



FROM THE PEOPLE OF THE SOUTH MOLUCCAS
A HUMAN RIGHTS APPEAL

A Statement for Submission to the
Working Group on Indigenous Populations

Commission on Human Rights
Geneva, August 3 - 7

by

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In today's world, a human strife to gain freedom is often beamed worldwide by our modern media, displaying powers of enragement, fumes, fires and tear gas, casting an unpredictable challenge to the piece and stability one has laboured upon for years on end.

At the same time, another strife has gone on for almost four decades, in a place, called the South Moluccas, hardly noticed by the world. The human strife here has itself so often shifted to a pshychological profile of endless pli-ability and resilience, enduring countless of untold misfortunes and ordeals brought upon the people and their environment by the Indonesian-Javanese military dictatorship.

Since the proclamation of the Republic of South Moluccas on April 25, 1950, a date prior to the establishment of the republic Indonesia as an unitarian state, the South Moluccan people has suffered an irreparable damage and ruination after the Javanese invasion, its usurpation and occupation to date of the territory.

The United Nations has shown more attention to the freedom movements of East Timor and West Papua, similar fellow victims of Indonesian-Javanese conquest in that part of the archipelago, but the South Moluccans have fared worse after such a protracted period of oppression, abuse and exploitation. The human rights violation we have suffered here, have raised the specter that our particular species of mankind will disappear from this earth. Our language, music, the very clothes we wear and so many members of our population will simply disappear.

The Javanese who dominate Indonesia seek our destruction through the organized Transmigration Programme, moving in an overwhelming capacity of the people from Java into our islands. Intermarriage is encouraged within a concerted exportation from Java of young women to populate newly established brothels, sex bars and various types of honky-tonks.

The temptations are great. The Birth Control Programme being a national plan to curb Indonesian population rate, deviates into an inconsistent authoritative rule to be implemented on the South Moluccas women. The anomaly here is, that the indigenous women may have no more than three children, spaced at three years intervals, while the Javanese transmigrants are exempted, on the theory that the agriculture is a boon to their economy, thus there is no reason to restrict their birth rate in the South Moluccas. The masterplan is, on the contrary, meticulously coerced on the South Moluccan women in rules they dare not escape. For it is only by programme enrollment that they get the indispensable "card" which is the necessary prerequisite in job-hunting, to enter labour plan, to secure admission of one's child to a primary school, etc.

In the name of land reform to benefit development plans and the transmigration influx from Java, traditional lands are taken away from the indigenous people without compensation. Valuable trees as a source of livelihood, as cocoanut-

resin-, and sagopalm trees are felled on reimbursements which are too far below minimum charge. Eventuating to a covert account involving an indigenous woman kneeling before the military police at gunpoint under the bare sky, dressing herself in her black church-garment, beseeching the armed men not to cut down her few cocoanut trees, a last safehold to survive.

But the tractors meanwhile moving in, commencing their merciless tour de force, the woman sank down as in silent prayers, only letting the bitter tears flow before God and the unmoved gunmen.

There is an unique Brother Bond no one has ever come across in the entire Indonesian archipelago than singularly in the South Moluccas. It is a Bond called Pela which unites the indigenous Christians and Muslims of our islands since the ancestral time. These two communities pledge allegiance to help each other in times of need and shortness. A school, a church or a mosque is built together and when there is flood or famine, the Pelahood functions as an insurance factor. In brief, Pela is always there to support and aid in times of affliction. But the Indonesian authorities, nowadays, impute the Pelahood as being the remnants of heathenism and make it difficult for the subject to survive. If Pela is to be destroyed, then the islands unity will be greatly endangered and unpredictable consequences will surely darken the South Moluccan future!

In addition to everything else, there is an organized torture on the prisoners of conscience of which you in the West have no conception. It involves the use of a snake-house in which the victim, being placed inside, at first feels relax due to the absence of the interrogation officers. The quietness ends abruptly as a huge snake coils itself around the victim and the struggle for life begins.

Usually, a Javanese (probably the reptile's trainer) enters the place in time to unwrap the victim, but there are reports of broken bones and permanent injuries from such practices. This involves a sort of a python or patola snake, as large as a man's thigh and easily capable of crushing the prisoner to death.

The notorious site of this practice is located next to the old prison building in Ambon city, at what was then the Pohon Pulehstreet. South Moluccans are arrested for the slightest reasons of for no reason at all.

Comments on the transmigration system, for example, constitutes a valid reason and one is soon enough accused of subversion, plotting or offending the state.

Only last year mass arrest and detention found place in the South Moluccas, for the novel crime that some tourists have taken into the islands a cassette on which the 1985 speech before this forum was taped. And on the 25th of April of last year also, some villages made an attempt to commemorate the proclamation day of the South Moluccan republic which took place 37 years ago. Hundreds of people are rounded up and brought to a detention center in Ambon city to be interrogated, a dozen of them were thrown into jail and tortured. They were alle shaven bald, a stigma of being state offenders or subversives. Many of them still remain under obligation to report to the local army or police, once a week, concerned their whereabouts. There are few lawyers on the islands, no legal aid and therefore few actual trials. We have a long list of those who have been imprisoned and those who have been tortured. Naturally, we can name no names here for fear of reprisal, but I assure you that they are all prisoners of conscience and not criminals engaged in the acts of violence.

We again share our plight with you. We seek your help, your guidance and your blessings in the human rights struggle in which we are engaged.