

Oral statement to the UN Human Rights Council – 23<sup>rd</sup> Session,  
Agenda Item 3 – General Debate, responding to the report of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression  
and Opinion  
Delivered by: Budi Tjahjono

## **Freedom of Expression in Papua is under Threat,**

Mr. President,

The freedom of expression in the provinces of Papua, Indonesia is under threat. We joint the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights, Ms. Navi Pillay who expressed her deep concern on the using of excessive force by the police Indonesian through its police force to the peaceful demonstration in Sorong, Papua on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2013 in commemoration of the inclusion of Papua to Indonesia. Two indigenous Papuans were killed, Mr. Abner Malagawak and Mr. Thomas Blesya, three were wounded and later one died in the hospital.

The Indonesian Government also repeatedly denies the existence of political prisoners in Papua, in contradiction with the fact. According to the data of Papuan behind bars, as 31<sup>st</sup> May 2013, there are 65 Papuan political prisoners. At least 20 of them are charged under the article 106 of Indonesian Penal Code on treason (makar), a problematic criminal offence originating from the Dutch colonial period.

The Government of Indonesian has continuously denied the right to freedom of expression of association of the Papuan. The suppression of political protest in Papua both fuels existing resentment and creates new ones. The policies used to clamp down on free expression and limit democratic space send a message that peaceful means will not be tolerated, increasing the incentive to turn to other means of expression. Civil society live in an atmosphere of intimidation, fear, mutual distrust and any residual faith in the justice system is eroded, many groups are increasingly oriented towards the international community rather than trying to pursue justice at the local and national level.

**Therefore, we would like to recommend the government of Indonesia the following:**

- 1. Provide access to the special rapporteur to visit the provinces of Papua and West Papua during the visit to Indonesia,**
- 2. Ensure no further arrest of peaceful demonstrators and activist are taking place based on the expression of their political opinions;**
- 3. Recognise the existence of political prisoners in Indonesia and release all Papuan political prisoners.**
- 4. Review article 106 and 110 of the Penal Code to which are frequently applied to sentence activists for the peaceful expression of their political opinions;**

Thank you.