

Received: January 23, 2026

Accepted: July 1, 2026

Published: August 18, 2026

The Indonesian Diplomacy to Manage Global Support on Papua

Sukawarsini Djelantik**Parahyangan Catholic University**

Email: sukedj@unpar.ac.id

Abstract

Indonesia has a long history of diplomacy to protect national sovereignty and regional integrity against separatist movements. The Indonesian negotiation to resolve the conflict in Aceh and East Timor marked by peace agreements that end the conflicts for good. However, the issue in Papua remained unresolved and became a diplomatic problem until now. The result of the 1969 referendum (Pepera), which stated that if the majority of Papuan chose to be part of Indonesia, the demand for independence still challenged Indonesia. The demand for independence was led by the Free Papua Movement (OPM). The OPM's diplomatic factions actively voice their causes at international level to maintain the global awareness of unresolved issues. This paper analyses Indonesia's diplomacy to maintain global support on Papua as part of Indonesia. The objective of Indonesia's diplomacy at bilateral, regional and multilateral level is to strengthen the support of the international community that Papua is legally part of Indonesia. Indonesia's diplomacy also aims to weaken claims of the OPM on the accusation of the violations of human rights as conducted by the military and security apparatuses in the province. The research's main finding is that the strength of Indonesia's diplomacy is in bilateral and multilateral level, however, maintaining its position at global level, however still weak in public and media management. This research is benefits in both theoretical and practical purposes. Theoretically, this research benefit to develop understanding of diplomacy as a specific study in international relations, especially related to public, economic, and preventive measures. In practical matters, the study could be used in implementing foreign policies especially in the context of wining global support.

Keyword: diplomacy, conflict resolution, Papua, Indonesia.

Abstrak

Indonesia memiliki sejarah panjang diplomasi untuk melindungi kedaulatan nasional dan integritas regional terhadap gerakan separatis. Negosiasi Indonesia untuk menyelesaikan konflik di Aceh dan Timor Timur ditandai dengan perjanjian damai yang mengakhiri konflik untuk selamanya. Namun, isu di Papua tetap belum terselesaikan dan menjadi masalah diplomatik hingga saat ini. Hasil referendum 1969 (Pepera) telah menyatakan bahwa mayoritas penduduk Papua memilih untuk menjadi bagian dari Indonesia, namun tuntutan kemerdekaan masih menjadi tantangan. Tuntutan kemerdekaan dipimpin oleh Gerakan Papua Merdeka (OPM), dimana faksi-faksi diplomatiknya secara aktif menyuarakan tuntutan mereka di tingkat internasional untuk mempertahankan kesadaran global tentang isu-isu yang belum terselesaikan. Tulisan ini menganalisis diplomasi Indonesia dalam mempertahankan dukungan global terhadap Papua sebagai bagian dari Indonesia. Tujuan diplomasi Indonesia di tingkat bilateral, regional, dan multilateral adalah untuk memperkuat dukungan masyarakat internasional bahwa Papua secara hukum merupakan bagian dari Indonesia. Diplomasi Indonesia juga bertujuan untuk melemahkan klaim OPM atas tuduhan pelanggaran hak asasi manusia yang dilakukan oleh militer dan aparat keamanan di provinsi tersebut. Temuan utama penelitian ini adalah bahwa kekuatan diplomasi Indonesia pada tataran bilateral dan multilateral dalam mempertahankan posisi pada tingkat global tetapi lemah dalam diplomasi publik dan pengelolaan media. Penelitian ini bermanfaat baik secara teoritis maupun praktis. Secara teoritis, penelitian ini mengembangkan pemahaman tentang diplomasi sebagai studi khusus dalam hubungan internasional, terutama yang berkaitan dengan pendekatan diplomasi publik, ekonomi, dan preventif. Secara praktis, studi ini dapat digunakan dalam implementasi kebijakan luar negeri, khususnya dalam konteks memenangkan dukungan global.

Kata kunci: diplomasi, resolusi konflik, Indonesia, Papua.

Introduction

Political conflict in between Indonesia and the region of West-Papua began during the Dutch colonial period in Indonesia. In 1949, the Dutch recognized Indonesia's independence, which included all areas of the former Dutch East Indies, without acknowledging Western New Guinea (West Papua). Since 1950 onwards, the Dutch and Western powers agreed that the Papuans should be given an independent status. However, due to the interests of Western countries during the Cold War, the United States government supported West Papua as part of Indonesia. The struggle for Papua's independence peaked in 1961, when the people of Papua declared their independence by proclaiming the Republic of West Papua. However, the conflict reignited when Indonesia took control of Papua in 1963 through Operation Trikora (Tri Komando Rakyat) or Three People's Commands. In 1962, Papua was under the temporary trusteeship of the UN, until a referendum was held in 1969. The results of the referendum indicated that majority of the population wanted Papua to be part of Indonesia.

The referendum results were protested because they did not represent the voice of majority of population. Since then, various central government policies,

including transmigration from other parts of Indonesia to Papua, have further marginalized the Papuan people. The conflict continues to this day, particularly related to actions carried out in the name of the Free Papua Movement (OPM), which have attacked various government facilities, civil servants, and state officials on duty. The issue in Papua obtained international coverages due to the activities of the OPM to keep the issues alive. The global media coverages especially focus on various human rights violations conducted in Indonesia's provinces by the polices and security apparatuses. The increase and intensive media coverages especially happened in connection the commemoration of West Papua political manifesto on every December 1st. The "morning star" flag was raised to mark the day, accompanied by speeches from its political leaders. The events accompanied by several other activities under the hashtag #GlobalFlagraising", which remind the global community on unresolved conflict of the province.

The internationalization of West Papuan issue was focus more on the injustice that has caused the continuation conflict up to this day. Numerous human rights abuses occurred during the implementation of "Military Operation Region" (MOR) since New Order

government in 1969. The perpetrator of the violations was normally did not followed by a justice mechanism and resolution. During the implementation of MOR, the Indonesian government had stationed 50,000 military and police personnel, in addition to several hundred others in Papua New Guinea borders, in charge on security issues. For example, the “Paniai Massacre” in Central Papua which killed five teenagers and wounded of 17 others. The demand for independence had killed at least 30,000 Papuans. The latest report of Human Rights Watch confirmed on the long history of human rights violations with specific risks to the indigenous community”. The latest report of Human Rights Monitor stated that The Indonesian military (TNI) deployed new troops and intensified operations in the regencies Nduga, Pegunungan Bintang and Puncak Jaya in January and February 2025. The military operations were reportedly carried out in indigenous communities, causing new internal displacements. Violations continues to this day, as confirmed by the latest report of 2025 Human rights Monitor which contains of cases and developments, violations and their patterns. The report also mentioned on the escalation of the armed conflict and its impact on civilians.

The political conflict has also created social and economic instability that

has impacted the welfare of local community. To resolve, the Indonesian government has taken various steps, such as granting special autonomy and increasing infrastructure development. To maximise the infrastructure and social development, the territory is currently divided into six provinces; Central Papua, Highland Papua, Papua, South Papua, Southwest Papua, and West Papua. To respond on marginalization issue, the Indonesian government had established the Unit for the Accelerated Development of Papua and West Papua (UP4B). The institution established under Presidential Regulation Number 66 of 2011, to coordinate, facilitate, and oversee the implementation of the Accelerated Development of Papua and West Papua Provinces. However, greater efforts, an appropriate and comprehensive approach are still needed to resolve the conflict thoroughly. The issues of demand for independence, human right violations and economic marginalization, has caused negative image of Indonesia overseas. All types of diplomacies have been conducted at bilateral, regional, and international levels, however, the issues were continued damage Indonesia image. The OPM overseas representatives increased its activities to obtain greater support for independence, while Indonesia have tried to weaken and decrease its global

support. In accordance to the above background, this paper would analyse the Indonesian diplomacy to obtain global support on the Papuan issues. The questions to be answered is “How effective is the Indonesian diplomacy to increase the international community support on Papuan issues?”. The diplomacy would be analysed from bilateral, regional, and multilateral level. A bilaterally diplomacy analysis would be given to The United States of

America (USA), a superpower with a strong economic and business interest in Papua, while at regional level the focus would be on The Pacific Island Forum (PIF). Regarding the Indonesian respond on human rights violation, the multilateral diplomacy would be focused on to the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC). Hopefully the analysis would provide the Indonesian government information to formulate diplomatic strategies and national policies.

Theoretical Framework

Diplomacy is define as the established method of influencing the decisions and behavior of foreign governments and peoples through dialogue, negotiation, and other measures short of war or violence. To resolve complexity of global issues, diplomacy had expanded to cover summit meetings and other

international conferences, parliamentary diplomacy, the international activities of supranational and subnational entities, unofficial diplomacy by nongovernmental elements, and the work of international civil servants. Further development in the field of diplomacy indicated that the actor is not only the government, but to support the process, the involvement of public or non-state actors are necessary. The terms known as “public diplomacy”, which refers to a government’s activities and programs designed to communicate policy messages to its own domestic audiences. Further approached suggested that public diplomacy was widely seen as the transparent means by which a sovereign country communicates with publics in other countries. Its aim was to inform and influence audiences overseas for the purpose of promoting the national interest and advancing foreign policy goals.

One type of diplomacy that related to conflict is “preventive diplomacy”, or some actions can be implemented by the UN, regional organizations, NGO networks and individual states. The UN report defines preventive diplomacy as an action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur. The assumption with both conflict prevention

and preventive diplomacy is that intractable conflicts are easier to avoid before they happen, rather than fix once they have occurred. There is a great deal of truth to this assumption, although some conflicts are likely to be unavoidable.⁶

The UN Secretary General reported that in the face of political tensions or escalating crises, preventive diplomacy is often one of the few options available, short of coercive measures, to preserve peace. It is also potentially a high-return investment. The biggest return comes in lives saved. However, prevention also makes strong economic sense. The World Bank has calculated that “the average cost of civil war is equivalent to more than 30 years of gross domestic product (GDP) growth for a medium-size developing country”. The most severe civil wars impose cumulative costs of tens of billions of dollars, and recovery to original growth paths takes the society concerned an average of 14 years.

Bilateral Diplomacy and The Support from the USA

The main issue to most conflict across the world is resources interests. West Papua is rich natural resource, yet it remains among Indonesia’s least-developed provinces. It has gold, silver, copper, natural gas, and timber, among other resources. Interests of exploitation of

these resources contributed to allegations of appropriation, as Papuans have not seen much benefit. The government of Indonesia officially gained the majority stake in the Freeport-run Grasberg Mine in 2018. Papuans still demand the closure of the mine, with protests occurring from time to time.

With economic and business interests as the main consideration, the most prominent strength of Indonesian diplomacy is the support of the United States of America (USA). Officially both countries supported the Indonesian causes since the beginning of the implementation of the referendum in 1969. The USA’s economic interests was served by business concession that provided by Indonesia through exploration and exploitation of natural resources since 1967 by the US based company, PT Freeport Indonesia (FTFI). The company is the owner and manager of Freeport McMoran Copper & Gold Inc and PT Indonesia Asahan Aluminium (Persero Inalum). Freeport-McMoran started the activity of mining in West Papua, Indonesia in 1972. This massive mining company recorded as the biggest producer of gold in the world and the second largest producer of copper.

The official USA's support was voiced again by Moeldoko, a Chief of Staff to the Indonesian President of Joko Widodo in 2019. The statement and US encouragement were voiced by Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs during his visit to Indonesia. Moeldoko explained that the support is in any form, especially in the diplomacy in maintaining the situation jointly considering the country has a business in the eastern region of Indonesia.

Multilateral Diplomacy and Internationalization of Conflict

In order to support its causes and gaining global support, the Free Papuan Organization (OPM) is consists of three faction, each with a specific duty. The first is the West Papua National Liberation Army, under the leadership of Mathias Wenda, and the West Papua National Army, led by Fernando Worobay. Due to frequent violent activities, these organizations considered as an "armed criminal group" or terrorist group by the Indonesian government's point of view. The second group of armed units that focused on demonstrations and protests; led by leaders that stationed in several countries. Its duty is to raise awareness of issues in the territory whilst striving for international support for independence. The

next faction is the Revolutionary Council (OPMRC), founded in 1982, led by Moses Werror. This organization uses diplomatic instruments for its struggle to independent. The organizations focused at the UN, the South Pacific Forum (SPF)/the Pacific Island Forum (PIF), and the Southeast Asian regional organization (ASEAN).

The third element is the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP), formed from the merger of three political independence movements. Under this organization is the International Parliamentarians for West Papua (IPWP), focused on taking proactive approaches to advocating for West Papuan civil rights. IPWP's membership includes officials from Melanesian Pacific nations, plus New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. IPWP coordinates support for West Papuan independence, supported by four politicians from Vanuatu, four from Papua New Guinea, one from New Zealand, one from the Solomon Islands, and one from Samoa. The participation and support of these politicians are crucial to the ULMWP's lobbying success. The task of IPWP and the International Lawyers for West Papua (ILWP) are drafting petitions and working across three sectors: providing legal advice, legal action, and public advocacy through the media. ILWP's membership includes lawyers from across

national borders, including Australia, the United Kingdom, Guyana, the Solomon Islands, the United States, Vanuatu, and Papua New Guinea. ILWP operates in various regional and multilateral platforms to provide a strong legal basis for West Papua's independence.

The Indonesia diplomacy aims to balance various efforts of OPM lobbies at the UN. OPM had approached various organizations to support independence, with a main argument that “the independent of each nation” had been regulated in the 1945 Indonesian constitutions Preamble. Another argument was that the rejection of Papua’s independence was a violation of the International Covenant on Civil, Political, and Economic rights, as promulgated in Law number 15 (2005) and Law number 11 (2005).

Indonesia also countering actions of the ULMWP political wing leader, Benny Wenda, which communicate with various groups at the UN. In May 2016, a meeting of International Parliamentarian for West Papua (IPWP) in London gained a result called the “Westminster Declaration”. The initial content of this declaration is condemnation to human rights violations in West Papua, and the illegality of the Act of Free Choice in 1969. The Declaration signed by 95 IPWI members, 11 New

Zealand’s Members of Parliament from four political parties.

In regard to negotiation with the Indonesian government, Benny Wenda rejected further negotiation unless “independence” is guaranteed. . Wenda’s argument was, West-Papua is a colonized nation and not a province of Indonesia. During Un Meeting in New York in September 2019, Benny Wenda lobbied the UN members to support Papua’s independence, argued that his issues was relevant to the Palestinian. The purpose was to lobby the human rights commission to visit Papua to examine condition in the province. He stated that: "My goal is for the UN to examine the situation in Papua, which is illegally occupied by Indonesia. "Wenda also presented a speech before the United Kingdom’s Parliament members in June 14th, 2022.

Beside official support, the OPM also gained sympathy and solidarity act from public in Australia and New Zealand. In Auckland, New Zealand, the “Pasifika Festival” was conducted annually since 1993, to celebrate the Pacific cultural experiences. West Papua, as part of Pacific community which share common cultures, also involved on several occasion. Even though it is a cultural event, however, politically the condition of “colonized”

situation of West-Papua by the Indonesian government being discussed amongst the participants. This public diplomacy is complemented to political diplomacy hat conducted by different factions of West-Papua. In Australia, support from public indicated by the formation of West Papuan support groups in several major cities. Since the last 10 years, the resident in a Warrambool Town always celebrate the commemoration of West-Papua independence every December 1st.

Another public support demonstrated by the establishment of the Australian West Papua Association, as in South-Western Victoria. Benny Wenda was awarded the “Freedom Award” by the City of Oxford. Although the British government has announced "has no bearing on UK government policy" and it does not support Papuan independence, however, this award considerate as a success of ULMWP to obtained international public support. More important than just an award is the coverage is a propaganda and a sign of mass and social media support to OPM interests.

Multilateral Diplomacy: Indonesia's Position and the Issues of Human Rights Violations

Indonesia's diplomacy is supported by its strong position a “middle power”, and

prominent membership in most regional and international organization. Since 2020, Indonesia held a leadership of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Being the 16th biggest economy, Indonesia also a member of G-20. The prominent of this organization is the controlling of 80 percent of total trade and 90% of the world's gross national products. The country's inclusion on the G-20 enabled Indonesia to have a strong lobby and support amongst prominent economies. By implementing an “economic statecraft”, Indonesia using its economic ability to gain political support from the world's most influential countries. In addition, in 2020 Indonesia is elected as a member of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC). This position enabling Indonesia to play a greater role and contribute to tackling human rights violations around the world. This position enable Indonesia prevented the human rights issue in Papua did not included on the meeting agenda. After Indonesia released its membership, in 2022 the UNHR report stated the organization's serious concerns on the “deteriorating human rights situation” in the province.

As a nation with the biggest Muslim population, Indonesia is becoming the member of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). Being an OIC prominent member, in 2025, Indonesia

hosted the 19th Conference of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIC). Indonesian had a significant position amongst 35 OIC members, therefore, obtained a global solidarity within Islamic world. This position had assured that the Papua's agenda would never mention during OIC's meetings.

The above facts indicated that Indonesian diplomacy relied only on official-government support. Beside first track diplomacy that conducted by the government officials, the success of diplomacy would also require non-state actors supports. Several international organizations especially those focused on human rights issues, challenged the Indonesian diplomacy. For example, on May 2024, TAPOL, Franciscans International, AJAR (Asia Justice and Rights), PWG (Papuan Women's Working Group), CIVICUS and FORUM-ASIA, at international forums, urge the Indonesian government to take concrete actions to implement the concluding recommendations made by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). The Human Rights Committee (CCPR) also demanded to take actions and to ensure that all rights and obligations stemming from the twin Covenants are respected and protected, particularly for indigenous Papuans.

Regional Diplomacy; The Approaches to South Pacific Region

The Free Papua Organization is strongly supported by countries in the South pacific region. The sentiments support was due to the spirit of anti-colonialism and the principle of the "Melanesian Way". The principle was initiated by Bernard Narokobi in the 1970's. Narokobi was a Papua New Guinea (PNG)-born philosopher, which argue that Melanesia includes the territory of Indonesian Papua, PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, and Fiji. The spirit of the "Melanesian Way" is to support Melanesian independence which previously had long been colonized by European powers.

Another organization that supported Papua's caused is the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), established in 1986. The organization composed of four Melanesian states of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and later the Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste (FLNKS), a pro-independence movement from New Caledonia admitted membership in 1989. The initial establishment of MSG is to support the economic development of member countries, while endorsing every struggle for Melanesian self-determination.

The MSG frequently supporting West Papua against the Indonesian government especially in regard to the continue human rights violations. The MSG support also concerning the area of economic marginalization, racial discrimination, and the demand to further develop social and infrastructure in Papua. In 2011 Indonesia was granted observer status at the MSG, which raised controversy in the organization. Fiji opposed Indonesia's full membership at MSG, despite granting Indonesia observer status in 2019. In 2022, Prime Minister Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum confirmed support for West Papuan independence at multilateral level. In early 2023, Fiji's Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka expressed support for West Papuan membership in the MSG, which contradicted previous efforts to maintain good relations with Indonesia for a decade.

Amongst MSG members, Vanuatu plays a significant role to maintain the issue of West Papua alive at regional and global levels. For example, in September 2019 UN Forum, the Prime Minister Charlot Salwai Tabimasnas voices human rights violation in West Papua. Bob Loughman, Vanuatu Prime Minister, speech at the UN General Assembly in 2021 stated that West Papua's suffering was due to tensions and human rights violations as the result of Indonesian occupation. Loughman further demanded a

visit of an investigative team to the province. Representative of the Solomon Islands supported the cause by stating: "The Solomon Islands has received reports from respected sources, including fellow UN member states and moral leaders from civil society, describing the lack of protection of the human rights of the Melanesian people of West Papua. Our concerns relate to the increasing loss of life in West Papua by Indonesian authorities, but how can we, as members of this honourable body, defenders of human rights and benchmarks of ethical and moral values, turn a blind eye to the deaths of more than 500,000 West Papuans over the past 50 years?".

The first Prime Minister of Vanuatu, Walter Hadye Lini also one of the supporter of Papua's independence movement. Lini stated that Vanuatu is not in a complete independent before all Melanesian countries were free from colonialism. In 2016, the Vanuatu's Foreign Minister, Bruno Leingkone, declared support by give affirmation on Melanesia's sense of solidarity. To respond on the dynamics at MSG, the Indonesian diplomacy responded by reaffirms its commitment to strengthen concrete cooperation. The government's commitment was stated in March 2024 during the Budget Foreign Ministers Meeting (FFM) of the MSG in Port Vila,

Vanuatu. Indonesia provide an economic assistant to Vanuatu, through applied technology, training, scholarship, agriculture, and animal husbandry. Further Indonesia provides USD 2 millions foreign aid when the country effected by the Hurricane Pam (Cyclone Pam) disaster that hit the country in 2015.

Despite economic assistance, the Indonesia's effort to win the heart and mind of Vanuatu government and public was unsuccessful. The political support that expected in return to economic benefit was considered inadequate. The diplomatic failure was indicated by Vanuatu's continued support to OPM. During the 76th UN-GA Session, Vanuatu supported the Papua's right to self-determination. During the 2022 UN Human Rights Council session in Geneva, Vanuatu urged a visit to the provinces of Papua and West Papua to examine human rights violations. This effort resulted in a report entitled: "Human Rights in West Papua in 2022: No Improvement but Worsening." In 2023, Vanuatu also developed a narrative at its 7th Melanesian Arts and Culture Festival (MACFEST), entitled "Rebuilding Melanesia for our future." A delegation from ULMWP invited to the festival, and the Morning Star flag was raised.

The Indonesian Diplomacy and the Role of Media

The Indonesian public diplomacy to increase support from South Pacific countries conducted through "heart and minds" approaches. Indonesia, through its "look east" policy, has increasingly considered the Pacific Region pivotal for economic development, connectivity, and security. Indonesia has long neglected the South Pacific region, treating it as its backyard. However, Indonesia has transformed its relations with this policy that focused on aid diplomacy. Indonesia prioritizes Nauru, Tuvalu, the Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea in the South Pacific region. In 2019, the Indonesia AID (Agency for International Development) officially launched the Indonesia AID (Indonesian Agency for International Development Cooperation Fund) or LDKPI. This agency aims to strengthen international development cooperation, South-South and triangular cooperation, in maintaining peace and social welfare.

In 2019, the Indonesian government provided financial assistance to seven countries, five of which are from the South Pacific region. Through the South-South Triangular Cooperation (SCCT) and the Indonesia AID, Indonesia gives grants,

technical assistance, and humanitarian aid to the South Pacific. The technical assistance was driven by Indonesia's strong economic performance and the need to navigate global challenges. It also aligns with the Indonesian government's financial reforms and offers a more cohesive approach to foreign assistance. Using its financial capabilities, Indonesia was able to gain influence over South Pacific countries and flourish its image in the international community. However, the assistance was limited in amount while did not accompanied by providing further information on the situation and condition in Indonesia. The majority population of destined countries still have lack of knowledge on Indonesia's rich cultural and ethnic diversity, as well as the recent economic conditions. Public image on Indonesia is remain negative, as public diplomacy did not update with the recent development after the reform movement in 1998. The image of Indonesia still reflected to the condition during New Order government (1966-1998), which reflected by its authoritarian and militaristic nature. Another public diplomacy failure was due to lack of public involvement after economic cooperation. The Indonesian diplomacy should also include other cooperation and aid in problems that considered as "human security" issues. The

example of cooperation is in term of education, social development, natural disasters, and new-energy.

Public diplomacy also closely relates to national image, that reflected by the news of international media. The Indonesian diplomacy should give more attention on publication on Indonesia at regional level. For example, news on human rights violations were given more attention rather than development issue that have been vastly conducted under President Joko Widodo's administration. The issues as the result of the implementation of Papua as the Military Operation Region (MOR), have decreased attention on other positive aspects related to physical and social developments in the province. Joko Widodo has been earnestly working on West Papua's infrastructures, and during his first term as the president in 2014 until 2023, he visited the region 19 times to check and see the performance of every big project in progress. During these visits, besides checking the progress of the existing projects, he also observed areas that require further expansion or development.²⁷ The Indonesian government also have a negative image due to mismanagement of Papua's issues. The government has focused on containing, rather than resolving the root problems.

Human rights issues were also provided strong negative impacts on Indonesian international image. Indonesia as a state law, is known for the principle of “equality before the law”. However, to security and military apparatuses that violate human rights, this principle does not apply. With the digitalized era, the global media both conventional and social-media platform could easily access human rights violations happened in the province. The news could be published in real time.

The Indonesian diplomacy is focus more on first track approach and neglected the power of social media and public supports. Public should be involved more on the causes, especially in the form of research and education, business entities, religious organizations, or prominent private-individuals. News regarding to development in Papua should be manage for the advantage of creating positive images. A counter article, “No Genocide in Papua”, is considered ineffective to counter-narratives the continuing issues of human rights violations and genocide in the province. On the other hand, media in Vanuatu have aggressively reporting Indonesian human rights abuses, without any significant respond and counter-narratives. As a respond to massive news on human rights abuses, the Indonesian government in Ambon, Moluccas,

established an organization named “Melindo” stand for “The Indonesian Melanesian Brotherhood” on October 7th, 2015. On the same year, “Melindo” followed by organizing the cultural festival, called “The Melanesian Cultural festival VI” in Kupang, Eastern Nusa Tenggara.

The success of diplomacy does not only depend on the diplomats’ ability to defend the state’s interests. A stable domestic security and the protection of human rights also became a significant precondition to positive international image. Lack of international support was partly due to the failure of Indonesian domestic security apparatuses to maintain a stable condition in West Papua Province.

Conclusion

The Indonesian diplomacy have a strong support from international community due to the country’s position in a strategic and political arena. Indonesia’s position in various international organizations had led to strong confidence on official support of global community. It means that Indonesian diplomacy have successfully secure its position in various global organization. However, the Indonesian diplomacy did not support by a comprehensive public diplomacy strategy to win the heart and mind of global populations. Approaches to non-state

actors, such as the International NGO (INGO) and global media did not conduct thoroughly, which led to the undermining global community image on Indonesia. In term of media strategy, Indonesia had lack of program related to news management. A strong media condemnation mainly responded by a mild approach that did not resolve the main issue. In this case, a communication strategy should be conducted in order to balance the international media publication that undermined the Indonesian global image. In term of public approach, especially to the Pacific region and the MSG, where the strongest support of West Papua independent movement was significant, the Indonesian public diplomacy should provide a different strategy. The economic aid and technical assistances should be followed by a sustainable and continuous information sessions and publications on Indonesia.

The Indonesian diplomacy regarding the Papuan issue should be redefine by emphasizing public diplomacy activities. In digitalized era, the Indonesian diplomacy should increase the use of social media to inform on development and changes in Indonesian government's policy and administration on Papua. Media management that involved the process of collecting data, processing it to national

interests, and utilize it to national benefit. Meanwhile, security approach that became the focus of Indonesian approach should be minimized and change into humanitarian approaches.

References

- Azis, Aswin Ariyanto, 2023, From Recipient to Donor: Indonesia's Motives in Giving Foreign Aid to South Pacific 2015-2023, https://www.academia.edu/118676236/From_Recipient_to_Donor_In_donesias_Motives_in_Giving_Foreign_Aid_to_South_Pacific_2015_2023.
- Brezina, Daniel, 2023 "One Choice is No Choice At All: Indonesia is Violating the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by Requiring Political Parties to Adhere to Its national Ideology of PANCASILA," American University International Law Review: Vol. 38: Iss. 2, Article7. <https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/aui/r/vol38/iss2/7>.
- Dobrin, Lise M. 2020, The Legacy of Bernard Narokobi and the Melanesian Way, Journal of PacificHistory55(2):149-164, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342681681_The_Legacy_of_Bernard_Narokobi_and_the_Melanesian_Way.
- Mahazir, Ibtesam, Yuyun Wahyu Izzati Surya, Safeena Yaseen, Junaid Ansari, Exploring the Image of Indonesia in International News Media through a Comparative Analysis of Leading News Websites from the World, <https://scholar.unair.ac.id/en>

/publications/exploring-the-image-of-indonesia-in-international-news-media-through-a-comparative-analysis/, Universitas Airlangga.

Natapraja, 2017, New Chapter of Diplomatic Relation Between Indonesia-America Under New Contract of Freeport-McMoran, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322077294_New_Chapter_of_Diplomatic_Relation_Between_Indonesia-America_Under_New_Contract_of_Freeport-McMoran.

Pugu, Melyana Ratana, 2024, Unraveling Indonesia's Diplomacy in the Pacific Region, <https://ijssr.ridwaninstitute.co.id/index.php/ijssr/article/view/681>, a Home / Archives/ Vol. 4 No. 02, : International Journal of Social Service and Research (IJSSR).

Wangge, Hipolitus, 2023, Why Indonesia fails to address the West Papua conflict, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/3/14/why-indonesia-is-losing-the-west-papua-conflict>.

Internet

6 Provinsi di Papua beserta Ibukotanya, <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2023/08/26/220042478/6-provinsi-di-papua-beserta-ibukotanya>.

Britannica Dictionary, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/diplomacy>.

The Meaning of Diplomacy, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344339208_The_Meaning_of_Diplomacy.

UN Secretary General Report "Agenda for Peace", 1992,

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/145749?v=pdf>

https://www.intractableconflict.org/www_colorado_edu_conflict/peace/treatment/prev_ent.htm.

World Bank, 2011 World Development Report: Conflict, Security and Development, Washington, D.C., 2011.

Tempo, Moeldoko Says America Support Indonesia Sovereignty over Papua, <https://en.tempo.co/read/1242846/moeldoko-says-america-support-indonesia-sovereignty-over-papua>, Tempo English.

Institute for Policy Analysis (IPAC) Report, 2022, Escalating Armed Conflict And A New Security Approach in Papua, July 13th, Jakarta, Indonesia.

United Liberation Movement for West Papua, ULMWP, <https://www.ulmwp.org>.

International Parliamentarians on West-Papua (IPWP), <https://www.ipwp.org>.

Westminster Declaration, www.ulmwp.org/westminster-declaration. <https://www.aucklandnz.com/pasifika>.

“Benny Wenda: West Papua leader receives freedom of Oxford”, see: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-49009326>.

West Papua's cause not forgotten, <https://www.standard.net.au/story/4333050/west-papua-not-forgotten/>.

Australia West Papua Association Adelaide, <https://awpaadelaide.com/>.

Antara, Indonesia runs for UN Security Council non-permanent seat 2029-2030,

<https://en.antaranews.com/news/327791/indonesia-runs-for-un-security-council-non-permanent-seat-2029-2030>.

Bank Indonesia, G20 Presidency of Indonesia 2022, a
<https://www.bi.go.id/en/g20/Default.aspx>.

Office of High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR),
<https://www.ohchr.org>.

The Melanesian Spearhead Group: What is it, and what does it do?
<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/melanesian-spearhead-group-what-it-what-does-it-do>.

Bob Loughman, UN General Assembly Debate, 2021,
<https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1g/k1grmwnykh#:~:text=Bob%20Loughman%2C%20Prime%20Minister%20of%20the%20Republic%20of,of%20the%20UN%20%28New%20York%2C%2021-27%20September%202021%29>.

Cyclone Pam: UN confirms 24 dead and 3,300 displaced in Vanuatu
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-31912305>.

West Papua Voice, April 2024,
<https://westpauvoice.ac/politics/joko-widodo-for-west-papua/>.

Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR) Press Release, 2014, Indonesia: Human Rights Violations in West Papua Received High Attention in the Recommendations of UN Human Rights Bodies,
[https://asia-ajar.org/press-release/indonesia-human-rights-](https://asia-ajar.org/press-release/indonesia-human-rights-violations-in-west-papua-received-high-attention-of-un-human-rights-bodies/)

violations-in-west-papua-received-high-attention-of-un-human-rights-bodies/

Detik.com,

<https://www.detik.com/sulsel/hukum-dan-kriminal/d-6304230/kronologi-lengkap-pelanggaran-ham-berat-paniai-papua-tewaskan-4-orang-10-luka>.

Human Rights Watch, May 30th, 2025, “Indonesia: Pertempuran Mengancam Warga Sipil di Papua Barat”,
<https://www.hrw.org/id/news/2025/05/30/indonesia-renewed-fighting-threatens-west-papua-civilians>.

Human Rights Monitor, March 6th, 2025., Military intensifies operations in Nduga, Pegunungan Bintang and Puncak throughout January and February’25,
<https://humanrightsmonitor.org/news/military-intensifies-operations-in-pegunungan-bintang-and-puncak-throughout-january-and-february25/>.

The Papua Monitor Q1-2025,
<https://humanrightsmonitor.org/id/laporan/laporan-triwulan-papua-q1-2025-pemboman-pengungsian-militer-memperluas-jangkauan-sipil-dan-doktrin-perang-baru-di-tengah-protes/>.

A Brief History of Public Diplomacy, USC Centre on Public diplomacy,
<https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/page/what-is-pd>.

Post-Courier, Wenda Rejected Jakarta’s Dialogue Offer; West Papua is Not Another Aceh”,
<https://www.postcourier.com.pg/wenda-rejects-jakartas-dialogue-offer-west-papua-is-not-another-aceh/>.

Tribun Manado, 'Jokowi Harus Duduk dengan Saya Bicarakan Kemerdekaan Papua Barat', <https://manado.tribunnews.com/2022/06/25/pidato-benny-wenda-untuk-pbb-jokowi-harus-duduk-dengan-saya-bicarakan-kemerdekaan-papua-barat>.

Pacific News, Host Status of the 19th PUIC Conference Strengthens Indonesia's Role in the Muslim Inter-Country Forum, <https://pacifictopic.com/2025/05/10/host-status-of-the-19th-puic-conference-strengthens-indonesias-role-in-the-muslim-inter-country-forum/>

INews Papua, Organisasi Papua Merdeka: Sejarah dan Tujuan Berdirinya, <https://papua.inews.id/berita/organisasi-papua-merdeka-sejarah-dan-tujuan-berdirinya/6>.

Bombastis, Mengenal OPM, Organisasi Bersenjata Terselubung yang Masih Bercokol di NKRI <https://www.boombastis.com/fakta-opm-papua/17198>.

The Melanesian Spearhead Group: What is it, and what does it do? <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/melanesian-spearhead-group-what-it-what-does-it-do>.

RNZ, Vanuatu PM calls for UN action on West Papua, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/399952/vanuatu-pm-calls-for-un-action-on-west-papua>.

Kaufman, Michael T. (23 February 1999). "Walter Lini, 57, Clergyman Who Led Nation of Vanuatu". The New York Times.

Tempo English, Indonesia Commits to Strengthening Concrete

Cooperation with Melanesian Spearhead Group Indonesia Commits to Strengthening Concrete Cooperation with Melanesian Spearhead Group, <https://en.tempo.co/read/1850312/indonesia-commits-to-strengthening-concrete-cooperation-with-melanesian-spearhead-group>.

UN Meeting, 76th Session of the UN General Assembly, 25 September 2021 https://statements.unmeetings.org/statements/10.0010/20210925/98yJHEsSga5z/XSuO5mKJwIMd_en.pdf.

Naratimes, Diplomasi Budaya: Indonesia Ramaikan Perhelatan 7th Melanesian Arts and Culture Festival (MACFEST) 2023.

Arief Rachman, 2016, Jurnal intelijen, "No Genocide in Papua", <https://jurnalintelijen.net/2016/08/08/no-genocide-in-papua/>