

ARE WE PART OF THE PROBLEM OR PART OF THE SOLUTION?

A Reflection on Two Major Problems in West Papua & what we can contribute to solve them

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Opening Comments



I am used to, and made into believing, that 'I' am only responsible for what 'I' have done, and have nothing to do with whatever other people have done, including those of my ancestors, parents, friends, or even children and my political leaders. Individual responsibilities or individualism is a catastrophic condition, at least for me anyway, for humanity in our relations to other fellow humans and other beings. This mindset is preached across the globe in the names of democracy, human rights, law and order and modern religions.

Myself as a tribesperson, and all tribal people, see things on the contrary. Every being and everybody is interrelated, interconnected and we are dependent on each other, responsible for each other, and live here in this planet because of each other, not because of "me" and "myself." We are not individual beings, but social beings, and all beings are families of the same society in the same planet earth, within the same ecology and ecosystem. We live best as human communities and community of all beings on earth. What I do affects the others, and what others do affects me. Likewise, I am responsible to solve problems created by others, as we are one "human being", in one planet, in one country, in one family, and so on.

Two Major Problems in West Papua and Their Histories²

1. Political History

The first problem in West Papua is the history of West Papua's occupation by Indonesia, began informally in 1963, then formally in 1969. The occupation is based upon three major legal instruments; starts began with the New York Agreement of 15 August 1962³. Then, the Memorandum of Rome of 30 August 1963⁴, and finally, the UNGA resolution 2504 (XXIV) of 19 November 1969.

The New York Agreement was signed between the Netherlands and Indonesia, under the UN Supervision, excluding the concerned party, West Papua or Papuan people. The agreement that outlined the principles and procedures of the Act of Free Choice to be carried out by Papuan People, but it excluded the Papuans as one of the signing parties. Is this democratic and legally justifiable to the world and legally binding for the Papuans to obey? What is the relation between New York and West Papua? Secondly, the Memorandum of Rome was signed by the USA, the Netherlands, and Indonesia, in which they agreed to give West Papua to Indonesia for 25 years (May 1, 1963-April 30, 1988) to "develop" West Papua and afterwards give the chance for the Papuans to self-determine their political future. The Netherlands as the colonial power was given the task to contribute financially for the development programme. And, strangely enough, the USA was given the full right to exploit the natural resources in West Papua without any limit of the amount to take or the limit of time whatsoever. ⁵ Again, Papuan people were not consulted nor asked for their opinion and did not sign the memorandum.



Third, and this is something to do with you and I, strangely enough, the *Republic of Ireland*, during the time when Irish people fought for a united Ireland, when the Northern Republicans felt being betrayed by their Southern friends as this country was entering a new wave of troubles just because of the division of the Island into two, the leaders of the Republic of Ireland passed the UN resolution 2504 (XXIV) of 19 November 1969⁶ that gave permission for Indonesia's re-colonisation of West Papua. Despite their knowledge that the provisions in the New York Agreement were heavily and deliberately violated⁷, the UN and the International community failed to stand for the truth and justice. Eighty-three modern states, including the Republic of Ireland, who knew well about democracy, international laws and human rights, passed the resolution. West Papua became part of Indonesia, **without** any consent from the Papuan people, without any democratic process, without any legal basis whatsoever. Forty countries, including Israel refused to give opinion to this resolution.⁸

2. Social and Environmental Problems

The second problem is regarding destruction of our natural environment, social environment, i.e., changing mountains into valleys, making rivers into poisons, converting forests into deserts, changing joy into sadness, forcing harmony into madness, sending foreigners in and pushing us out from our homes. We have our own identity, but we were, and are called



the cannibals, head-hunters, un-evangelised, pagan, undeveloped, primitive, and suggest that we do not know what we are doing and why we are doing things. To educate us, develop us, and make us more 'humane', they tell us to move from mountain ranges to valleys, to get away from our forests, they force us to forget our places for hunting, gardening and praying and tell us to look up to the sky, because we are from there and we are heading towards that direction, and to forget the planet earth in which we were born into, we live and to which we will go back.

At one point, I believed that what they were saying to me was correct, and that I must change myself. But some decades later, I discovered that their "enlightenment" was false illusion. It turned out that this "enlightenment" is the one that brought about most of the problems we can identify now in West Papua.

I am Just Wondering, "Are We Part of the Problems, or Solutions?"

This is an easy question to answer. People here will easily say, "I am not part of it. It is the old generations' fault. It is disturbing to hear these old stories. Tell me good news, I am not up to the problems right now."

Well, there is some good news. New Guinea is the home of 22% of the world's languages, 11% of the world's species of flora and fauna, the bird of paradise, the only everlasting glaciers at the equatorial rainforests, most untouched and unmapped territories, most unexploited people with their cultures. This a place of Ireland some centuries ago, with all beings that you can remember and mention, will all natural beauty and astonishing atmosphere, where peaceful life reigns, where the world calls "the paradise."

If the Republic of Ireland and Irish people are anti colonial, then are we prepared to ignore Ireland's involvement in passing resolution upon the fraudulent, shameful and undemocratic Act of Free Choice in West Papua? If we are not parts of the problems, -who will help us to do something about them?

My responsibility is to keep West Papua as it is right now, with no more destruction and exploitation, no more massacres, terrorist activities, and no more wars. I want to keep the natural and social environments as they are, not for me, but for generations to come. I want them also see and enjoy the natural world that we still have there, so that we can become part of the solutions.

To make this happen, I am humbly asking you to:

1. Ask your government, through your local and national TDs and political leaders as well as NGOs, through student's organisations and ordinary people, to withdraw itself from its signature in the UNGA resolution 2504 (XXIV) of 19 November 1969. This is the root of the problem, and I am asking you to sort this out first before jumping into gross violations of human rights as well as rapid and massive exploitation of the nature and the environments.
2. Join me, by supporting me personally, supporting my projects and supporting the cause.
3. Write to your TDs and thank them for what they have done to me here in Ireland.

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² Read more on the cases, visit <http://www.westpapua.net/cases/>

³ <http://www.westpapua.net/docs/nya.htm>

⁴ <http://www.westpapua.net/docs/rome-agreement.htm#The>

⁵ <http://www.westpapua.net/docs/books\book2\part06.htm>

⁶ <http://www.westpapua.net/docs/books\book3\part06.htm>

⁷ <http://www.westpapua.net/docs/books\book2\part06a.htm>

⁸ <http://www.westpapua.net/docs/books\book1\part06.htm>, <http://www.westpapua.net/docs/books\book3\part06.htm> and <http://www.westpapua.net/docs/books\book2\part06.htm>