

Statement made by John O Ondawame, Conference “Paths to Justice and Prosperity: West Papua 2007” on 9th -10th August 2007.

Decolonization Without Independence

Today, many former colonies around the world enjoy freedom and independence. However, it is not the case of West Papua for some obvious reasons. In fact, 2,5 million West Papuans are still suffering under new colonial tyranny-Indonesia, in the last 45 years of colonization. The Papuans become subject of repressions, exploitation, discrimination, and in worse case, the Papuans are facing silent and systematic genocide. There is increasing fear that the history of Aborigines in Australia and Indians in America will repeat again in West Papua in the absence of the international concern.

Main root cause of the ongoing problem in West Papua today is the denial of the Papuan fundamental rights, including Self-determination and Independence before, during and after what was called the Act of Free Choice in 1969 by the world community including the UN, The Governments of the Dutch, USA, Indonesia and Australia and its allies. Under the pretext of saving Western interests in Pacific from communist influences, the future of the Papuans were denied and then sold out from one colonial power to another—from the Dutch to Indonesia during the Cold War. The UN, the Governments of USA, Australia, The Netherlands and Indonesia betrayed the people of West Papua. This was an unfortunate story for the West Papuans, but it was also a vital mistake in the UN history that this very institution that claims its self as a champion of human rights, but same time, it becomes puppet of super powers and denied the basic human rights of the people of West Papua.

Historically, decolonization process in West Papua was started in 1957 by the Dutch, which process the Papuans were given new opportunity to establish an independence state. The colonial administration introduced ten years Papuanization program. Within this framework, new reform program was taken place, where the Papuans were allowed to establish Papuan National Council, Provisional Government, own military and police force, own currency, and introduced national anthem-*Hai Tanahku Papua*, name of the country-West Papua and national flag-*Morning Star*. On 1st December 1961, West Papuan flag was raised along side with the Dutch flag, which date the Papuans celebrate as *National Flag Day* every year.

Consequently, Papuan issue was brought to UN by the Dutch in the successive years and gained more support from the broader world community, particularly in the earlier stage, from the Governments of USA, Australia; and the most Western European and African countries. The Papuan issue was already listed on the agenda of Decolonization commission, which is also called Committee 24 of the UN as one of the Non-Self-Governing Territories that should be decolonized. The Papuans took parts in Pacific social-cultural and political activities such as member of Pacific Economic Commission, (now Pacific Islands Forum) and one of the founding members of Pacific Council of Churches and took parts in cultural and sport festivals and educational exchange program where many

Papuan students studied in PNG and Fiji or vice-versa. This means, the issue of West Papua was already internationalized, which was a diplomatic defeat for Indonesia at the UN. The Papuans believed they would be second independence state after Samoa in Pacific.

However, this hope was only a short live and it was only decolonization process without having any independence. West Papua became subject of new military conflict between Indonesia and the Dutch. By using Chinese and Soviet Unions supplied arms, money and personnel, Indonesia declared war against the Dutch in 1962, which war raised concern in Washington and Canberra and then withdraw their earlier support to the Dutch and then backed up Indonesian claims. Primary aim was to prevent any further communist influences that slowly came into Pacific. The USA government forced the Dutch to transfer West Papua unconditionally to Indonesia.

But just to manipulate international opinion, New York Agreement was signed between the Governments of Indonesia and the Dutch on 15th August 1962 without consulting the Papuans. The agreement did not provide full legal framework to respect the Papuan rights, rather, it was mainly designed to in favor of the Indonesian demands. This can be seen from those provisions of the Act, with some exceptions. Take example, The Agreement allowed to implement *One Man One Vote*, but in reality, the regime implemented Indonesian traditional style of consultation method or *Musyawaharah* during the Act of Free Choice in 1969, which Act is known as Act of No Choice for obvious reasons. More over, only 1,025 Papuans of a total population 1,5 million people were allowed to participate in the Act. Under the gunpoint, those participants were forced to vote in favor of Indonesia. Despite UN representatives to the Act criticized Indonesia for its violation of basic human rights, the UN took *Note* the result as final and then West Papua was removed from the list of the Agenda of the UN Decolonization Commission.

Since then, West Papua becomes new colony of Indonesia with serious human rights abuses and genocide. As a colony, the old but new conventional colonial systems imposed on the people of West Papua. More than 100,000 civilians have been killed, executed, disappeared, tortured, and considerable numbers of political activities and supporters are now still suffering behind the bars in Indonesian prison camps and detention centers. Silent and systematic genocide is also continuing with serious devastating effects There is increasing fear that the history of Aborigines in Australia and Indians in America will repeat again in West Papua in the absence of international community concern.

Because of the complexities nature of the problems, and also of those bad political and historical experiences as mentioned above, one remain question is how to re-inscribe West Papua again on the agenda of Decolonization Commission of the UN as one of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Here we look into two aspects: Problems and Possibilities.

The following problems have hindered the re-inscription process:

- (1). Despite the conduct of the Act of Free Choice in 1969 remains legally questionable, however, World perception are united that West Papua is already an integral part of Indonesian as a result of the shameful Act.
- (2). There is no political will of the colonial government of Indonesia who considers the issue of West Papua as not only social-economic problems but also an integral matter of Indonesia that should be solved within the Indonesian national framework.
- (3). Feel embarrassment shown by major actors such the UN, the governments of USA, Australia, the Dutch and Indonesia who violated the Papuan rights during the Act in 1969 if the issue would be brought back to the UN.
- (4). Fear of destabilizing Indonesia and Pacific region that will have serious side effects for Indonesian national unity, regional stability; and social and economic development.
- (5). Fear of increasing terrorist and Muslim Extremist activities that may promote more religious and ethnic violence in the immediate regions of concern.
- (6). There is no sponsorship given by at least five or more members of sovereign independent countries and members of the UN to bring back the issue of West Papua to the UN.

Despite all these deadlocks, the following possibilities may be taken to bring back the issue to the UN:

- (1). There must be a political will of both conflicting parties- the Government of Indonesia and the OPM, to find a lasting peace. There is urgent need to develop a capacity to see the problem and ability to find a solution. In the era of democratization, the general principles of democracy, human rights and peace must be respected and recognized and it becomes new tool to educate power elites and armed forces that may allow Jakarta to sign international conventions on political; social and economic rights.
- (2). Allow international monitoring groups-including human rights organizations, churches, journalists, red-cross and Amnesty international to pay a visit West Papua to monitor the situation.
- (3). The need of national and international pressures that Indonesia must respect human rights and willing to address the problem for the sake of his own international credibility and world peace.
- (4). Those major actors who violated the Papuan rights, particularly the UN, must admit their wrong doing and submit an Inquiry to investigate the conduct of the Act of Free Choice in 1969.

- (5). Five or more governments of sovereign independent states in the immediate region- Melanesia and Pacific, take collective position to bring the issue of West Papua to the UN-Decolonization Committee by raising the issue in the annual General Assembly meeting of the UN.
- (6). The issue of West Papua should be brought to international court of justice sponsored by a government of sovereign state/s and the court decide that the conduct of the shameful the Act of Free Choice 1969 was illegal and called for new democratic and just referendum.
- (7). The both conflicting parties agree to allow third party to mediate the conflict. NGO or a government that accepted by the both conflicting parties could play the same role.

Conclusion

As long as there is no political will of major actors of concern and regional support, any possibilities to regionalize the issue is very slim indeed. It is, therefore, the Papuans must mobilize support in the immediate region as a jumping stone for the future advancement and internationalization. Further more, put more pressure on Jakarta by exposing silent and systematic human rights abuses and genocide perpetuated by TNI and then put all efforts to allow international organizations to monitor the situation in West Papua.

In my opinion, decolonization of West Papua would take place in the near future if Melanesian regimes take seriously the issue of West Papua and then increase their diplomatic lobbies. To do this, there is needed two things, firstly, find a good leader who have a clear vision for Melanesia in the MSG-countries. Secondly and last, the level of revolutionary flame in West Papua should be much more even bigger and louder than the current one.