedom as a *Mobu* is the existence of the ability to fulfil needs materially, spiritually, with freedom from hunger and disease. In essence, the basic needs of the community are met.

Sixth, independence is a movement to restore human dignity. We often hear of some Papuans being treated like animals or being inhumanely oppressed. Independence means removing oppression and raising human dignity.

The absence of a uniform perception of independence, especially among Indonesians who understand 'independence' as the separation of Papua from Indonesia, closes the door to a

peace dialogue. Thus, there is a need for cultural dialogue at many levels to anticipate such a stalemate so that independence is not merely interpreted as an attempt at separation from a sovereign nation. The author refers to this potentiality as cultural values that can be maximized to push the willingness to solve the problem in Papua through peaceful dialogue and, consequently, navigate the flow of peaceful conflict resolution. The following section will look at the challenges of peace dialogue more broadly.

### **Political Barriers to the Settlement of Papua in Dialogue**

The discourse of dialogue as a way of settlement is strongly voiced. However, there are several political obstacles in realizing the Jakarta-Papua dialogue for *Papua Tanah Damai* (PTD), which need to be overcome.

*First*, dialogue is suspected of being a dignified way to achieve Papuan independence. This suspicion is based on the prejudice that the endpoint of this dialogue is an independent Papua. This is because the dialogue is mainly voiced by indigenous Papuans and various NGOs who are committed to human rights. In other words, when certain groups more strongly voice the demands for dialogue and do not reflect the spiritual voice of the public beyond religion, and ethnicity, dialogue at this point can be suspected of being a political vehicle to fight for an independent Papua. This perception applies to some people who are for the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia and who are not willing to have a Jakarta-Papua dialogue. Here, a shared perception of 'independence' needs to be agreed upon that it does not only refer to separation from a unitary Indonesia.

*Second*, related to the first point above, who will represent Papua in the predicted dialogue? It is a fact that there are 250 ethnicities with different languages that inhabit the land of Papua. The various ethnicities in Papua are also not fully united, and there is no charismatic leader who can really be the leader of Papua today. The case of fragmentation of supporters of Kamp Pantai [Beach Camps] and Kamp Pegunungan [Mountain Camps] after the elections in Papua seems to be evidence of a black hole for Papuan unity, where Papua itself cannot be said to be anything homogeneous, not to mention the younger generation born from mixed marriages, who are members of the military and police and the sons of Papuan veterans; in other words, Papua's internal dialogue will be much more challenging to realize due to sharp fragmentation and friction compared to dialogue with Jakarta. The plan of the Papuan People's Congress in early August 2015 was the real touchstone before arriving at the

Jakarta-Papua dialogue. In short, Papua representation should be involved in planning the peaceful dialogue, even though it takes work to achieve an agreement.

*Third*, the *Papua Tanah Damai* (PTD) discourse socialized by the JDP with its ten indicators, especially the last, which is 'on freedom', gave birth to a dilemma. Two things should be clarified here. First, the PTD by the JDP differs slightly from what the *Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama* (FKUB) [Religious Leaders Forum for Tolerance] is fighting for in Papua. This fact was revealed in a gathering in Bali of the interfaith network made by Dian Interfidei Yogyakarta. FKUB is more focused on PTD as a vision and tends not to pursue political paths. Instead, the JDP seems to be more strategic and political. Although several FKUB individuals were involved in JDP activities personally, the author has, so far, seen no official support or voice of FKUB to support the Jakarta-Papua dialogue. Uniquely, Neles Tebay, the JDP supervisor, is also a member of the FKUB, while I am more positioned as an academic who will be critical for peace in Papua. Also, the indicators of freedom in the *Papua Tanah Damai* by the JDP may connote the notion of self-determination, which may be understood negatively by the Indonesian government and people who love the Republic of Indonesia. In the end, whether FKUB support is needed for the idea of a Jakarta-Papua dialogue is something that must be studied further, considering the determinant role of religious/customary leaders in Papua. Also, what does the JDP refer to as the interpretation of freedom? As a result, it is necessary to agree on the concept of Papua Land of Peace.

*Fourth*, the content or topic of the dialogue, with the source of funding, still needs to be clarified. This is the most crucial thing. What is the content of the dialogue? It concerns what the two sides want to discuss. What kind of settlement is offered, whether renewed special autonomy, a referendum, or independence? It must also be further socialized to erode suspicions that the agenda of dialogue is wrapped in certain political interests, especially ignorance about the allocation of funds obtained to drive these activities. Hopefully, there will be a reliable audit of JDP funds due to suspicions of donor interests behind the disbursement of funds. At the very least, the agenda and content of the dialogue must be formulated to accommodate the interests of both parties. It is a job that takes time and exceptional resilience. To conclude, both parties need to determine the content of the dialogue, including the options that can be agreed upon in a planned peaceful dialogue.

*Fifth*, facilitators are also an important issue. Who will be a genuinely impartial and neutral facilitator? The JDP seems to be moving from a dialogue participant with ongoing



activities to a facilitator. Whether both parties accept the JDP is an important question, as is how to convince the public that the JDP as a facilitator stands above the interests of both parties. Finding facilitators from outside parties who may be neutral is also an option. However, the last thing that may be a stumbling block to the realization of dialogue is the implication of two very equal parties that Jakarta may not be able to accept. The author maintains that a neutral facilitator from abroad, such as the international mediator assisting in the Aceh settlement, is an option that can be agreed upon by both conflicting parties.

*Sixth*, what kind of dialogue is intended by Jokowi? The mistake made by President Habibie in granting a referendum on East Timor, has given birth to a domino effect and fostered a wave of separatist movements that almost made Indonesia a second Balkans. All the existing sovereign states view that Indonesia has not moved away from the adherents of classical realism that puts national sovereignty above all else. It is essential to see what kind of dialogue Jokowi will offer or what kind of concept the JDP proposes. My prediction is that Jokowi will still attach importance to national sovereignty, with policies that will pay more attention to the ideology of development and welfare to solve the Papuan problem—for example, the planned construction of railway corridors from Sorong and Manokwari. However, I am pessimistic about whether there will be a Jakarta-Papua dialogue during Jokowi's second term as president. In the long run, efforts to encourage a peaceful dialogue should be continuously promoted.

Apart from the various political obstacles that overshadow the complexity of the Jakarta-Papua Dialogue plan, several principles for dialogue must be regarded as golden rules if the dialogue is to be realized, namely the equality of the parties to the dialogue, mutualistic relations (reciprocity), the absence of judgment and truth claims, and being ready to present joint decisions accepted by both parties. This last principle will be a differentiator in whether a dialogue can be productive or counterproductive because two positions that stand at diametrically opposite poles seem difficult to reconcile if both are firm regarding the ideology of independence and the Republic of Indonesia unless there is a win-win solution that can be mutually agreed upon. In short, dialogue desires common ground; there is a give and take. Neither side loses or wins. Are both sides ready for such consequences? Dialogue is vital if the dialogue aims to produce common ground and win-win solutions, because if there are aggrieved parties, it is not the substance of the peaceful dialogue.

## Conclusions and Prospects

To date, Papua is the only area in the eastern part of Indonesia that is still turbulent, and this latent conflict has persisted since the 1960s if we count on the emergence of the OPM movement. Since the 1998 Reformation, efforts to resolve the Papuan issue with dialogue have not yielded results. The peace dialogue faced various issues, including no agreement on the content and format of the dialogue it wanted to conduct. The Indonesian government wants dialogue within the framework of the Republic of Indonesia, although Papuan nationalists want foreign mediation, and, in the eyes of Indonesians, want separation from the Republic of Indonesia.

Cultural values and perceptions of independence can be capitalized on to bring about peaceful dialogue. In reality, the absence of peace dialogue has put Papua's situation in latent conflict, which disrupts political stability in areas that impede development, where the economic marginalization of indigenous peoples is visible in various parts of Papua. This unfortunate situation requires political will on the part of the Republic of Indonesia and Papuan nationalists to seek a peaceful dialogue in the spirit of a win-win solution. As discussed above, several challenges in establishing peace dialogue must be addressed to reach an understanding so a peace dialogue can be realized. Without it, dialogue will never be realized, and violence in Papua still makes headlines in various media, as we have seen these days.

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