



Genocide Watch
The Alliance Against Genocide

Indonesia: Genocide Warning November 2021

Genocide Watch is issuing a Genocide Warning for Indonesia. Ethnic West Papuans and practitioners of minority religions in Indonesia face targeted attacks, arrests, and displacement.

In 1963, Indonesia invaded West Papua, the western half of the island of New Guinea. Six years later, the rigged Act of Free Choice (hereinafter “Act”) referendum formalized Indonesian rule. The Act is highly contested in West Papua, and there is strong support for the [“Free Papua Movement”](#). Indonesian law criminalizes support for West Papuan independence as treason.

In 2019, Indonesian nationalists in Surabaya attacked West Papuan student dorms, shooting teargas into the buildings and calling West Papuan students “[pigs](#)” and “[monkeys](#).” This incident led to a series of protests and riots that left at least [33 dead](#) and [8,000 Papuans displaced](#). Since then, there has been increasing violence in West Papua between Indonesian security forces and the West Papua National Liberation Army—an armed branch of the Free Papua Movement.

The increase in violence in West Papua has displaced over [50,000](#) Papuans. Indonesian security forces have committed numerous rights abuses against ethnic Papuans, including [extrajudicial killings, torture, and rape](#). Indonesia severely [limits the ability of international journalists and human rights workers to enter and report](#) on the situation in West Papua.

The Indonesian government discriminates against other minority religious groups as well. Muslim extremist groups commit violent attacks against these same minority groups. The 1965 Blasphemy Law made it illegal to [“express feelings or commit an act: which principally has the character of being of hostility, hatred, or contempt against a religion adhered to in Indonesia.”](#) Since its implementation, this law has been used to imprison practitioners of minority religions.

This discrimination is facilitated by the inclusion of religion on Indonesian ID cards, a classic example of the **Symbolization** stage in the genocidal process. The government approves [only certain religions on national ID cards](#). While it is possible to leave the religion section blank, those who do are [accused of being “godless”](#) and are prohibited from marrying legally. Yet if a practitioner of a [minority religion lists a recognized non-Muslim religion on their ID card](#), they risk being imprisoned under the 1965 Blasphemy Law. Further discrimination comes in the form of laws [limiting the construction of houses of worship in both 1969 and 2006](#), the [2008 Anti-Ahmadiyah Decree](#), and the [Religious Harmony Bill](#).

Due to the dehumanizing language, extrajudicial killings, and rights abuses taking place in West Papua, Genocide Watch considers Indonesia to be at **Stage 4: Dehumanization** and **Stage 8: Persecution**.

Due to the limitations placed on religious minorities, Genocide Watch considers Indonesia to be at **Stage 1: Classification**, **Stage 2: Symbolization**, **Stage 3: Discrimination**, and **Stage 6: Polarization**.

Genocide Watch Recommends:

- Indonesia must permit unrestricted access for journalists and human rights workers to West Papua.
- The Indonesian government should provide resettlement aid to displaced West Papuans.
- Designation of religion should be removed from Indonesian national ID cards.
- Indonesia should repeal the 1965 Blasphemy Law and the 2006 Decree on Houses of Worship.