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## INDONESIA CSW urges dialog with Papuan people following brutal crackdown by military

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Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) today urged the Indonesian Government to take urgent steps to address the grievances of the Papuan people after tension escalated in West Papua last week.

On October 19, the Indonesian military and police brutally suppressed a peaceful Papuan People's Congress after delegates raised the Morning Star flag, a symbol of West Papua's resistance to Indonesian rule, and declared independence. At least six Papuan people were killed and six have been charged with treason. Several hundred were initially arrested, although many have since been released.

According to media reports, the police and military fired shots into the air to disband the gathering, but some soldiers reportedly pointed weapons directly at people. Delegates were beaten by the police and soldiers with batons, bamboo poles and rifle butts. Security forces raided a nearby Catholic seminary and priests' residence. In a chilling warning, the police chief in Jayapura, Imam Setiawan, told the media, "Whoever supports separatism or subversion activity, I will do the same as yesterday. I'll finish them."

Rev. Socratez Sofyan Yoman, Chairman of the Alliance of Papuan Baptist Churches, told CSW, "We call on the Indonesian authorities to open the door for peaceful dialogue between the Papuan representatives and the Indonesia Government. Dialogue must take place without preconditions and be mediated by a neutral party. The Indonesian military and police must respect the Papuan people's dignity and rights and stop the violations. As church leaders we strongly support genuine dialogue between the Indonesia Government and West Papuan leaders to solve West Papua's problems."

CSW's Advocacy Director Andrew Johnston said, "It is overwhelmingly clear that the Indonesian military and police used disproportionate force against a peaceful gathering, flagrantly violating human rights and brutally beating and killing unarmed civilians. As a member of the UN Human Rights Council, Chairman of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and a member of the G20, Indonesia has a responsibility to uphold the rule of law, protect human rights and respect international law. The tragic and bloody escalation in tensions serves as a wake-up call to Indonesia and the international community, that the grievances of the Papuan people must be addressed. Indonesia cannot continue to suppress the Papuan peoples' freedom of expression as it did last week. Instead, a dialogue process is urgently needed, in which concerns about human rights, health care, education, development, environmental degradation and the impact of migration should be discussed, and Papua's political future negotiated. We urge the Indonesian government to take the following steps to build confidence with the Papuan people, which has been further damaged by last week's brutal crackdown: release all political prisoners, lift the ban on raising the Morning Star Flag, demilitarize Papua by reducing the military presence, and start to address the basic needs and rights of the Papuan people. The time for genuine dialogue is now."