

Comment by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet on Indonesia (Papua and West Papua)

Geneva, 4 September 2019

“I have been disturbed by escalating violence in the past two weeks in the Indonesian provinces of Papua and West Papua, and especially the deaths of some protestors and security forces personnel. This is part of a trend we have observed since December 2018, and we have been discussing our concerns with the Indonesian authorities. There should be no place for such violence in a democratic and diverse Indonesia, and I encourage the authorities to engage in dialogue with the people of Papua and West Papua on their aspirations and concerns, as well as to restore internet services and refrain from any excessive use of force. Blanket internet shutdowns are likely to contravene freedom of expression and limiting communications may exacerbate tensions”.

“I welcome the appeals made by President Widodo and other high-level figures against racism and discrimination – a long-standing, serious issue in Papua and West Papua provinces – and their calls for dialogue and calm. I note that some arrests have been made and some members of security forces have been suspended in relation to the original violent attacks on Papuan students in Surabaya and Malang, but I am concerned about reports that nationalist militias and groups are also actively involved in the violence. Local human rights defenders, students and journalists have been facing intimidation and threats and should be protected”.

ENDS

For more information and media requests, please contact: Rupert Colville - + 41 22 917 9767 / rcolville@ohchr.org or Marta Hurtado - + 41 22 917 9466 / mhurtado@ohchr.org

Tag and share - Twitter: [@UNHumanRights](https://twitter.com/UNHumanRights) and Facebook: [unitednationshumanrights](https://www.facebook.com/unitednationshumanrights)