

# ***Office For Justice & Peace Diocese Jayapura, Papua, Indonesia***

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## **Introduction**

This report is meant to give some basic idea about what SKP (“Sekretariat Keadilan & Perdamaian” or “Office for Justice & Peace”) stands for.

SKP is an integral part of the Diocese Office in Jayapura, and since its formal establishment (July 1998), happens to be staffed by two Franciscan brothers (Theo van den Broek OFM and Budi Hernawan OFM). SKP works under the direct responsibility of the Bishop of Jayapura, Mgr. Dr. Leo Laba Ladjar OFM.

## **I. Reporting On Human Rights Violations**

For anyone who is a bit familiar with the situation in Tanah Papua it shall be no secret that the indigenous people of Tanah Papua have suffered from a frequent use of force and political manipulation. After losing its status as a Dutch colony in 1962, it has become a part of the Indonesian Republic via international political manipulations, thus ending dra-

matically its perspective to become an independent country. Although an “Act of Free Choice” has been staged under United Nations supervision in 1969, it left the population with no choice at all. This experience of international treachery has left deep, if not traumatic, marks in the heart of the indigenous population.

Therefore it should not surprise anybody that a basic desire to gain independence has been always present since then and once in a while surfaces with candid frankness. Over the last year, especially after President Suharto was forced to step down, the will to separate itself from the Republic of Indonesia has been expressed more clearly than ever. It was even expressed by a delegation of 100 Papuan representatives in front of the President of the Republic on Feb. 26, 1999. The expression is not just rooted in the unjust procedure way back in 1969, but even more vividly in more than 30 years of repression and suppression that this people has experienced, including arbitrary killings, torture and disappearances. Briefly, the people feel that they have had enough!

Although a lot of this suffering is still not documented, a number of recent experiences have been documented in a series of reports on human rights violations. The first report by the Diocese of Jayapura in August 1995 (a report published under the responsibility of the now retired Bishop, Mgr. Herman Munning-

hoff OFM)<sup>6</sup>, mainly focused on violations in and around a huge mining operation area in Timika (Freeport McMoran company).

*Since then, several reports followed:*

1. A report has documented the tragedy in Mapnduma (place of a hostage-taking action by the local 'liberation movement' in January 1996 and its aftermath of military operation). The report has been initially presented in May 1998 and revised as well as completed in July 1999.<sup>7</sup>
2. A report on the atrocities by the army as an aftermath of a peaceful demonstration held by local independence-activists in Biak (July 1998). The report had been initially presented in August 1998 and revised as well completed in July 1999.<sup>8</sup>
3. A report on the systematic intimidation by security forces in the Paniai area. The report was presented in October 1998.<sup>9</sup>
4. A report on the systematic intimidation by security forces in the Star Mountains-area. The report was presented in July 1999.<sup>10</sup>

While being directly responsible for the reports on Timika (1995), Paniai (1998) as well as on the Star Mountains (1999), SKP has contributed actively as well to the composition of the other reports mentioned, mainly working together with another local human rights organization (Els-HAM). On the request of UNHCR, SKP made a survey of the situation of refugees who returned from Papua New Guinea to Tanah Papua over the last couple of years. The report was published in January 1999.<sup>11</sup>

SKP will continue reporting on Human Rights violations. Via its own style of reporting, SKP has tried to draw attention to the underlying structures of repression in order to make clear that violations cannot be looked at as just separate incidents or separate cases, or as results of individual misbehavior. They are just part of a structural pattern.

Additionally, SKP tries to keep an open eye for a wide scope of what might be looked at as human rights violations. Based on the UN Declaration of Universal Human Rights, exposure of vio-

<sup>6</sup>“Laporan Pelanggaran Hak Asasi terhadap Penduduk Lokal di Wilayah Sekitar Timika, Kabupaten Fak-Fak, Irian Jaya, Tahun 1994/1995”, August 1995.

<sup>7</sup> Report coordinated by Els-HAM

<sup>8</sup> Report coordinated by Els-HAM

<sup>9</sup> *Seri Memoria Passionis* No. 2, “Laporan Situasi: Hak-Hak Azasi Manusia di Wilayah Paniai Dan Tigi, Irian Jaya”, Oktober 1998.

<sup>10</sup> *Seri Memoria Passionis* No. 5, “Dampak Kehadiran Aparat Keamanan bagi situasi kemasyarakatan dan HAM di Wilayah Pegunungan Bintang Tahun 1998-1999”, Juli 1999.

<sup>11</sup> *Seri Memoria Passionis* No. 3, “Situational Report on Returnees from Papua New Guinea to Irian Jaya, dealing in particular with returnees to the Waropko-Mindiptana area”, January 1999.

lations should not just focus on killings, torture and such, but should also focus on all varieties of intimidation or on limiting of rights such as employment, economic opportunities, speech, religious practice, cultural ex-pressions, and such.

## II. Socialization Of Insight In The Problems

The socio-political situation in Indonesia in general, and specifically the situation in Tanah Papua, have become very complicated over the past year. This also means that it is hardly understood by a large part of the population. They often have to feel satisfied with just bits of information or what a local paper tells them to believe. This is also especially true for church-workers and other educated people in the relative isolated inland of Tanah Papua. Therefore SKP has been involved in several efforts to socialize its understanding of the developments.

Besides a lot of meetings in the Jayapura-area, all the visits to the field (in 1999: Starmountains –Oksibil, Abmisibil, Kiwirok-, Mappia –Timeepa-, Moni –Bidogai-, Timika, Merauke) have been partly spent on just discussing the situation, channeling information as an effort to make people more familiar with the

problems and to complete the often very partial information they have and base their opinion (action) on. We have tried to pick up the same socialization function when publishing in national or local papers.<sup>12</sup> The best-known publication has been the one concerning the National Dialogue under the title of “Memoria Passionis.” Via this publication we have tried to picture the problems in Tanah Papua in relation to a collective memory of suffering in the past.

In the second half of 1999, SKP started to develop a course in human rights issues.<sup>13</sup> The effort is connected with the need to build up a local circle of persons in various areas who can be instrumental in handling human rights issues. There is a real need to develop a course focused on the specific situation and cultural background of Tanah Papua. Therefore, although starting with general material, we hope to gradually complete the materials used with a very local substance. For the time being, the main elements in the course (for a minimal full 4-day workshop) deal with [1] a general understanding of Human Rights, [2] an understanding of developments in Tanah Papua in relation to local human rights issues, [3] a capacity building in reporting on human rights abuses, [4] ways to move to solutions, including an

<sup>12</sup> Publication a.o.: (1) *Seri Memoria Passionis No. 4*, “Dialog Nasional Papua, sebuah kisah ‘Memoria Passionis’”, in: *Tifa Irian*, March 1999, and in: *Suara Pembaruan*, April 1999. (2) “Sikap berdialog: kapan akan kita menikmatinya”, in: *Tifa Irian*, Juli 1999. (3) “Konsep Pembentukan Komisi Kebenaran dan Rekonsiliasi, Tingkat Nasional”, in: *Tifa Irian*, November 1999.

<sup>13</sup> “Bahan Pelatihan menyangkut Hak-Hak Asasi Manusia”, November 1999.

understanding of a reconciliation-approach, and [5] human rights issues related to the gender issue. Another special key-issue might be the human rights issue related to land-problems; but that part still has to be developed and for the time being, we rely on another local NGO to fill in that gap. Over a couple of future workshops we intend to develop an appropriate course.

### **III. Efforts Towards Solutions**

Exposing human rights violations is just one side of the mission SKP stands for; another is the effort to look for solutions. It is our deep conviction that exposing problems/violations without a commitment to look for a solution is an odd activity and risks being very counter-productive. On one hand, exposure as such is a necessary part, as any solution has to start from a keen understanding and recognition of what is really happening. On the other hand, exposure risks making the perpetrators more defensive, or worse, more aggressive, especially when no way is offered to cope with the problems or the wrong that has been done.

Based on the above mentioned conviction SKP has committed itself to promoting a dialogue among the parties involved and, where possible, to look for ways of 'reconciliation' without lessening the effort for social justice to be done. This commitment has motivated SKP to take a 'pushing' role to keep local channels for dialogue alive.

In line with the commitment to look for solutions, SKP also has used the media available to reach out and voice its opinion. The articles mainly deal with the need for dialogue and reconciliation, while suggesting steps to reach that goal. At the end of last year SKP also made an effort to get "interested parties" involved in the discussion about setting up a Committee for Truth and Reconciliation.

Efforts connected with building up an atmosphere for reconciliation will be one of the main priorities of SKP in the future. This means on one hand that the SKP staff itself still has to deepen its understanding of "what reconciliation really stands for," and on the other hand to find a way to socialise this understanding. Doing this we hope that slowly openings to more dialogue and 'healing of wounds' will be made possible. The theme has been also a part (and will be more integrated in the future) of the courses we have started on Human Rights. We value the "reconciliation-issue" as the key element in our work as a church related Office for Justice and Peace.

### **IV. Participation In A Larger Network**

The mission of SKP cannot be done without joining in with other people and organizations. The reality focused on is just too much and too complicated, as well as too structural, to become objective of an 'isolated effort' by whomever. Therefore from the very beginning, SKP

has been looking to take part in a workable and effective network.

In looking for partners, SKP does not first of all look for internal church-organisations. From the very beginning, SKP has looked for local partners/ organizations that are active in the same, or a closely affiliated, field. It has specially developed a practical working relationship with the local human rights organization Els-HAM as its main partner.

On the national level the working relationship with a number of NGOs in Jakarta is on the way of being intensified, while on the international level SKP has some really supporting relations with a number of NGOs.

## **Conclusion**

This presentation of SKP and its activities indicates that a lot has to be developed, and even we still don't understand a lot of the problems we really face. Nevertheless we have the feeling that it is more than worthwhile, even a necessity, that the Church is involved in the mission to get basic rights of people recognized, respected, and promoted. We also have experienced that people are really hoping for the church to choose their side in their struggle and suffering. Over recent years, people in Tanah Papua have shown a great trust in the church, and the church is often the only place left where they can "feel recognized and respected as real human beings".<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>"Timika, December 1999, a (part of the) story", December 1999.