

# "Destroy them first... discuss human rights later"

An investigation of Indonesian Security Forces' operations in Papua's Kiwirok under international law.



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# 1. Foreword by Eliot Higgins

I believe that no human being should be subjected to gross human rights violations and abuses, regardless of where they live or what their political beliefs may be. In today's world, technology allows us to understand the plight of people who are often far from us, physically and culturally. This report, focused on the Kiwirok District in West Papua, brings to light many shocking details that demand our attention.

The grim reality of the Indonesian security force operation in the Kiwirok District is illustrated in the words of Bambang Soesatyo, the Speaker of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), who refused to prioritize human rights when dealing with the armed conflict in West Papua. Emphasizing a "destroy first, discuss human rights later" mentality shows a blatant disregard for human life and dignity. This attitude should not be tolerated by the international community.

This in-depth report provides evidence of security force raids carried out in the Kiwirok District, impacting both indigenous villages and public properties. It paints a harrowing picture of over two thousand villagers displaced and forced to live in subhuman conditions, without access to food, healthcare services, or education.

The analysis of the evidence provided raises an important question: Have the security operations in Kiwirok constituted crimes against humanity according to international humanitarian law? There appears to be substantial evidence for the existence of crimes such as extermination and the forced displacement of civilians, all hallmarks of the Rome Statute's definition of crimes against humanity.

By shining a light on these concerning events, the hope is that this report will serve as a catalyst for change in West Papua and contribute to a broader understanding of the ongoing conflict and human rights abuses occurring in this region. The international community must acknowledge these violations and act accordingly to ensure accountability for the perpetrators and justice for the victims.

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## 2. Executive Summary

On 26 April 2021, Bambang Soesatyo, Speaker of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), the legislative branch in the Indonesian political system, was quoted in the media as saying, "Destroy them first. We will discuss human rights later". Soesatyo made the statement in response to the [killing of the Papuan Intelligence Chief, I Gusti Putu Danny](#), by members of the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB) in the Puncak Regency on 26 April 2021.<sup>1</sup>

Soesatyo's statement demonstrates low regard for human rights in Indonesian security force operations against the TPNPB and shows the central government's frustration with the five-decade armed conflict in West Papua. Soesatyo called on the government to change its policy on West Papua and to take a violent approach with the armed resistance, despite its detrimental impact on the civilian population. He repeated this statement on 18 September 2021,<sup>2</sup> shortly after armed violence resulted in the death of a health worker in Kiwirok District.

This report provides detailed information on a series of security force raids in the Kiwirok District, Pegunungan Bintang Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province (until 2022 Papua Province) between 13 September and late October 2021. Indonesian security forces repeatedly attacked eight indigenous villages in the Kiwirok District, using helicopters and spy drones. The helicopters reportedly dropped mortar grenades on civilian homes and church buildings while firing indiscriminately at civilians. Ground forces set public buildings as well as residential houses on

fire and killed the villagers' livestock. In response, schools and public buildings used by security forces as bases were burnt to the ground by resistance fighters.

The attacks on indigenous villages had far-reaching consequences for the indigenous Ngalum people of Kiwirok. Analysis of satellite imagery indicates that 206 buildings in the eight villages were destroyed during the security force operation in Kiwirok, including homes and public buildings such as churches and schools. At least 2,252 indigenous Ngalum people fled their villages and have not returned to their homes as of June 2023. The security situation in Kiwirok has not yet calmed down. Security posts and sniper positions throughout the Kiwirok District restrict freedom of movement and cause fear among the displaced indigenous population. Most of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Kiwirok are forced to live in forest shelters without access to healthcare or education services and with serious food security difficulties. Many of the IDPs are women, elderly, and children. They are not receiving any form of government assistance.

The pattern of the security raids raises the question of whether the operation of Indonesian state forces in Kiwirok has been conducted according to international humanitarian law. The Rome Statute provides a legal definition for the most serious crimes such as genocide and crimes against humanity. These definitions include grave human rights violations. According to Article 7 of the Rome Statute, crimes against humanity are 'atrocities committed as part of a widespread or systematic

1 CNN Indonesia (26.04.2021): Ketua MPR: Tumpas Habis KKB Papua, Urusan HAM Bicarakan Nanti, available at: <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20210426114223-32-634743/ketua-mpr-tumpas-habis-kkb-papua-urusan-ham-bicarakan-nanti>

2 Banyuwangi Times (18.09.2023): KKB Papua Makin Biadab, Ketua MPR RI Minta TNI-Polri Tumpas Teoris KKB available at: <https://banyuwangi.times.co.id/news/berita/wfpz57wvqx/kkb-papua-makin-biadab-ketua-mpr-ri-minta-tnipolri-tumpas-teoris-kkb>

attack directed against a civilian population', ranging from murder and extermination to the forcible transfer of a population.

The open-source investigation into the security force operations in Kiwirok between 13 September and late October 2021 provided new findings that allow the conditions and circumstances of the raids to be assessed against the legal criteria of crimes against humanity as defined in the Rome Statute. The findings indicate that the aerial and ground attacks were widespread and systematic, and targeted the indigenous civilian population in Kiwirok (Article 7(1)). Additional security forces were deployed to carry out raids in villages, following the same patterns and using sophisticated military equipment. In the case of Kiwirok, Human Rights Monitor found supporting evidence for extermination (Article 7(2)(b)), and the deportation or forcible transfer of population (Article 7(2)(d)).

Although the raids caused no direct civilian deaths, people were forced to flee into the forest and live in shelters without access to adequate food and medicine, where they are vulnerable to hypothermia, malnutrition, and disease. As of 23 July 2023, at least 72 IDPs have reportedly died since their displacement. The living situation in the IDP shelters, the isolation from any form of government support, and the lack of possibility to return to their homes amount to conditions that meet the definition of Article 7(2)(b) of the Rome Statute on Extermination. The pattern of attacks is consistent with the description of the forced displacements through coercive acts as stipulated in Article 7(2)(d).

While Indonesia has not yet been willing to become a party to the Rome Statute, the definitions provided in it are internationally recognised legal norms. An investigation by the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) into allegations of crimes against humanity is necessary and mandated by Indonesian law to reveal command structures, determine who authorised the attacks, and what security force units carried out the raids in Kiwirok. ●

### 3. Methodology

Human Rights Monitor (HRM) has been closely monitoring the armed conflict in West Papua, particularly documenting and assessing media reports and data collected by church workers and human rights defenders on the ground. The churches play an important role in documenting and advocating human rights violations, as the heavy security force presence and lack of access for NGOs and journalists to conflict areas leave many human rights violations unnoticed.

The majority of media reports originate from online news platforms, such as Jubi<sup>3</sup> and Suara Papua.<sup>4</sup> Both platforms have a clear geographical focus on West Papua. These small but relatively independent media outlets have an extensive network of journalists throughout the region. Unlike most of the national media, Jubi and Suara Papua frequently publish articles on human rights abuses in West Papua that go beyond the narratives commonly promoted by representatives of the government, police, or military officials. Despite the repressive environment in West Papua, these media continue publishing interviews with victims, academics, activists, and NGOs on human rights violations.

Local partners constantly document the armed conflict and human rights violations and share the information with HRM and other stakeholders. Papuan Churches and human rights organisations seek international partners to help them amplify the information to a wider international audience. They work in a highly repressive environment, as the Indonesian Government continues to prevent international attention to the conflict by restricting access for human rights organisations, foreign journalists, and international observers.

Papuan church workers and human rights defenders went to the Kiwirok District to collect

3 <https://jubi.id/>

4 <https://suarapapua.com/>

data on the raids and the IDP shelters in the Kiwirok District. They visited multiple IDP shelters in the Pegunungan Bintang Regency, recorded witness testimonies, and collected quantitative data on the IDPs. The interviews with IDPs were important to understand the course of the air and ground raids and document the living conditions in the IDP shelters. They took photos of destroyed houses and temporary IDP camps. To get a comprehensive picture of the armed attacks, HRM complemented the data collected on the ground with open-source research and comparative analysis of satellite imagery. The main open-source applications used were 'Fire Information for Resource Management System' (FIRMS) and [Metadata2go](#).

The 'Fire Information for Resource Management System' (FIRMS), developed in 2007 by the University of Maryland, with funding from NASA's Applied Sciences Program and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provides near real-time locations of active fires to natural resource managers who faced challenges in obtaining timely satellite-derived fire information. A FIRMS US/Canada map service was launched in January 2021 in partnership with the US Forest Service. FIRMS can locate large fires on a global map. The application also allows for the historic tracking of fire locations. HRM used the application to confirm locations and dates of armed attacks involving mortar grenades and arson.

To verify the dates and times of the incidents, HRM used [Metadata2go](#), an open-source tool that analyses the metadata of photos and videos taken during or shortly after the raids. While not all media material contained relevant metadata information, it was possible to apply this method to some part of the base material.

HRM used satellite imagery comparative analysis, a technique that compares images of the same location from different dates, to identify the villages and houses damaged by the armed attacks. While the satellite images provide a detailed picture of the destruction in Kiwirok, they do not show who caused the damage. Therefore, HRM consulted with the displaced villagers, who

identified the buildings and provided information about the perpetrators.

The obtained satellite image of 30 April 2021 shows the intact villages before operations began. The satellite image of 29 September 2021 shows the damage caused by the armed attacks between 13 and 28 September 2021. A third satellite image from 3 June 2022 shows the further disappearance of buildings compared to 29 September 2021.

No suitable satellite images of the Kiwirok District taken after 29 September 2021 were obtained because of dense cloud coverage. Cloud coverage conditions are common in the Papuan central highlands, where the precipitation can reach more than 5,000 mm/year. Only until 3 June 2022, were satellites able to take useful images. In contrast to the satellite image taken on 29 September 2021, signs of burning were already overgrown by grass or plants by 3 June 2022; however, floor plans of former houses were still identifiable in the photos.

The complementary use of different investigation methods allowed HRM to develop the chronology of events. Many villages are not connected to mobile phone network coverage, which impedes the flow of information, particularly in times of conflict. Most IDPs can only access network connections in particular areas near the towns, or mission posts. Humanitarian workers and journalists are prevented from coming to Kiwirok, hence no comprehensive reporting on the raids and attacks is available. ●

## 4. Legal Framework of Crimes Against Humanity

To assess whether Indonesian security forces have committed 'Crimes Against Humanity' in the Kiwirok District, it is necessary to comprehend the underlying legal framework. The legal framework can be used as a reference to

assess findings on the ground against the legal definitions as set by international law. The Rome Statute is part of international humanitarian law and contains a legal framework with definitions of 'Crimes Against Humanity'.

It was established by the International Criminal Court (ICC) and adopted at the diplomatic conference in Rome, Italy on 17 July 1998. The treaty entered into force on 1 July 2002. The statute establishes the court's functions, jurisdiction, and structure. The Rome Statute provides the legal definition for four core international crimes, namely genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression. The ICC has jurisdiction over these crimes in three cases: first, if they were committed on the territory of a State Party; second, if a national of a State Party committed them; or third, if the crimes were referred to the Prosecutor by the UN Security Council.

Indonesia has not yet ratified the Rome Statute and does not acknowledge the ICC's jurisdiction over the prosecution of the four core international crimes. War crimes, genocide and crimes against

humanity have been given a *jus cogens* status as fundamental principles in international law because of their grave nature. This means that the prohibition against crimes against humanity amounts to a peremptory norm.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, no derogation shall be permissible.<sup>6</sup> Under international law, all states, including Indonesia, are obliged to comply with this prohibition.<sup>7</sup>

The treaty contains a legal definition of "Crimes Against Humanity". In the context of the security operations in Kiwirok, Pegunungan Bintang Regency, this is the most relevant among the four core international crimes. Article 7 of the Rome statute lists eleven crimes that may be committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population with knowledge of the attack (see box below). According to Article 7, paragraph 2a, an "Attack directed against any civilian population" means a course of conduct involving the multiple commission of acts referred to in paragraph 1 against any civilian population, pursuant to or in furtherance of a State or organizational policy to commit such attack."

## Rome Statute, Article 7 Crimes against humanity

*1. For the purpose of this Statute, "crime against humanity" means any of the following acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack:*

- (a) Murder;
- (b) Extermination;
- (c) Enslavement;
- (d) Deportation or forcible transfer of population;
- (e) Imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law;
- (f) Torture;

5 Definitions: Crimes Against Humanity, UN.org, url: <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/crimes-against-humanity.shtml>, last accessed 11.07.2023

6 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, opened for signature 23 May 1969, Art. 53, 1155 UNTS 331

7 See Reservations to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Advisory Opinion), p. 23, International Court of Justice (28 May 1951). The Court states: 'the principles underlying the Convention are principles which are recognized by civilised nations as binding on States, even without any conventional obligation'

- (g) Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity;
- (h) Persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender as defined in paragraph 3, or other grounds that are universally recognized as impermissible under international law, in connection with any act referred to in this paragraph or any crime within the jurisdiction of the Court;
- (i) Enforced disappearance of persons;
- (j) The crime of apartheid;
- (k) Other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health.

*2. For the purpose of paragraph 1:*

- (a) "Attack directed against any civilian population" means a course of conduct involving the multiple commission of acts referred to in paragraph 1 against any civilian population, pursuant to or in furtherance of a State or organizational policy to commit such attack;
- (b) "Extermination" includes the intentional infliction of conditions of life, inter alia the deprivation of access to food and medicine, calculated to bring about the destruction of part of a population;
- (c) "Enslavement" means the exercise of any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership over a person and includes the exercise of such power in the course of trafficking in persons, in particular women and children;
- (d) "Deportation or forcible transfer of population" means forced displacement of the persons concerned by expulsion or other coercive acts from the area in which they are lawfully present, without grounds permitted under international law;
- (e) "Torture" means the intentional infliction of severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, upon a person in the custody or under the control of the accused; except that torture shall not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to, lawful sanctions;
- (f) "Forced pregnancy" means the unlawful confinement of a woman forcibly made pregnant, with the intent of affecting the ethnic composition of any population or carrying out other grave violations of international law. This definition shall not in any way be interpreted as affecting national laws relating to pregnancy;
- (g) "Persecution" means the intentional and severe deprivation of fundamental rights contrary to international law by reason of the identity of the group or collectivity;
- (h) "The crime of apartheid" means inhumane acts of a character similar to those referred to in paragraph 1, committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime;
- (i) "Enforced disappearance of persons" means the arrest, detention or abduction of persons by, or with the authorization, support or acquiescence of, a State or a political organization, followed by a refusal to acknowledge that deprivation of freedom or to give information on the fate or whereabouts of those persons, with the intention of removing them from the protection of the law for a prolonged period of time.

Not all acts mentioned in Article 7(1) are relevant in the context of the armed attacks against villages in the Kiwirok District. Based on the documented human rights violations, there are three relevant acts: First, (a) Murder, second, (b) Extermination, and third, (d) Deportation or forcible transfer of population.

Particularly, the deportation or forcible transfer of population has high relevance because the armed attacks in Kiwirok reportedly caused the internal displacement of more than 2,000 indigenous Ngalum people. They have to survive in remote forest shelters without access to sufficient food,

healthcare, and education service. In this regard, the Rome Statute stipulates that ““Deportation or forcible transfer of population” means forced displacement of the persons concerned by expulsion or other coercive acts from the area in which they are lawfully present, without grounds permitted under international law”. ●

## 5. Armed Conflict in West Papua

The armed conflict in West Papua has significantly aggravated since December 2018, as TPNPB members killed at least 19 road workers in the Nduga Regency.<sup>8</sup> That incident marks the re-escalation of the armed conflict in West Papua. The conflict statistics show a continuous increase in violence over the past three years, reaching a new peak in 2022. The number of civilian fatalities related to the conflict rose from 28 in 2021 to 43 in 2022 (see conflict statistics below).

In early 2022, the Indonesian government adopted a softer approach to security operations against the TPNPB. However, this policy may change to a stricter one after President Joko Widodo appointed General Laksamana Yudo Margono as the new TNI Commander in December 2022. President Widodo instructed Margono to take firm action against armed groups in West Papua.<sup>9</sup> Based on this statement, it is likely that the armed violence in West Papua will escalate in 2023 and 2024. In

addition, the Indonesian police have failed to curb the illegal arms trade in West Papua, which fuels the armed violence.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the intensification of the conflict, there is no indication of a reconciliation between the conflicting parties, but rather a further divergence. In early December 2022, the TPNPB spokesperson Mr Sebby Sambom, announced that the TPNPB would pursue a “total revolution” in the next two years.<sup>11</sup> This statement came shortly after the first talks on a humanitarian pause in Maybrat Regency between Papuan stakeholders, including the ULMWP, and Jakarta, failed. The TPNPB is willing to talk with Jakarta under mediation of a third party such as the UN. However, the violence in 2022 and the statements by Jokowi and TPNPB representatives suggest that dialogue is unlikely at the moment.

The central government wants to keep firm control of West Papua, which has rich natural resources and low population density. Both are seen as vital for Indonesia’s future. Jakarta pursues its interests by increasing its security presence, imposing administrative divisions, and promoting economic growth in West Papua.

The statistics show a significant worsening of the armed conflict in 2021 and 2022. The number of armed attacks rose from 64 in 2020 to 85 in 2021 and remained high at 72 in 2022. The most striking indicator of conflict deterioration is the number of civilians killed in armed attacks or as an indirect result of conflict-related displacements. The civilian death toll in armed violence rose from 28 in 2021 to 43 in 2022 (see conflict statistics below).

8 The Diplomat (24.12.2018): Massacre in Nduga: Indonesia’s Papuan Insurgency, The recent killings highlight how Indonesia’s attempts to use economic inducements to secure peace in Papua are failing. available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2018/12/massacre-in-nduga-indonesias-papuan-insurgency/>

9 CNN Indonesia (19.12.2022): Jokowi Singgung KKB di Papua Usai Lantik Panglima TNI Yudo Margono, available at: <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20221219132620-20-889265/jokowi-singgung-kkb-di-papua-usai-lantik-panglima-tni-yudo-margono>

10 The Democratic Alliance for Papua (ALDP) published a new report on the illegal arms trade in West Papua, according to which the cases of illegal arms trade that have been processed legally are believed to be only the peak of the iceberg. This assumption is based on various observations. The traders range from civilian professions to the police and military, involving transportation on land, water and air. The trials against the traders led to their prosecution but failed to process the suppliers and financiers, who continue to sell firearms on the illegal market. Even weapons with serial numbers were not traced back to identify those at the top of the supply chain.

11 Suara Papua (11.12.2022): TPNPB Tetapkan Revolusi Total Selama Dua Tahun, available at: <https://suarapapua.com/2022/12/11/tpnpb-tetapkan-revolusi-total-selama-dua-tahun/>

Among the victims were many non-Papuan, killed by TPNPB fighters under suspicion of collaborating with or working for Indonesian security forces.

In 2019, 196 internally displaced persons (IDPs) reportedly died due to the conditions during displacement. The lack of shelter, nutritious food, public services, and government support has serious consequences for the IDPs. The most vulnerable groups are infants, children, elderly, and pregnant women. The number of dead IDPs

remained almost constant until 2020 with 186 IDP documented fatalities but increased sharply to 745 for the years 2021 and 2022, with 615 IDPs from Nduga alone.<sup>12</sup> An estimated 60,000 IDPs<sup>13</sup> are scattered over remote forest areas and urban areas across West Papua (see conflict statistics below). The harsh geographical conditions and heavy security force presence impede the work of solidarity groups, churches, and human rights defenders to collect comprehensive data on IDPs and their situation.

**Armed violence statistics in West Papua between 2017 and 2022**

ARMED VIOLENCE IN WEST PAPUA	ARMED CLASHES IN WEST PAPUA					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of armed clashes/ attacks	24	44	33	64	85	72
Number of casualties among security forces	3	8	18	11	18	19
Number of injured security forces	8	15	12	10	34	29
Number of casualties among TPN-PB fighters	2	12	14	14	24	8
Number of injured TPN-PB fighters	2	4	0	1	8	1
Total number of casualties among civilians during armed clashes or raids	3	42	20	27	28	43
Number of civilians killed by security force members	0	17	13	20	12	5
Number of civilians killed by TPN-PB fighters	3	25	7	7	14	38
Number of killed civilians (perpetrators unclear)	0	0	0	0	2	0
Number of victims who died during armed conflict due to consequences of internal displacement	0	20	196	186	745	
Total number of injured civilians	12	15	9	26	20	21
Number of civilians injured by security force members	9	7	9	10	7	2
Number civilians injured by TPN-PB fighters	3	8	0	16	13	19

*(The conflict statistics are based on reports,<sup>14</sup> media releases, news articles, and information collected by churches and human rights defenders)*

12 Jubi (19.12.2022): Nduga darurat militer sejak 2018 dan masyarakat masih mengungsi, available at: <https://jubi.id/kabupaten-jawawijaya/2022/nduga-darurat-militer-sejak-2018-dan-masyarakat-masih-mengungsi/>

13 Human Rights Monitor (02.01.2023): IDP Update 2022 – more than 60,000 IDPs in West Papua remain without government aid, available at: <https://humanrightsmonitor.org/news/idp-update-2022-more-than-60000-idps-in-west-papua-remain-without-government-aid/>

14 International Coalition for Papua (December 2021): Human Rights in West Papua 2021, p. 126

Most armed clashes in West Papua follow a similar pattern. The steady deployment of military personnel and the expansion of the military and police infrastructure are constant drivers of the armed conflict. The Indonesian Government argues that this is necessary to provide security for its citizens and protect development efforts. However, the formation of new military posts and police stations is often accompanied by human rights violations and the exploitation of natural resources. Non-Papuan workers and security force members in remote areas are easy targets for attacks by the TPNPB, which is desperate to defend their ancestral land from the control of the Indonesian government. The Security force raids commonly conduct raids in surrounding indigenous villages in response to the attacks. Thousands of indigenous Papuans have fled their homes in fear of being killed, tortured, or arbitrarily arrested during such raids. Most remain internally displaced until today.

In contrast to the previous three years, the military refrained from conducting air raids throughout 2022. This may be related to the “softer security approach”, which the [government announced in late November 2021](#). Besides the Pegunungan Bintang Regency (Kiwirok District), Indonesian security forces carried out air raids in the Nduga Regency in December 2018<sup>15</sup>, as well as in the regencies Puncak<sup>16</sup>, and Yahukimo (Suru-Suru District)<sup>17</sup> in 2021.

Over the past four years, the armed conflict has shifted to new regencies in the Papua Barat province and the central highlands. The Pegunungan Bintang Regency is among these new conflict areas. Four armed clashes took place in March

and October 2020. This number quickly rose to ten armed attacks in 2021 and eleven such attacks in 2022. Today, Pegunungan Bintang has become one of the top hotspots of armed violence in West Papua within only two years. TPNPB members in Pegunungan Bintang came into possession of multiple automatic firearms retrieved from a helicopter reported missing on 28 June 2019.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, the TPNPB in Pegunungan Bintang appears to have recruited more fighters and improved weaponry.

## 6. Security Force Operations in the Kiwirok District

The Kiwirok District, Pegunungan Bintang Regency, is inhabited by the indigenous Ngalum Tribe. Apart from health workers and civil servants, most of the local population in the Kiwirok District are Ngalum. The Ngalum follow a traditional way of life. They plant sweet potatoes and taro, the staple food in the Papuan central highlands. They domesticate pigs, which serve them as a source of protein and have a high social and cultural value in ritual exchanges during weddings and other ceremonies. The Ngalum rely on their land for farming and animal husbandry to survive in the challenging environment in the Papuan central highlands. Hunting and gathering is only a supplemental practice to enrich their diet.

- 15 International Coalition for Papua (18.11.2021): Indonesian Govt denies alleged use of chemical weapons during military operation in Nduga Regency, available at: <https://humanrightspapua.org/news/2018/indonesian-govt-denies-alleged-use-of-chemical-weapons-during-military-operation-in-nduga-regency/>
- 16 International Coalition for Papua (17.11.2021): Military operation in Puncak causes internal displacement – Jakarta continues deployment of additional troops, available at: <https://humanrightspapua.org/news/2021/military-operation-in-puncak-causes-internal-displacement-jakarta-continues-deployment-of-additional-troops/>

- 17 Human Rights Monitor (10.01.2022): The Armed Conflict in West Papua throughout 2021 – Trends, Developments and Future Indications, available at: <https://humanrightsmonitor.org/news/wp-armed-conflict-2021/>
- 18 Tribun News (15.02.2020): Misteri Hilangnya 10 Senjata TNI di Helikopter yang Jatuh di Pegunungan Bintang, Pangdam Duga Ini, available at: <https://batam.tribunnews.com/2020/02/15/misteri-hilangnya-10-senjata-tni-di-helikopter-yang-jatuh-di-pegunungan-bintang-pangdam-duga-ini?page=all>

Similar to other parts of the central highlands, the weather in the Pegunungan Bintang Regency can change quickly, and temperatures vary strongly with altitude. Night frosts may occur above 4,000 m, and periodic snowfalls above 4,500 m.<sup>19</sup> The highest elevation in the regency is Mandala Peak, at 4,760 metres. Kiwirok is one of 34 districts in the Pegunungan Bintang Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province. The regency is remote and shares a direct border with Papua New Guinea (PNG). There are no connecting roads to neighbouring regencies. Transportation of goods and people heavily rely on small airplanes.

The armed conflict in the Kiwirok District significantly aggravated in early September 2021. Prior, the TPNPB had carried out isolated attacks only in other districts, such as Serambakon, Oksibil, and Oksob. On 8 September 2021, TPNPB members burnt bulldozers and other heavy machinery for the construction of the Trans-Papua Road from Oksibil to Kiwirok in Mangabip Village.

Shortly after, an armed clash between security forces and TPNPB fighters took place in the Kiwirok District on 13 September 2021. The armed violence escalated around 10.00 am (EIT). The time of the incident was re-constructed based on a video of the burning facilities taken by an Indonesian security force member during the firefights. A video and metadata analysis<sup>20</sup> confirm that the video was recorded at 10:32 am in the Mangoldogi Village, Kiwirok District. TPN PB members burned down public facilities, including a public health centre (Puskesmas) and a school. Eight health workers and a military member were injured. One health worker and one TPN PB fighter were killed during the incident. The TPN PB captured one health worker named Mr Gerald Sokoy (see photo below) during the incident. He was released after several days.

It is not clear what triggered the arson of health facilities and the school. Human rights observers have demanded an independent investigation



*Health worker Gerald Sokoy (on the right, wearing a blue sweatshirt) was taken hostage by TPNPB members on 13 September 2021.*

19 Prentice, M.L. and G.S. Hope (2007): Climate of Papua and its recent changes, in Marshall & Beehler eds Part 1, The ecology of Papua, pp 177-195

20 Human Rights Monitor used the open-source tool Metadata2Go for the data analysis

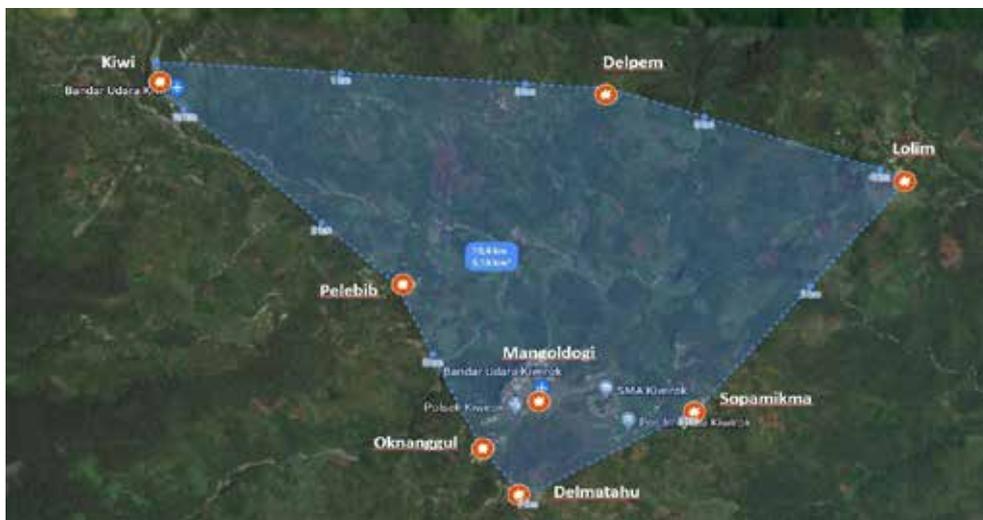
into the incident. The suspicion is understandable, considering that military members had previously burnt down public facilities in the Intan Jaya Regency during a raid in the Hitadipa Village on 19 September 2020.<sup>21</sup> TPNPB members in Pegunungan Bintang Regency claimed they attacked and burnt down the health centre because one of the health workers drew a gun and opened fire at them. The TPNPB suspected the medic of being affiliated with the Indonesian military.<sup>22</sup>

Indonesian security forces responded with air raids against the eight villages Kiwi, Delpem, Lolim, Pelebib, Mangoldogi, Sopamikma, Oknanggul, and Delmatahu between 13 September and late October 2021. The villages are scattered over approximately 5,18 km<sup>2</sup> in the Kiwirok District (see photo below). According to witness testimonies, the military used four helicopters for the operations. Two helicopters held positions and observed the area while the other two helicopters dropped explosives and fired heavy machine guns at the villages. According to witness testimonies, the

helicopters indiscriminately attacked residential houses and people working on their smallholdings.

They also deployed additional security force members to Kiwirok. Most were brought to the Mangoldogi Village, which served the security forces as operational headquarters. Locals identified multiple sniper positions in the Mangoldogi Village. The positions remained active as of October 2022 (see photo below).

Witness testimonies were consistent regarding the use of spy drones to surveil villages before ground forces moved in. Several witnesses stated that the security forces also used drones to drop mortar grenades onto indigenous settlements. HRM did not find visual evidence of active or destroyed drones confirming these allegations. However, drones can be customised for such purposes with little effort and have been used in other armed conflicts like in Ukraine. Therefore, it is possible that the Indonesian military may have customised drones to drop explosives during the attacks.



*The villages Mangoldogi, Sopamikma, Delmatahu, Oknanggul, Pelebib, Kiwi, Delpem and Lolim in the Kiwirok District were repeatedly attacked by joint security forces between 13 September and late October 2021. The attacks were carried out on land and from the air. All villages are located in an area of 5,18 km<sup>2</sup>(see marked blue area).*

21 [The Military Police named eight soldiers suspects for allegedly burning down buildings of the Intan Jaya Health Agency in the Hitadipa Village, Intan Jaya.](#) It is not known whether the investigation led to military tribunal. The incident was related to the [killing of Pastor Yerima Zanambani on 19 September 2020.](#)

22 Undercover police and military members in West Papua often follow daily jobs such as motorcycle taxi drivers or street sellers to monitor the situation in the communities and report suspicious activities. The military is systematically expanding its presence in public facilities in West Papua, including schools and clinics



*Sniper position in the Mangoldogi Village. The photo was taken between the Kiwi Village and the Okhika District in October 2022. Snipers use laser pointers for aiming at night. The laser beams of several rifles are pointing to the sky as would be expected when rifles are placed against each other with the barrel pointing upwards. According to the photographer, snipers repeatedly aimed at him while passing the Mangoldogi Village.*

All interviewed witnesses testified that helicopters dropped explosives on residential areas. Villagers were able to collect bullet shells and intact mortar grenades after the attacks (see photos below). Schools, churches, public village facilities, and residential houses were damaged and burnt to the ground. The people panicked and fled into the forest. Some villagers were reportedly shot at while working on their plots of land as the attacks occurred. Not all villagers were able to return to their homes and pick up important belongings before

hiding in a forest shelter. Many brought nothing but the clothes they were wearing. Almost all villagers remain internally displaced as of July 2023 and reside in small camps in the Pegunungan Bintang's remote highland jungle. According to name lists received from Papuan church workers and human rights defenders, 2,252 indigenous Ngalum people were internally displaced due to the security raids. The figure excludes the displaced health workers, teachers, and government officials, who had been working in Kiwirok.



*Villagers collected green mortars marked 81mm M72 HE and ammunition shells after the raids in Kiwirok. The NGO Conflict Armament Research (CAR) found that the mortar grenades were produced by the Krušik Holding Corporation<sup>23</sup> in Serbia<sup>24</sup> (bottom). The Indonesian 5.56 ammunition was reportedly manufactured by the Indonesian defense company PT Pindad between 2002 and 2019 (top). The NGO Bellingcat traced back the origin of the ammunition and provided HRM with information on the identified weapons.*

23 Krušik Holding Corporation is a Serbian state-owned company for the production of defense and civil-related equipment, with headquarters in Valjevo, Serbia.

24 Reuters (3.06.2022), available at: <https://shorturl.at/SEKV3>

Similar attacks with firefights between the TPNPB and Indonesian security forces continued until late October 2021. After that, the armed clashes in Kiwirok appeared to be more occasional and less systematic while the security situation in the district remains tense. Indonesian security forces continued to monitor the area closely. The military established snipers positions and security outposts in villages. According to witnesses, public buildings, such as schools, churches, and village assembly halls, in the villages Mangoldogi, Kiwi, and Lolim were used as security posts or accommodations for security force members. They were deployed to control and monitor the area around the settlements.

IDPs testified that security force personnel took the people’s personal belongings and killed the livestock before demolishing their houses or burning them to the ground. In some villages, metal roofing sheets and wooden boards were removed (see photos below). The security forces

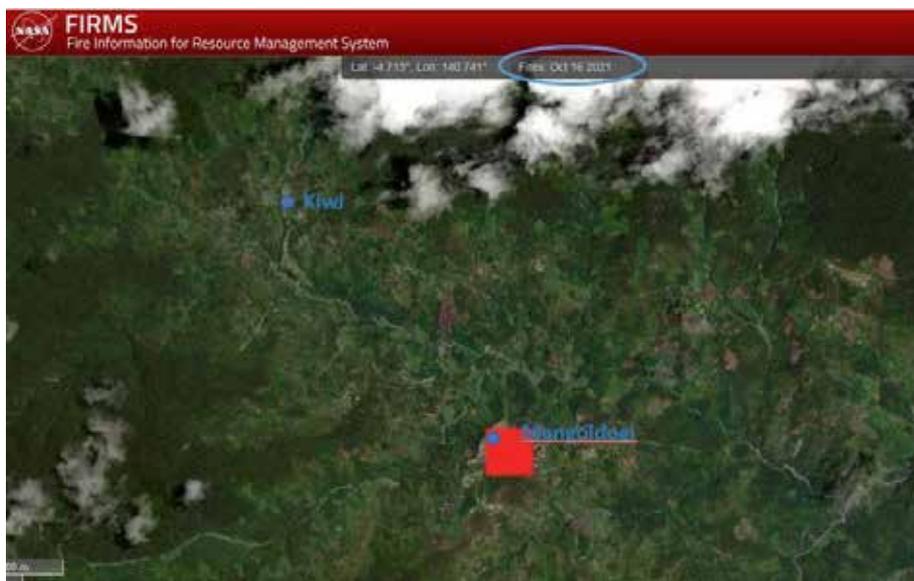
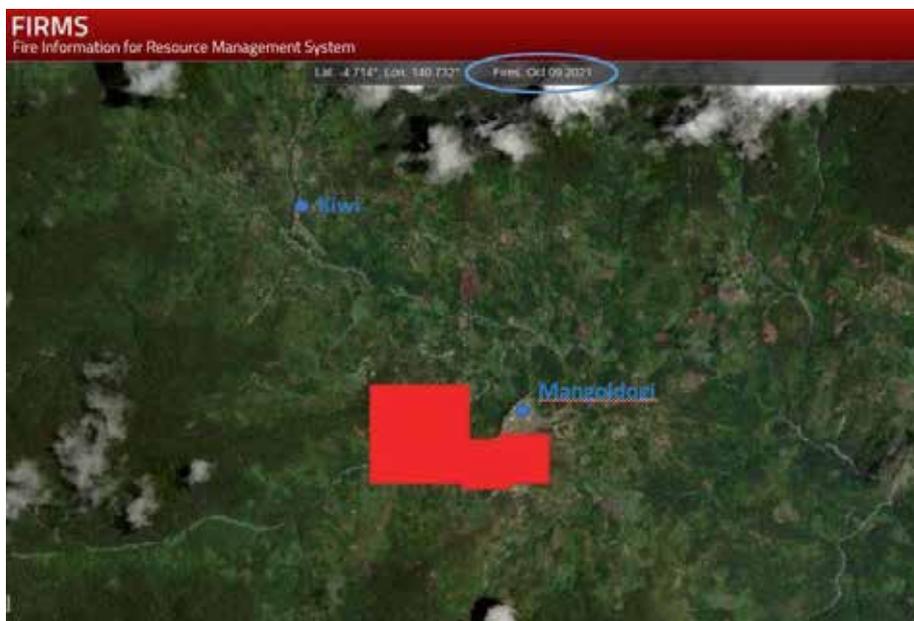
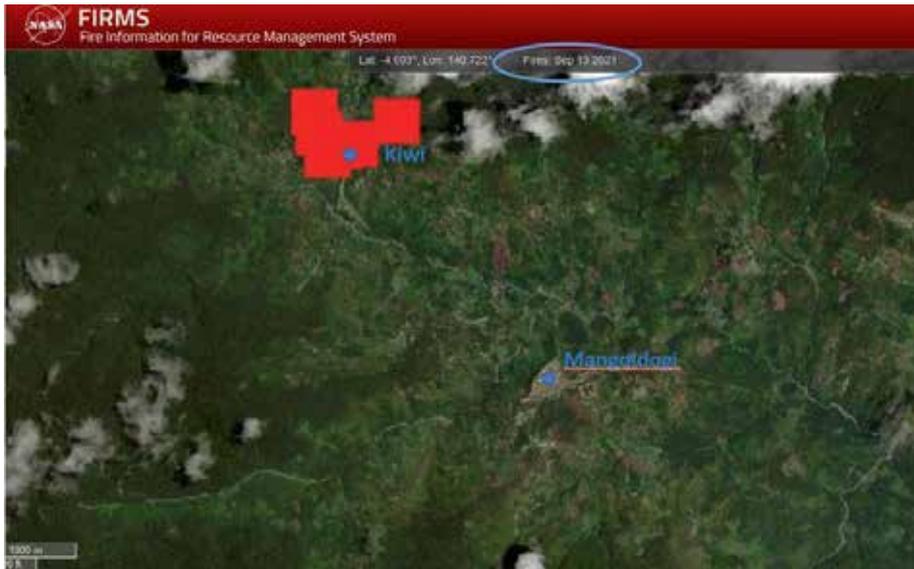
reportedly devastated the interior and took personal belongings. Security force members removed the walls but left the roof intact, making it difficult to identify damages on satellite images. The removed materials were used to build and improve security posts.

The security forces conducted the raids in eight villages in Kiwirok between 13 September and late October 2021. HRM verified three operations using the FIRMS Fire Map tool. The map showed fire marks in the Kiwi Village on 13 September 2021, as well as larger fires in the villages Pelebib, Oknanggul, and Delmatahu on 9 October 2021, and the villages Mangoldogi, and Sopamikma on 16 October 2021 (see FIRMS satellite images below). This method was useful because the witnesses did not always recall the exact dates of attacks. Many Ngalum women and people above 40 years are illiterate, and time or dates do not play an important role in their daily lives.



*Displaced children standing in front of their house in the Kiwi Village (top). The house was demolished by security force members and the roof panels removed (bottom).*





The FIRMS Fire Map recognized larger fires in the Kiwi Village, Kiwirok District due to the air raid on 13 September 2021 (top). HRM found digital evidence for larger fires in the Kiwirok District in the villages Pelebib and Mangoldogi on 9 October 2021 (centre) and the villages Mangoldogi and Sopamikma on 16 October 2021 (bottom).

The extent of destruction was investigated through a comparative analysis of satellite images from the Kiwirok District. The satellite images used for this report date 29 September 2021, 30 April 2021, and 3 June 2022. The satellite images were presented to multiple witnesses to identify damages and perpetrators. The analysis came to the result that the villages Mangoldogi, Oknanggul, Kiwi, Pelebib, Delmatahu, and Sopamikama were most affected by the air raids. The satellite images showed visual proof of the destruction, such as destroyed buildings and marks of fire. Public buildings in

the villages Mangoldogi and Kiwi were burnt to the ground by TPNPB members after Indonesian security forces had used them as security posts or accommodations. The villages Oknanggul and Delmatahu were destroyed entirely.

HRM used satellite imagery analysis, media articles, open-source technology, and witness testimonies to reconstruct a gross timeline of the events in the Kiwirok District between 13 September and 23 October 2021 (see table below).

**Reconstructed timeline of armed attacks in the Kiwirok District between 13 September and 23 October 2021**

<p><b>13 September 2021</b></p>	<p>A doctor of the health centre in Mangoldogi allegedly opened fire at a resistance fighter instigating the TPNPB members to burnt multiple buildings in Mangoldogi to the ground. These actions led to armed clash between TPNPB and Indonesian military. Eight health workers and a military member were injured. One health worker and one TPNPB fighter were killed during the incident. (Date and location of the incident were verified through metadata analysis of a video of the armed clash and confirmed in media coverage)</p> <p>Following the armed clash, Indonesian security forces launched air raids against the villages Mangoldogi and Kiwi. Mortar grenades and bullets destroyed residential houses and damaged various buildings of the mission complex in Kiwi. The TPNPB responded by setting school buildings, a village assembly hall, and a health care centre in Kiwi on fire. According to the TPNPB the buildings were used to accommodate military members since the armed conflict in Pegunungan Bintang had intensified (Date and location of the incident were verified through FIRMS Fire Map and witness testimonies).</p>
<p><b>21 September 2021</b></p>	<p>Armed clash between TPNPB members and security forces resulted in the death of a military member (Date and location of the incident were reconstructed based on a video testimony and media sources<sup>25</sup>)</p>
<p><b>22 -25 September 2021</b></p>	<p>According to media sources,<sup>26</sup> security force members began deploying additional security force personnel and evacuating non-Papuan civilians from Mangoldogi</p>
<p><b>26 September 2021</b></p>	<p>According to media sources<sup>27</sup>, armed clashes between TPNPB and security force members occurred near the airstrip in Mangoldogi. One police officer was killed.</p>

25 Viva CO.ID (21.09.2021): Pratu TNI Ida Bagus Gugur Ditembak Teroris OPM, available at: [https://www.viva.co.id/militer/militer-indonesia/1406582-pratu-tni-ida-bagus-gugur-ditembak-teroris-opm?page=all&utm\\_medium=all-page](https://www.viva.co.id/militer/militer-indonesia/1406582-pratu-tni-ida-bagus-gugur-ditembak-teroris-opm?page=all&utm_medium=all-page); Detik News (23.09.2021): Pratu Ida Bagus Putu yang Gugur Ditembak KKB Papua Naik Pangkat Anumerta, available at: <https://news.detik.com/berita-jawa-tengah/d-5736369/pratu-ida-bagus-putu-yang-gugur-ditembak-kkb-papua-naik-pangkat-anumerta>

26 Regional Kompas (25.09.2021): TNI-Polri Kuasai Bandara Kiwirok, 17 Warga Berhasil Dievakuasi, available at: <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2021/09/25/093335978/tni-polri-kuasai-bandara-kiwirok-17-warga-berhasil-dievakuasi?page=all>; VOI.ID (25.09.2021): Satgas Nemangkawi Gelar Operasi Penindakan KKB di Kiwirok Papua available at: <https://voi.id/aktual/88543/satgas-nemangkawi-gelar-operasi-penindakan-kkb-di-kiwirok-papua>

27 Republika (26.09.2023): Kontak Senjata di Kiwirok Papua, 1 Personel Brimob Gugur, available at: <https://news.republika.co.id/berita/r01443438/kontak-senjata-di-kiwirok-papua-1-personel-brimob-gugur>;

<b>28 September 2021</b>	According to media sources, <sup>28</sup> armed clashes between TPNPB and security force members again occurred near the airstrip in Mangoldogi. Two police officers were killed.
<b>13 - 29 September 2021</b>	Security forces responded with raids in the villages Mangoldogi, Oknanggul, Delmatahu, Pelebib and Sopamikma using ground forces and helicopters, shooting with machine guns, and dropping mortar grenades on residential houses (Time period and location of the incidents were verified through comparative satellite imagery analysis and witness testimonies)
<b>9 October 2021</b>	Security force members raided the villages Pelebib, Oknanggul, and Delmatahu using ground forces and helicopters, shooting with machine guns and dropping mortar grenades on residential houses (Date and location of the incident were verified through FIRMS <i>Fire Map</i> )
<b>10-14 October 2021</b>	Security force members raided the villages Oknanggul and Delmatahu using ground forces and helicopters, shooting with machine guns, and dropping mortar grenades on residential houses (Time period and location of the incidents were reconstructed based on witness testimonies)
<b>15 October 2021</b>	Security force members reportedly burnt buildings in the Mangoldogi Village (A villager recorded the arson in Mangoldogi, testifying that security force members were responsible for the fires. The date is displayed in the recording).
<b>16 October 2021</b>	Security force members raided the villages Sopamikma and Mangoldogi using ground forces and helicopters, shooting with machine guns and dropping mortar grenades on residential houses (Date and location of the incident were verified through FIRMS <i>Fire Map</i> )
<b>18 October 2021</b>	Security force members deployed additional security force members using three helicopters (Date and location of the incident were verified through metadata analysis of a video showing TPNPB fighters monitoring Mangoldogi Village).
<b>14-21 October 2021</b>	According to media sources <sup>29</sup> quoting TPNPB Spokesperson Seby Sambom, security force members raided the villages Lolim, Delpem, and Pelebib using ground forces and helicopters, shooting with machine guns and dropping mortar grenades on residential houses (unverified)
<b>23 October 2021</b>	Security force members reportedly burnt buildings in the Mangoldogi Village (Date and location of the incident were verified through metadata analysis of a photo showing burning houses and heavy smoke over the Mangoldogi)

Detik News (26.09.2021): Sosok Bharatu Kurniadi, Anggota Brimob Gugur Ditembak KKB di Papua, available at: <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-5740896/sosok-bharatu-kurniadi-anggota-brimob-gugur-ditembak-kkb-di-papua>

28 Medius News (28.09.2021): KKB Kembali Menyerang Kiwirok, Dua Anggota Polri Tertembak, 1.000-an Warga Mengungsi, available at: <https://www.mediusnews.com/nasional/pr-1321289226/kkb-kembali-menyerang-kiwirok-dua-anggota-polri-tertembak-1000-an-warga-mengungsi?page=all>;

Serambi News (28.09.2023): Lagi, 2 Anggota Polisi Tertembak dalam Kontak Senjata dengan KKB Papua di Distrik Kiwirok, available at: <https://aceh.tribunnews.com/2021/09/28/lagi-2-anggota-polisi-tertembak-dalam-kontak-senjata-dengan-kkb-papua-di-distrik-kiwirok>

29 Law Justice (25.10.2021): Helikopter TNI-Polri Disebut Bombardir 4 Kampung di Pegunungan Bintang, available at: <https://www.law-justice.co/artikel/118551/helikopter-tni-polri-disebut-bombardir-4-kampung-di-pegunungan-bintang/>; Tempo (23.10.2023): Sejumlah Organisasi Sebut Aparat Diduga Bombardir Kiwirok, Warga Mengungsi, available at: <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1520461/sejumlah-organisasi-sebut-aparat-diduga-bombardir-kiwirok-warga-mengungsi>

## 7. Comparative Analysis of Satellite Imagery

The following section provides a detailed analysis of the destruction in the eight villages. The identification of buildings and actors was carried out in cooperation with witnesses using satellite imagery from 3 June 2022, 29 September 2021, and 30 April 2021. The satellite images were supplied by European Space Imaging (EUSI).

### Mangoldogi Village



*Aviation Photography of Mangoldogi Village before (top left) and after the raids (top right). Burning houses in Mangoldogi, following armed clashes between TPNPB and Indonesian security forces on 13 September 2021 (bottom left). Metadata analysis of the left photo revealed the photo was taken on 23 October 2021, 07:59:23 (bottom right)*



**Comparison:** Satellite images of Mangoldogi Village on 30 April 2021 (left) and 29 September 2021 (right)



Satellite image of Mangoldogi Village taken on 3 June 2022



**Satellite image of Mangoldogi Village, taken on 29 September 2021. According to witness testimonies, houses in Mangoldogi were burnt to the ground by TPNPB members and Indonesian security force members:**

1. Three buildings of SD Inpres Polobakon Elementary School were set on fire by TPNPB members because military members allegedly used the school as a security post
2. Teacher's house burnt to the ground after being hit by a mortar grenade during the air raid
3. Two residential houses burnt to the ground after being hit by a mortar grenade during the air raid
4. Kiwirok Health Centre (Puskesmas) was burnt to the ground by TPNPB members on 13 September 2021 after TPNPB members accused a health worker of shooting at them
5. Two houses for health personnel working at the Kiwirok Health Centre were burnt to ground by security force members during the raids.
6. Kiwirok Market burnt to the ground on 13 September 2021 after fire spread from the neighbouring buildings
7. Two government-owned houses for civil servants were burnt to the ground by security force members
8. Joint Bank Papua and District Office building was set on fire by TPNPB members on 13 September 2021 after TPNPB members accused a health worker of shooting at them
9. Residence of the Kiwirok District Chief burnt to the ground after being hit by a mortar grenade during the air raids
10. Immigration office was set on fire by TPNPB members
11. Two buildings of Kiwirok Junior High School were burnt to the ground by TPNPB members because military members allegedly used the school as a security post



**Satellite image of Mangoldogi Village, taken on 3 June 2022. According to witness testimonies, houses in Mangoldogi were burnt to the ground by TPNPB members and Indonesian security force members after 30 September 2021:**

1. Three buildings of SD Inpres Polobakon Elementary School were set on fire by TPNPB members before 29 September 2021
2. Eleven buildings of a housing estate for teachers burnt to the ground after being hit by mortar grenades during an air raid
3. Teacher's house burnt to the ground after being hit by a mortar grenade during a security force air raid before 29 September 2021
4. Ten residential houses burnt to the ground after being hit by a mortar grenade during a security force air raid, two of them before 29 September 2021
5. GIDI Yerikho Congregational Church was partly destroyed after being hit by a mortar grenade during the air raids
6. Residential house burnt to the ground after being hit by a mortar grenade during a security force air raid
7. Residential house burnt to the ground after being hit by a mortar grenade during a security force air raid
8. Three houses for health personnel working the Kiwirok Health Centre burnt to ground after being hit by a mortar grenade during an air raids
9. Doctor's house was burnt to the ground by security force members
10. Kiwirok Health Centre (Puskesmas) was burnt to the ground by TPNPB members on 13 September 2021 after TPNPB members accused a health worker of shooting at them
11. Kiwirok Ecumenical Church burnt to the ground after being hit by a mortar grenade during an air raids
12. Three government-owned houses were burnt to the ground by security force members
13. Four buildings of the old Kiwirok Health Centre were burnt to the ground by security force members
14. Two houses for health personnel working the Kiwirok Health Centre were burnt to ground by security force members during the raids before 29 September 2021

15. *Kiwirok Market burnt to the ground after fire spread from the neighbouring buildings before 29 September 2021*
16. *Four government-owned houses for civil servants were burnt to the ground by security force members, two of them before 29 September 2021*
17. *Joint Bank Papua and District Office building was set on fire by TPNPB on 13 September 2021 after TPNPB members accused a health worker of shooting at them on 13 September 2021 after TPNPB members accused a health worker of shooting at them*
18. *Immigration office was set on fire by TPNPB members before 29 September 2021*
19. *Residence of the Kiwirok District Chief burnt to the ground after being hit by a mortar grenade during an air raid*
20. *GIDI Imanuel Polobakon Congregational Church was occupied by security force members and used as post. IDPs testified they had seen laser pointers used by Indonesian snipers coming from holes in the roof.*
21. *Kiwirok office of the Transportation Ministry burnt to the ground after being hit by a mortar grenade during an air raid*
22. *Seven residential houses of Sopamikma villagers burnt to the ground after being hit by a mortar grenade during an air raid*
23. *Two buildings of Kiwirok Junior High School were burnt to the ground by TPNPB members because military members allegedly used the school as a security post. Witnesses testified they had seen laser pointers used by Indonesian snipers*
24. *Security force members damaged and took apart all buildings of a housing estate for high school teachers. The interior and construction materials were used to build a security outpost.*

## Pelebib Village



*Fires burning in the Pelebib Village. Witnesses stated that the photo was taken during the raids on 15 or 16 September 2021. A metadata analysis failed to reconstruct the exact creation date of the jpg file.*



*The Pelebib Village on 30 April 2021, prior to operations*



***Destruction in Pelebib Village between 13 and 29 September 2021 (photo of 29 September 2021):***

- 1. Residential building that burnt to the ground after military members dropped mortar grenades on the house, allegedly by using a drone.*
- 2. Village assembly hall was set on fire by security force members*
- 3. Pigsty of Mr Yahya Tepmul, where he was reportedly shot dead by an Indonesian sniper on 27 October 2022.*



***Destructions in Pelebib Village that followed after 29 September 2021 (photo taken on 3 June 2022):***

- 1. Five residential houses were burnt to the ground by Indonesian security forces. One of the houses was destroyed by a mortar grenade during an air raid before 29 September 2021*
- 2. Village Assembly Hall was burnt to the ground by security force members*
- 3. Five residential houses were burnt to the ground by Indonesian security force members*
- 4. Two residential houses were burnt to the ground by Indonesian security force members*
- 5. One residential house was burnt to the ground by Indonesian security force members*
- 6. House owned by Mr Yahya Tepmul was burnt to the ground by security force members. Mr Tepmul was reportedly shot dead by an Indonesian sniper on 27 October 2022*
- 7. Four residential houses were burnt to the ground by Indonesian security force members*
- 8. Security force members demolished houses and killed the livestock in this residential area. They took interior and building materials to build a security outpost.*
- 9. Two residential houses were burnt to the ground by Indonesian security force members*
- 10. Two residential houses were burnt to the ground by Indonesian security force members*
- 11. One residential house was burnt to the ground by Indonesian security force members*

## Kiwi Village



The education complex (left) and the Christian mission complex (right) in the Kiwi Village on 30 April 2021 before operations started



**Destruction in the Kiwi Village between 13 and 29 September 2021 (photo of the education complex taken on 29 September 2021):**

1. Three buildings of the SMP YPPGI Katop Bakon Junior Highschool School were burnt to the ground by TPNPB members because military members used the school as security post
2. Two houses for the high school teachers were burnt to the ground by TPNPB members after the buildings were used to accommodate military members
3. Three elementary school buildings were burnt to the ground by TPNPB members because military members used them as a post
4. Two teacher's houses were burnt to the ground by TPNPB members after the buildings were used to accommodate military members
5. Village assembly hall was burnt to the ground by TPNPB members because joint security forces used the building as post
6. Health Centre (Pustu) was burnt to the ground by TPNPB members after the building was used to accommodate military members



**Destruction in the Kiwi Village between 13 and 29 September 2021 (photo of the mission complex taken on 29 September 2021):**

7. Pastor's house was hit by a mortar grenade during an air raid. The grenade did not explode. It was later removed and stored by local villagers.
8. One house was damaged by a mortar grenade during an air raid
9. Mission complex in Kiwi Village. Multiple houses were reportedly damaged by bullets during the air raid on 13 September 2021.
10. Residential houses in Kiwi Village were attacked with gunfire during an air raid. Mortar grenades reportedly damaged some of the houses during the attacks

## Oknanggul Village



**Oknanggul Village on 30 April 2021 prior to operations**



***Destruction in Oknanggul Village between 13 and 29 September 2021 (photo taken on 29 September 2021):***

- 1. Village assembly hall was burnt to the ground by TPNPB members because military members used the building as a post*
- 2. One residential house was hit by TNI mortar grenade and burnt to the ground*
- 3. One residential house was hit by TNI mortar grenade and burnt to the ground*
- 4. Three residential houses were hit by TNI mortar grenades and burnt to the ground*
- 5. One residential house was hit by TNI mortar grenades and partly burnt to the ground*



*Nineteen buildings in the Oknanggul Village, most of them residential houses, were destroyed by joint security forces after 29 September 2021 (photo taken on 3 June 2022). Security force personnel plundered the houses before burning them to the ground. The buildings have been marked with white circles. The seven buildings destroyed between 13 and 29 September 2021 were marked with red circles.<sup>30</sup>*

30 European Space Imaging (EUSI), the provider of the satellite pictures, identified the white spot on the imagery as a flare. A flare is an area of saturated pixels caused by high reflection from ground features overwhelming the sensor detectors. The electronic charge at the detector sometimes overflows and affects surrounding detectors until the excessive charge is dampened out. High reflection from ground features is a function of the angle of the feature relative to the sun angle and image collection angle.

## Delmatahu Village



*Comparison: Delmatahu Village on 30 April 2021 (top), 29 September 2021 (centre), and 3 June 2022 (bottom)*



**Destruction in Delmatahu Village between 13 and 29 September 2021:**

1. Two residential houses were hit by mortar grenades during security raid and burnt to the ground
2. Village assembly hall was burnt to the ground by joint security force members
3. Residential house was hit by a mortar grenade and burnt to the ground
4. Four pigsties were burnt to the ground by security force members. All livestock was killed and used for the consumption of security personnel

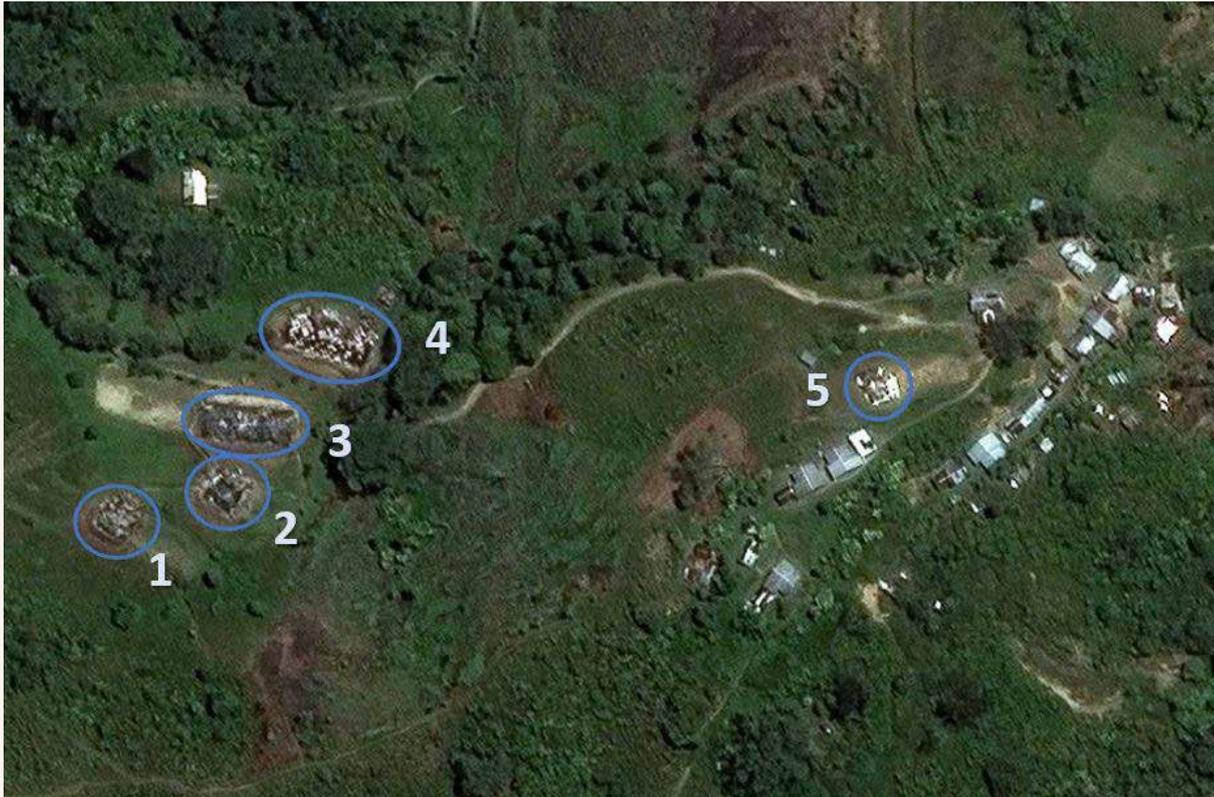


Thirty-two buildings in the Delmatahu Village, most of them residential houses, were destroyed by joint security forces after 30 September 2021. Number 5 marks four pigsties which were destroyed, and the livestock killed. Security force personnel reportedly plundered the houses before burning them to the ground. The former buildings have been marked with white circles. The village assembly hall, two residential houses, and four pigsties destroyed between 13 and 29 September 2021 were marked with red circles.

## Sopamikma Village

**Comparison:** Sopamikma Village on 30 April 2021 (top), 29 September 2021 (centre), and 3 June 2022 (bottom)





***Destruction in Sopamikma Village between 13 and 29 September 2021:***

- 1. Building of the Kiwirok Senior Highschool (SMA Kiwirok) was burnt to the ground by military members*
- 2. Building of the Kiwirok Senior Highschool (SMA Kiwirok) was burnt to the ground by military members*
- 3. Building of the Kiwirok Senior Highschool (SMA Kiwirok) was burnt to the ground by military members*
- 4. Three houses for the high school teachers were burnt to the ground by military members*
- 5. One residential house was burnt to the ground by military members*



*Six residential houses in the Sopamikma Village were destroyed by joint security forces after 30 September 2021. Security force personnel reportedly plundered the houses before burning them to the ground. The buildings have been marked with white circles. The seven buildings destroyed between 13 and 29 September 2021 were marked with red circles.*



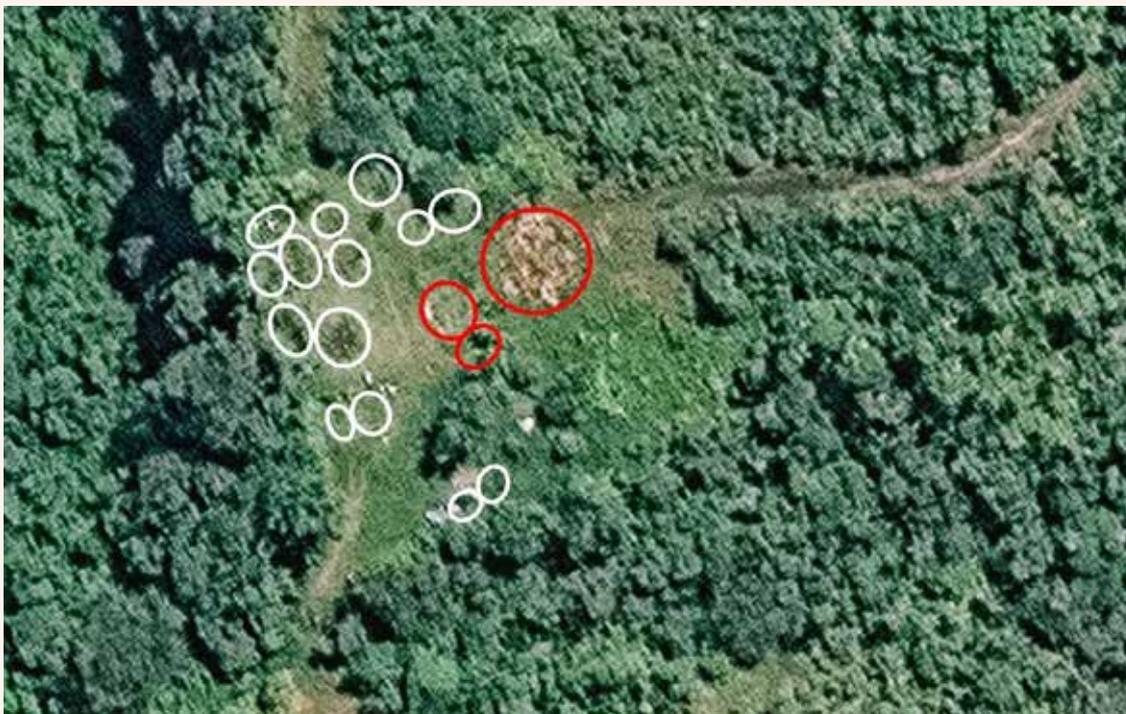
**Comparison:** The Kotobip Hamlet in the Sopamikma Village on 30 April 2021 (top), 29 September 2021 (centre), and 3 June 2022 (bottom)





***Destruction in the Kotobip Hamlet, north of the Sopamikma Village, between 13 and 29 September 2021:***

- 1. One office building of the cultural exhibition house was burnt to the ground by military members*
- 2. One office building of the cultural exhibition house was burnt to the ground by military members*
- 3. One cultural exhibition house was burnt to the ground by military members*



*Fourteen residential houses in the Kotobip Hamlet north of the Sopamikma Village were destroyed by joint security forces after 30 September 2021. Security force personnel plundered the houses before burning them to the ground. The buildings have been marked with white circles. The cultural exhibition hall and two office buildings were destroyed between 13 and 29 September 2021 were marked with red circles.*

## Delpem Village



**Comparison:** The Delpem Village on 30 April 2021 (top), 29 September 2021 (centre), and 3 June 2022 (bottom)





*Destruction in the Delpem Village between 13 and 29 September 2021. One residential house was destroyed by a mortar grenade during an air raid*



*Nine residential houses in the Delpem Village were destroyed by joint security forces after 30 September 2021. Security force personnel plundered the houses before burning them to the ground. The buildings have been marked with white circles. The residential house destroyed between 13 and 29 September 2021 was marked with a red circle.*

## Lolim Village



**Comparison:** Lolim Village on 30 April 2021 (top), 29 September 2021 (centre), and 3 June 2022 (bottom)





**Destruction in the Lolim Village between 13 and 29 September 2021:**

1. The village assembly hall and the neighbouring building were burned down by TPNPB members because military members used the buildings as a headquarter. Witnesses stated that the village was heavily attacked during the air raids with machine gun fire, resulting in less visible damages in the Lolim Village in comparison with other villages.



One residential house in the Lolim Village was destroyed by joint security forces after 30 September 2021. Security force personnel plundered and demolished the houses. The destroyed residential house is marked with a white circle. The village assembly hall and a neighbouring building destroyed between 13 and 29 September 2021 were marked with a red circle.

## 8. Consequences of the Operations

**A**nalysis of satellite imagery indicates that 206 buildings in the eight villages were destroyed during armed clashes and subsequent security force operations in Kiwirok between 13 September and late October 2021. The figures exclude pigsties and small buildings used as storage or toilets. The table below illustrates that joint security force members committed most damages. TPNPB members burnt public facilities such as health centres, school buildings, and village assembly halls to the ground, alleging that security force members used the public buildings as posts or accommodations. Almost all buildings in the villages Pelebib, Delmatahu, Oknanggul and Mangoldogi were destroyed. The information about the perpetrators of the destructions (TNI/Polri or TPNPB) was obtained from witness testimonies.

HRM did not receive reports on extra-judicial killings as a direct result of the Kiwirok security raids that took place between 13 September 2021 and late October 2021. However, data collected by church workers and human rights defenders indicates that 2,252 IDPs from the districts Kiwirok, Kiwirok Timur, Okhika, and Okbemtau were internally displaced as a result of the security operation. The figure excludes teachers, health workers and civil servants who had been living and working in Kiwirok. About 103 IDPs reportedly crossed the border to Papua New Guinea, where they continue to live in a self-established refugee camp. The majority of IDPs from Kiwirok live in temporary shelters without access to clean water, food, warm clothing, education and health care. The IDPs in Pegunungan Bintang Regency have to deal with extreme weather conditions in the central highlands.

The camps are located in the remote forest and can only be accessed through small mountain

**Table: Total damages segregated by actors and villages**

No	Names of villages attacked	Residential houses destroyed by		Churches, schools, & other public buildings destroyed by		Total residential buildings destroyed
		TNI/Polri	TPNPB	TNI/Polri	TPNPB	
1	Mangoldogi	19	0	33	9	61
2	Pelebib	23	0	1	0	24
3	Kiwi	4	0	1	12	17
4	Oknanggul	25	0	0	1	26
5	Delmatahu	34	0	1	0	35
6	Sopamikma	21	0	9	0	30
7	Delpem	10	0	0	0	10
8	Lolim	1	0	0	2	3
						<b>206</b>

trails. Among the IDPs are many women and children. The shelters are overcrowded making the IDPs vulnerable to transmittable diseases. There are no toilets or washing facilities and no soap or other sanitary items. The shelters offer

no protection against cold and rainy weather in the Papuan central highlands. The conditions in the shelters particularly affect pregnant women, children, and elderly people (see photos below).



*IDPs from the Kiwi Village have established a refuge shelter in the forest. Papuan church workers visited the IDPs in October 2021 (photos on top and centre, source: West Papua Council of Churches). Shortly after the attacks, many shelters were heavily overcrowded as this camp set up by IDPs from the Okhika District (photos on the bottom, source: West Papua Council of Churches)*

Church workers visited six temporary IDP camps in the Pegunungan Bintang Regency in October 2022 and compiled lists, according to which 50 IDPs had died since being displaced. At least 39 IDPs suffered from sickness without access to healthcare facilities. The figures were updated on 23 July 2023, counting additional 21 deceased IDPs from Kiwirok who died in 2023.<sup>31</sup> Many women gave birth in the forest shelters without the help of health workers. Children in the camps do not have access to education. The IDPs are in constant danger as Indonesian snipers continue to operate in the Kiwirok District. On 27 October 2022, Indonesian snipers shot dead Mr Yahya Tepul in the Pelebib Village,<sup>32</sup> where he wanted to look for his pigs. The location of the killing was marked on the satellite images of Pelebib Village in the previous section.

The local government promotes the resettlement of IDPs to their villages, although the security situation in the Kiwirok District remains tense. According to the police,<sup>33</sup> about twenty IDPs from the Kiwirok District, including eight village leaders and medical workers, were re-settled in their villages in late November 2022. They had lived in Pegunungan Bintang's largest city, Oksibil, with approximately 500 IDPs for 14 months. Joint security forces accompanied them to guarantee their safety in the village. The vast majority of IDPs refuses to return to their villages. Some of the villages have been burnt to the ground and some public buildings continue to be occupied by security force members.

Interviews with IDPs in the six shelters demonstrate that the Kiwirok IDPs remain isolated from humanitarian access by the government since their displacement in mid-September 2021. Heavy military presence in the area and Indonesian Government policies prevent international humanitarian organisations from providing support to the IDPs.

31 Gidi Church (23.07.2023): Data Orang Meninggal Di Lokasi Pengungsian Berjumlah 74 Orang (21 Orang Yang Sudah Lengkap Data) Dari Kiwirok Pegunungan Bintang, Bulan April – Juli 2023

32 Human Rights Monitor (15.11.2022): Sniper shoots dead Mr Yahya Tepmul in Pelebib Village, Pegunungan Bintang, available

## 9. Conclusions

Whether the Indonesian military attack on the Kiwirok District can be categorized as a crime against humanity can be assessed by examining the findings of this report against the characteristic elements according to the definition of crimes against humanity as stipulated in Article 7 of the Rome Statute. Not all elements can be applied in the context of the security forces' operation in Kiwirok. The relevant elements of the definition can be reduced to:

1. Widespread and systematic attacks
2. Aimed at the civilian population
3. "With knowledge of the attack"
4. Acts relating to murder (Article 7(1)(a)), extermination (Article 7, (1)(b)), or the deportation or forcible transfer of population (Article 7, (1)(d))

### 1. Widespread and systematic attack

The interpretations of the widespread aspect emphasise the geographical extent and the massiveness of the number of victims. As for the systematic element, policy implementation is indicated through the existence of the same and repetitive patterns and methods applied to different villages over a large area. The fulfilment of both elements can be assessed based on the military equipment used to attack the eight indigenous villages in the Kiwirok District.

The assessment applies these guiding questions:

- Could the attacks involving helicopters and drones have been carried out without coordination and careful planning?

at: <https://humanrightsmonitor.org/case/sniper-shoots-dead-mr-yahya-tepmul-in-pelebib-village-pegunungan-bintang/>  
33 Jubi (03.12.2022): Pengungsi kembali ke Kiwirok, Satgas Damai Cartenz kirim tenaga kesehatan, available at: <https://jubi.id/tanah-papua/2022/pengungsi-kembali-ke-kiwirok-satgas-damai-cartenz-kirim-tenaga-kesehatan/>

- Were the attacks against indigenous villages well-coordinated and proportionate in terms of the force applied and its impact on the civilian population?
- Were the airstrikes carried out with certainty to separate the targets from civilians?
- Are there patterns and repeated attacks?

Findings in this report lead to the conclusion that at least some of the attacks against the villages must have been coordinated and well-planned. Security force action in response to the initial attack after the killing of health workers on 13 September 2021 appeared to have a more responsive character without being carefully planned. Media sources and witnesses confirmed that additional security force members were deployed to the Mangolodgi Village between 22 and 25 September 2021. The deployment of additional police and military personnel often marks the beginnings of joint security force operations which must be well-planned, coordinated, and authorised by high-ranking authorities within the police and military.

Considering that the attacks on eight villages in Kiwirok were re-occurring, involved sophisticated military equipment such as helicopters and spy drones, covered an area of 5.18 km<sup>2</sup> between 25 September and late October 2021. It can be assumed that the follow-up raids after 25 September 2021 were part of a carefully planned and coordinated joint security operation.

The attacks on villages in Kiwirok followed a similar pattern which strengthens the “systematic” element of the definition. Security force members reportedly attacked from the air. Shortly after, ground forces moved into the village. They secured the area and searched houses. Security force members seized personal belongings and removed building materials from the houses to build security posts. Residential houses which had not been bombed to the ground during the air raid were later burnt down by ground forces. The livestock was killed.

The Rome Statute does not provide additional explanations regarding the legal definition of the term “widespread”. However, there is a general consensus among experts that an attack is widespread if it occurs on a large scale, directed at many intended victims. The villages attacked in Kiwirok are located in an area of 5.18 km<sup>2</sup>, strengthening the element of a “widespread attack”. The internal displacement of 2,252 civilians from the districts Kiwirok, Kiwirok Timur, Okhika, and Okbemtau as a result of the operations in Kiwirok additionally supports the element of a “widespread attack”. The number of displaced indigenous Ngalum amount to 12.5% of the total Ngalum population of estimated 18,000 Ngalum living on the Indonesian side of New Guinea Island.<sup>34</sup>

## 2. Aimed at a civilian population

The second element of crimes against humanity defines that the attack must be directed at a civilian population. According to Article 7 (2) of the Rome Statute, an “Attack directed against any civilian population” means a course of conduct involving the multiple commission of acts referred to in paragraph 1 against any civilian population, pursuant to or in furtherance of a State or organizational policy to commit such attack”.

The raids in Kiwirok predominantly targeted civilian settlements, destroying residential houses and churches. Witnesses testified that the security forces indiscriminately opened fire at people working in their gardens and dropped mortar grenades on residential houses, taking into account that a greater number of civilians would be harmed. Many residential houses, churches, and public facilities were reportedly damaged by mortar grenades and manually set on fire, making the villages no longer inhabitable. The security force members killed livestock and used the meat for the consumption of their combatants. Attempts by displaced civilians to return, such as in the

34 Martin Steer (September 2005): Languages of the Upper Sepik and Central New Guinea, p. 33, available at: [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/576ed271bebafeb665249c0/t/576ef4d7725e2552c3689535/1466889435280/Languages\\_of\\_the\\_Upper\\_Sepik\\_and\\_Central\\_New\\_Guinea.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/576ed271bebafeb665249c0/t/576ef4d7725e2552c3689535/1466889435280/Languages_of_the_Upper_Sepik_and_Central_New_Guinea.pdf)

case of Mr Yahya Tepul, were responded to with attacks by sniper personnel, further building up the deterrence against returning to their homes.

The pattern of attacks in Kiwirok, involving the destruction of houses and killing of livestock, was observed in five villages. This pattern indicates that these procedures were part of the security forces' counterinsurgency strategy against the TPNPB guerrilla fighters. TPNPB members hide among civilians and need the villages to supply their members with food and other essentials. TPNPB fighters are indigenous locals. Many are related to civilians living in the conflict areas. However, the presence of combatants among civilians is not sufficient reason to justify indiscriminate attacks directed against civilian settlements. Particularly in the case of air raids against small villages, a clear separation between civilians and targets can no longer be guaranteed. Therefore, such strategies involving the deliberate destruction of civilian settlements and livestock must be categorized as criminal acts. This pattern was reported during the raids in the villages Mangoldogi, Sopamikma, Delmatahu, Oknanggul, and Pelebib.

### 3. "With knowledge of the attack"

Neither police nor military officials made public statements regarding the raids in the Kiwirok District. In late October 2021, journalists questioned police and military officials regarding the allegations of air attacks against indigenous villages in the Kiwirok District. The Papua Regional Police denied any involvement in bombings on indigenous villages in Kiwirok. Likewise, representatives of the VXII/Cenderawasih Military Command refused to comment on the allegations.<sup>35</sup>

Raids involving coordinated air raids and ground force operations need planning and preparation.

Media reports on the deployment of additional security forces to Kiwirok shortly after the incident on 13 September 2021,<sup>36</sup> indicate that the operation was planned and prepared.<sup>37</sup> Military commanders arranged the transfer of additional personnel and weaponry. The cooperation of infantry and air force additionally strengthens the allegation that the Kiwirok operations were planned and commanded from above.

Although there is no public statement by military commanders or police chiefs available, officials may have been aware of or may have even authorised the operations. Only a thorough investigation into the allegations of serious human rights violations could reveal who authorised the attacks, which command structures, and which security force units were involved in conducting the Kiwirok attacks.

## 4. Acts relating to murder, extermination, or the deportation or forcible transfer of population

According to the information received, neither the air raids nor the ground attacks between 13 September and late October 2021 resulted in civilian fatalities. HRM monitor received isolated reports of indigenous Papuans being tortured and killed in the Kiwirok area. However, these incidents did not occur between 21 September and late October 2021. They were not part of the security force operation discussed in this report. Nevertheless, it must be considered that the security situation in Kiwirok never recovered after the attacks. Heavy security presence in the area puts civilians in the area at high risk of being arbitrarily arrested or killed. Indonesian snipers reportedly shot dead Mr Yahya Tepmul<sup>38</sup> on 27 October 2022, while he was in search of surviving

35 Tempo.co (24.10.2023): Aparat Keamanan dan KKB Diminta Menahan Diri dalam Kasus Serangan Bom di Kiwirok, available at <https://fokus.tempo.co/read/1520741/aparat-keamanan-dan-kkb-diminta-menahan-diri-dalam-kasus-serangan-bom-di-kiwirok>

36 See Timeline of incidents in Kiwirok in Section 6 of this report

37 see table *Reconstructed timeline of armed attacks in the Kiwirok District between 13 September and 23 October 2021* in Section 6 on security force operations in the Kiwirok District

38 Human Rights Monitor (15.11.2022): Sniper shoots dead Mr Yahya Tepmul in Pelebib Village, Pegunungan Bintang, available at: <https://humanrightsmonitor.org/case/sniper-shoots-dead-mr-yahia-tepmul-in-pelebib-village-pegunungan-bintang/>

livestock in his destroyed home in the Pelebib Village.

The findings provide supporting evidence for the extermination and forcible transfer of the Ngalum population in the Kiwirok District. According to Article 7(2)(b) of the Rome Statute, “Extermination” includes the intentional infliction of conditions of life, inter alia the deprivation of access to food and medicine, calculated to bring about the destruction of part of a population. Article 7(2)(d), stipulates that the “Deportation or forcible transfer of population” means forced displacement of the persons concerned by expulsion or other coercive acts from the area in which they are lawfully present, without grounds permitted under international law”.

According to data collected by solidarity groups and church workers, the attacks on eight villages in the Kiwirok District have caused the internal displacement of 2.252 Ngalum people. At least 72 IDPs reportedly died as a result of the living conditions in the IDP shelters away from their original live-sustaining village infrastructure as of October 2022. The IDPs remain isolated from any form of government support, humanitarian supplies, healthcare, or education until now. The heavy security force presence in the area prevents the IDPs from returning and rebuilding their villages. Most of them have lost their house, livestock, and all personal belongings. This leaves IDPs with no choice but to hide and survive in forest shelters without access to sufficient food, healthcare, and education.

The living conditions at the IDP shelters, the isolation from any form of government support, and the lack of options for returning to their homes amount to a situation that meets the definition described in Article 7(2)(b) of the Rome Statute on Extermination. The security operations only had serious effects on the indigenous Papuans in Kiwirok. Non-Papuan Indonesians

and civil workers were evacuated from Kiwirok by airplanes between 22 and 25 September. The evacuated civilians only comprise a small part of the affected population in Kiwirok. In light of the importance of animal husbandry and dependency on their smallholdings for livelihood, it is evident that the forced expulsion and destruction of their homes, including the livestock, would have fatal consequences for the Ngalum People, particularly the elderly and children.

The operations using helicopters and ground forces to attack indigenous villages in Kiwirok left people no choice but to flee into the forest. According to witnesses, the helicopters dropped mortar grenades on residential houses and indiscriminately fired at people in and near the settlements. Such attacks are not permitted under international law and meet the definition according to Article 7(2)(d) on “Deportation or forcible transfer of population”.

## 10. Recommendations

**H**RM recommends to the Indonesian Government, through its responsible agencies, to

- Immediately ensure humanitarian access for national and international humanitarian organisations and government agencies to the Kiwirok District. Humanitarian aid should be provided without involving security force members to ensure that IDPs can access aid without fearing reprisals;
- Instruct the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas Ham) to investigate allegations of gross human rights violations in the Kiwirok District between 13 September and late October 2021 according to Articles 9, 18 and 19 of Indonesian Law 26/2000 on Human Rights Courts;

- Immediately withdraw non-organic security force members<sup>39</sup> from the Kiwirok District, allowing the IDPs to return and re-build their villages without having to fear reprisals and further raids;
- Ratify the Rome Statute;
- Be open to a meaningful engagement in a constructive peace dialogue with the West Papua movement, including its armed wing;
- Allow international observers and foreign journalists to access and work in West Papua

39 Non-organic security force personnel in this regard refers to security force personnel which have been temporarily deployed to West Papua from other islands in Indonesia and are not part of regular territorial commands



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