

IWD rally in Jayapura take up theme 'Respect, protect and fulfill women's rights in Papua'

Monday 17 March 2025, by [ULIM Aida](#) (Date first published: 8 March 2025).

Aida Ulim, Jayapura — The Women's Coalition for the Defence of Human Rights in the Land of Papua held a silent action at the Cenderawasih University Monument in Abepura, Jayapura city, Papua province, on Maret 8. The action was held to commemorate International Women's Day (IWD) and took up the theme "Respect, Protect and Fulfill Women's Human Rights in the Land of Papua".

The women participating in the action brought a number of posters reading "Women are not men's slaves", "You like hitting women, you're stupid", "Stop the sexuality and patriarchy of the past, equality is the future" and "Act firmly against government officials perpetrating sexual violence".

Action coordinator Anasthasia Manong said that the coalition of women human rights defenders, especially in Jayapura, held the silent action on International Women's Day because they see that in Papua there is violence against women and respect for women is still lacking.

This, she said, happens because most Papuans still hold on to a patriarchal culture and also women's rights have not been seen as human rights.

"The concrete example that we see right now, is where national strategic projects (PSN) have taken away the rights of indigenous peoples, especially women, as well as children. This has had an impact on losing the right to life of indigenous peoples and that is one of the rights of women", she said.

Manong said that most women in Papua are aware of and knew that commemorating International Women's Day is important. "But there are still many Papuan women who do not consider commemorating women's day important", she said. Yet, she added, women's rights are also conveyed when commemorating women's day.

Manong also conveyed a message to the government that it is not fully paying attention to and even ignores women's rights, because there is still a lot of violence against women.

"For example there is the beating of women, the government still doesn't care. Then the impact of PSN (national strategic projects), women are most impacted upon, because the places to find food for women is in the forest. The government does not see any of that, it just thinks about how this project can proceed for the benefit of the government and state", she said.

'Free food not important'

Manong also said that the free nutritious meals (MBG) program for students in Papua not important, because it does not guarantee health for the people of Papua, especially children.

“Because when I return home, Mama was cooked at home for me to eat so what is more important is how the government cares for health workers and teachers to empower Papuan children in the interior. The issue of free food in Papua, SDA (natural resources) are quite abundant and Mama can cook for her child to eat every day”, she said.

According to Manong, free meals are not as beneficial compared with the provision of educational facilities, health care and teaching staff. “Along with healthcare for Papuan children in the interior who up until now can’t get a decent education or guarantees of healthcare”, she said.

The coordinator of the Papua regional Indonesian Young Women’s Activist Forum, Yokbet Felle, said that aside from commemorating International Women’s Day, the women at the action also see that the situation for women at the moment in Papua and the situation in Papua itself is “not just okay”.

“So women friends took the initiative to hold a campaign to show that the situation in Papua is not okay and there are still women who continue to stand up to speak out about the situation in of Papua, especially the deployment of the military and the theft of customary land in Papua”, she said.

In addition to this, she added, domestic as well as state violence are still ongoing and felt by women. “Therefore women friends choose ‘Respect, Protect and Fulfill Women’s Rights in the Land of Papua’ as the theme for this year”, she said.

Felle said that there are still many discriminatory rules in the implementation of government policies related to women and many women’s rights are still not fulfilled by the government, let alone the state.

Access to education for women, she added, is still lacking. Health services needs have also not been met, for example free healthcare for healthy menstruation. For women giving birth, this is also still not fulfilled by the state. “The state’s neglect of Papuan women can be very clearly seen, especially those in the conflict area”, she said.

Women whose land has been taken, which impacts on the lack of clean water, none of this is being paid attention to by the government. Moreover it is women who are very vulnerable in such situations.

“The hope of today’s action, is hopefully we can continue to mobilise to voice the condition of women in the land of Papua and can make small changes that can ignite major changes for women in the land of Papua”, she said. (*)

[. The original title of the article was “Koalisi Perempuan Pembela HAM Di Tanah Papua Lakukan Aksi Bisu”.]

Source:

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Slightly abridged translation by James Balowski