

RESISTING WITHOUT VIOLENCE: KNPB AND TRANSNATIONAL ADVOCACY NETWORK TOWARDS WEST PAPUA REFERENDUM

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ABSTRACT

After Indonesia's authoritarianism collapsed in 1998, the fight for independence in West Papua became diversified, focused on physical resistance and strategic international diplomatic steps. The National Committee for West Papua (Komite Nasional Papua Barat or KNPB) is an organisation that tends to use a non-physical and non-violence approach. The approach garners support from the international community as they fight for the right of self-determination for the people of West Papua. KNPB's international diplomacy has become a sort of strategic shift in the struggle of the West Papuan people, which initially tended to be instrumental, but eventually became wider by adopting a transnational advocacy network. This

study uses the theoretical framework of non-violent resistance from Gene Sharp in explaining KNPB's movement and the transnational advocacy network from Keck and Sikkink to explain KNPB's international political relations. This research relies on documentation studies and interviews with key figures in the struggle for Referendum and Papuan independence. KNPB has consistently linked its local actions with independence movements and the global struggle for human rights. KNPB often frames its efforts as a part of their struggle to reject violence against the people of West Papua. The non-violent resistance movements and actions carried out by KNPB are indeed directed to gain public attention, especially from the international public. Their approach aims to show the Referendum's importance and create an international agenda related to Indonesia's actions in West Papua.

Keywords: KNPB, West Papua, non-violent movement, Transnational Advocacy Network

INTRODUCTION

The tension between West Papua and Indonesia is an issue that has lingered for quite some time. In 1962, The Netherlands and Indonesia signed The New York Agreement to clarify the status of West Papua without involving West Papuans in the process (Wangge and Lawson 2023; Druce 2020). The absence of representation from West Papuan makes the agreement appear to be merely a transfer of power from the Netherlands to Indonesia without considering the voices of West Papuans (Leith 2002). In an interview, Papuan political prisoner Filep Karma stated that the Act of Free Choice (*Penentuan Pendapat Rakyat* or PEPERA), held in 1969, was also considered fraudulent because it used a representation mechanism and allegedly manipulation and intimidation (interviewed on 2 March 2021, Jayapura). Since 1962, there has been physical resistance from West Papuan to confront Indonesia's military operations against the Papuan people, especially under the New Order regime, Soeharto (Brundige et al. 2004).

After Soeharto's authoritarianism regime collapsed in 1998, the fight for independence in West Papua tended to be diversified, focused on physical resistance and strategic international diplomatic steps. The National Committee for West Papua (*Komite Nasional Papua Barat* or KNPB) is an organisation that tends to use a non-physical and non-violence approach. The approach has garnered support from the international community as they fight for the right of self-determination for the people of West Papua (Ondawame and King 2002).

KNPB's international diplomacy has become a strategic shift in the struggle of the West Papuan people. At first, their diplomacy tended to be instrumental, relying on armed resistance and boycotts of resource access. Eventually, they started adopting transnational advocacy network, including efforts to gain sympathy from the international community and activate it simultaneously. The approach is possible since there was a shift in Indonesia's approach towards the West Papua conflict after the Reformasi (Reformation) in 1998, and one of its implications was the Special Autonomy for West Papua in 2001 (Rusdiarti and Pamungkas 2017).

During Soeharto's reign, Indonesia's approach to Papua was highly militaristic and isolationist. West Papua was officially designated as *Daerah Operasional Militer* (Military Operational Area or DOM) from 1978 to 1998. Troops were deployed to guard the Freeport mining company and face *Organisasi Papua Merdeka* (OPM). Mass media only had limited access to West Papua. The signing of a contract between Freeport McMoran and the Soeharto government in 1967 marked a series of investment and development withdrawal programmes. Then, a transmigration project from Java was enacted as the next phase. The government-sponsored resettlement programme sent people from the crowded Java Island were sent to live in other islands, especially Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Papua. The project was carried out en masse in the 1980–2000 period, along with a series of other development programmes (Anderson 2015; McNamee 2020). These programmes reaped strong resistance from the people of West Papua and made the Indonesian government continue to strengthen its repression (Meterey 2012).

The Indonesian government also tried to suppress information access so that the international community could not access various activities and resistance from West Papuans. West Papua was even considered a “blind spot” for foreign journalists and media (Perrottet and Robie 2011; Leadbeater 2008). The Indonesian government prohibited foreign journalists and media workers from entering West Papua. Foreign journalists who managed to enter the area took illegal routes and were not recorded; therefore, the Indonesian government could not detect them (Robie 2013). The isolationist approach also applied to local media and journalists, which created inequality in domestic reporting related to West Papua (Adiprasetio 2020).

When the West Papuans' responded with violent resistance, the Indonesian government performed more repressive actions (Camara 1971; van den Broek and Hermawan 2001; Chao 2018). The arrests, imprisonment, and even torture of West Papuan activists prompted a redefinition of KNPB's strategy to get a Referendum to regain freedom for West Papua. In an interview,

KNPB National Spokesperson Ones Suhuniap stated that KNPB then tried to gain sympathy from the international community regarding the West Papua Referendum (online interview on 17 October 2021).

In 2000, local figures from West Papua organised *Musyawahar Besar* (Great Council) and Papuan Congress II (*Kongres Rakyat Papua* or KRP II). One of the congress results was a decision to form a new institution, namely the Papuan People's Assembly (*Majelis Rakyat Papua* or MRP). In addition, the Papuan Presidium Council (*Presidium Dewan Papua* or PDP) was created during the democratic transition when there were fewer restrictions than during the Free Papua Movement (OPM) era. Afterwards, three big separatist movements in West Papua, namely the Federal Republic of West Papua (*Negara Republik Federal Papua Barat* or NRPFB), West Papua National Coalition for Liberation (WPNCL), and National Parliament of West Papua (NPWP) merged as the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP).

The resistance strategy shifted and became a non-violent movement, using political lobbying, which received recognition from international communities. This momentum also provides space for the community, especially Papuan leaders, to actively participate in the struggle for Papuan independence through foreign channels (Rusdiarti and Pamungkas 2017). The non-violent strategy of West Papuan organisations was in line with the concept of a transnational advocacy network to garner support from the international community. In contemporary politics, advocacy efforts focus on the state and non-state actors (international organisations) interacting with each other. One of the prominent actors in this interaction is the international advocacy network. This network has a transnational, regional, and domestic significance which involves experts, scientists, and activists. Transnational advocacy networks drive regional and international integration processes by building relationships between civil society actors, states, and international organisations through dialogue and ideas. Ideas, norms, and discourses produce information within the transnational advocacy network framework. In addition, actors from transnational advocacy networks also work as pressure actors who make policies. The essence of this relationship is the exchange of information; in this network, non-traditional international actors mobilise information and gain more significant influence from organisations and governments.

KNPB is considered to play a significant role in the resistance movement. The significance is reflected in its members and affiliations, distribution, and the persistence of their movement. KNPB offers a different concept of movement, namely the spirit of non-violence to obtain Referendum and freedom for West

Papuans. This organisation is dominated by West Papuan intellectuals, such as West Papuan activists and students, who are affiliated with various local, national, and international West Papuan organisations (MacLeod 2015).

Since the Reformation era, the method of West Papuans' struggle has changed significantly. In the past few years, while still having Referendum as their primary goal, West Papuans have shown a more non-violent approach. KNPB, as an organisation, is continuing its struggle without weapons and putting forward democratic values that align with its initial purpose. The struggle of West Papuans to defend their territory is a delicate matter, even though it is often responded to with repression by the Indonesian government's military apparatus. As stated by Octavianus Mote from West Papuan Liberation Movement in an interview, according to many activists, the Referendum is a part of the human rights for West Papuans. This means that their efforts to achieve the agenda is legitimate thing to do (online interview on 16 December 2020). This article examines KNPB's position and vision of Referendum using non-violent means by relying on a transnational advocacy network strategy.

METHODOLOGY

This article is based on a research that uses qualitative approach which aims to build the construction of reality and its dynamics to obtain a better understanding of the situation in West Papua. The qualitative principles of processes, events, contexts, and flexibility of explanations related to KNPB and the West Papua Referendum are also considered. This article moreover relies on documentation studies and interviews with key figures in the struggle for Referendum and Papuan independence (see Table 1) to describe and explain the phenomena that occurred (Denzin and Lincoln 2009). By examining evidence and documents, this article aims to provide a context of internal and external relations that underpin various steps taken by KNPB.

The Indonesian government's policy towards West Papua was responded to with various kinds of resistance, including the non-violent resistance promoted by KNPB as a manifestation of the diachronic discourse of Referendum and Free Papua (Widdersheim 2018). Interviews with several key figures (see Table 1) are relied upon to describe the situation. Existing perspectives on historical events and movements are also written chronologically in this article. The primary data in this article were obtained from in-person interviews (face-to-face) and online interviews (video-call and voice-call). Afterwards, the interviews were transcribed and analysed.

Table 1: List of main interviewees

No.	Name	Affiliation
1.	Buchtar Tabuni	Founder of KNPB, Chairman of KNPB from 2008 to 2014
2.	Benyamin Gurik	Former member from 2008 to 2010
3.	Frederika Korain	An advocate who often handles KNPB cases
4.	Filep Karma	Papuan political prisoner
5.	Latifah Anum Siregar	An advocate who often handles KNPB cases
6.	Octavianus Mote	West Papuan Liberation Movement
7.	Ones Sunuhuniap	KNPB National Spokesperson since 2018
8.	Rolly Iche	Former Member of KNPB, now active in ULMWP

DISCUSSION

Ineffectiveness of the Violent Movement

The effort to integrate Papua into Indonesia, which was initially idealised as an assimilation process in various aspects between West Papua and Indonesia, faced many challenges related to natural resources in West Papua. The systematic exploitation of natural resources, the destruction of West Papua's resources and biodiversity, transmigration schemes, and forced re-locations have caused widespread environmental damage to the West Papua region, undermined many traditional subsistence practices, and led to the emergence of new diseases, malnutrition, and widespread mortality among West Papuan community (Brundige et al. 2004). These factors also sparked extreme resistance from the people of Papua in the following years. Findings from the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (*Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia* or LIPI) have suggested four sources of conflict in Papua: the marginalisation of indigenous Papuans, development failures, human rights violations, military violence, and the complicated process of Papua integration into Indonesia (Widjojo 2009).

The Indonesian government's militaristic approach in responding to the resistance movement in West Papua has continued the spiral of violence and spawned an endless spirit of revenge. The approach can be referred to as a "spiral of violence" in which violence becomes a multidimensional reality that never stands alone (Camara 1971). Under the pressure of the Indonesian government's repression, the Free Papua Movement (OPM) was born (Tebay

2005; Kirsch 2010). In West Papua, the OPM group carried out various violent movements. The movement started in the 1965 Kebar incident, when Johannis Djambuani's troops attacked the Sumpah Prasetya ceremony, resulting in three fatalities with nine weapons lost. In addition, there was the attack on Infantry Battalion 641 Cendrawasih I in Arfai under the leadership of Permenas Ferry Awom, which was considered the starting point of OPM emergence (Djopari 1993). This incident caused three fatalities from the Indonesian Military (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia* or TNI) and thirty people from OPM (Ondawame 2000). In 1967 and 1968, attacks at Sukorem and Ransiki by Jacob Rumbiak and his friends left thirteen people from the OPM side dead. In 1968, the Irai Anggi incident led to the death of five victims, with thirty-eight weapons confiscated under Joseph Indey's troops who attacked Complex II 341 Siliwangi. The following attack was the Enarotali incident in February-August 1969, which started when OPM's Bernadus Wally attacked Dubu Village and killed three TNI personnel. During this period, OPM started to develop an anti-Indonesian ideology (Djopari 1993).

From 1977 to 1978, the OPM attacked various military posts, including Kabakma Post, Makki Post, Petriver Post, Kurubaga Post, and Tiom Post. In 1979 OPM's Marten Tabu took the Sub-district Head of Arso, Billy W. Jamlean, as a hostage. Then in 1987, OPM's Tadius Yoghi and Daniel Kogoya took five civilians as hostages for a ransom of IDR two billion. In 1995 and 1996, OPM's Tadius Yoghi, Kelly Kwalik, and Daniel Kogoya separately took three researchers hostage, in Paniai and twenty five people consisting of twelve residents, ten researchers from the Lorens Expedition Team, and three researchers from World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); among them were seven foreign nationals (Djopari 1993). OPM's attacks briefly stopped when in 1999, Indonesian President BJ Habibie met with hundreds of West Papuan leaders named Tim 100, which included Theys Hiyo Eluay as OPM's representative (van den Broek and Hermawan 2001).

On the 38th anniversary of West Papuan Independence in Jayapura, President Abdurrahman Wahid continued the peaceful approach by allowing the West Papuan flag to be raised next to the Indonesian flag. The "Hai Tanahku, Papua" anthem was also allowed to be sung alongside "Indonesia Raya" anthem. The situation continued to improve and in 2000, local figures from West Papua organised *Musyawarah Besar* (Great Council) and Papuan Congress II (KRP II). One of the congress results was the decision to form a new institution, namely the Papuan People's Assembly (MRP). After the

Great Council and KRP II took place, OPM's attacks became less intense. The absence of data or facts that mention OPM radical attacks in various West Papua areas reflected the decreased numbers of attacks (Anwar et al. 2005 as cited in Paramitha 2019).

In addition, the Papuan Presidium Council (*Presidium Dewan Papua* or PDP) was established. Based on LIPI's research, PDP existed during the democracy-transition era when the situation was less repressive. This historic momentum later helped change the resistance strategy in West Papua into a non-violent movement, especially with political lobbying, including the formation of the ULMWP abroad (Rusdiarti and Pamungkas 2017). The birth of PDP and ULMWP also provided a communal space for West Papuan leaders to be actively involved in the efforts to push for West Papua's independence using foreign channels. Afterwards, more organisations using a peaceful approach emerged (MacLeod 2014).

How KNPB Emerged as an Organisation with Non-violent Values

KNPB was formed on 19 November 2008 in the Hall of the Walter Post Theological College (STT), Sentani, with Buchtar Tabuni as the Chair and Victor Yeimo as Secretary General (Suara Papua 2019). During its early days, KNPB's presence was crucial to design a structure that could mobilise West Papuans, especially after the International Parliamentarians for West Papua (IPWP) and International Lawyers for West Papua (ILWP) were established (Wangge and Lawson 2023). IPWP and ILWP shared a similar goal: to develop international parliamentary support and awareness for West Papua's issues.

Several international aspects also spurred KNPB's birth in 2008. That year, Benny Wenda, a West Papuan figure in the UK and Chair of ULMWP who declared himself interim President of West Papua, reintroduced the idea of self-determination for West Papuans. His campaign was mainly done abroad. KNPB was established to support the campaign for West Papuans' self-determination in Indonesia.

Most of KNPB's initiators were young activists with educational backgrounds in Java and Sulawesi. This youth group has an extensive network in West Papua and other cities in Indonesia (Rusdiarti and Pamungkas 2017). During the early days, Buchtar Tabuni was elected to serve as General Chair of KNPB—previously Deputy of General Secretary of Papua Indonesia Central Highlands Student Association (*Asosiasi Mahasiswa Pegunungan Tengah*

Papua Indonesia or AMPTPI). Meanwhile, Victor Yeimo, an activist for Papuan Student Alliance (*Aliansi Mahasiswa Papua* or AMP), was elected Secretary General of KNPB (Pedrason 2021).

KNPB is considered a solid ideological organisation in West Papua. Quoting Mako Tabuni, Wilson stated that the “idea of forming the West Papua National Committee as a continuation of the Papuan National Committee, which was formed in 1961 and gave birth to Papuan People’s Representative Council (New Guinea Raad) intending to fight for the right to self-determination...”. KNPB’s mass demonstrations and political education programmes reflect their solidarity, and their members feel like a part of the resistance. Relatively speaking, KNPB has a strategic position because it is not owned exclusively by other youth organisations in West Papua (Rusdiarti and Pamungkas 2017). According to MacLeod, after 2011, KNPB became known as the resistance’s leading actor. Although labelled a violent group and is still placed on trial by the Indonesian government, KNPB has continued to grow, and even succeeded in forming the West Papua National Parliament (PNPB) (MacLeod 2014).

Due to their political activities and movements, Papuan leaders and activists often came into contact with Indonesian authorities. Many were arrested and imprisoned by the Indonesian military security forces; some were even killed or died in prison (Aspinall and Chauvel 2018). However, KNPB has continued to conduct demonstrations and promote the Referendum agenda in a peaceful and open manner. Their approach reflects the method of non-violent resistance (Sharp 1973, 2013). Their activities include forming an assembly or supporting organisation, issuing formal statements, organising symbolic ceremonies, and using specific symbols to respect those who have passed away.

It is well known that KNPB actions often begin with peaceful intentions. However, sometimes the situation becomes uncontrollable, and the military apparatus represses them. For example, intruders who disrupted KNPB’s demonstrations caused friction, including with the security forces. These intruders, often from Indonesian National Armed Forces (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia* or TNI), infiltrated and opposed several demonstrations carried out by KNPB. This way, they were able to break the focus of KNPB members. Several demonstrations that had been disturbed by the authorities included: KNPB’s 2013 peaceful protest to support the establishment of the OPM office in Jayapura, the 2013 protests in Merauke to demand for the Referendum, and the 2019 protests in Maybrat to commemorate PEPERA Day. Frederika

Korain, an advocate who often handles KNPB cases (interviewed on 24 April 2021 in Jayapura), said that the friction between KNPB and the authorities is an unplanned reflex response, not something intentional.

Most West Papuan resistance actors today are educated individuals who have received organisational training while pursuing education outside of West Papua, mainly in Java and Sulawesi. Their educational and organisational background plays a big part in the growth of West Papua's resistance. The progressive ideology that is a part of the resistance movement in West Papua cannot be separated from the interaction of the young generation and other progressive organisations in Indonesia (Rusdiarti and Pamungkas 2017).

KNPB's Efforts to Establish Transnational Advocacy Network

KNPB has established relations with numerous international organisations, including those supporting and campaigning for the self-determination of West Papua, such as ULMWP, IPWP, and ILWP. Ones Suhuniap stated in an online interview on 17 October 2021, that these three organisations have a presence in various countries and can influence votes at the United Nations (UN) Assembly. KNPB's relations with these organisations are crucial in creating a transnational advocacy network to gain support from the international community.

There are several factors that encouraged the transnational advocacy network, including the lack of connection between local groups and the government. This lack of connection can make it difficult to resolve conflicts and create a boomerang pattern (Keck and Sikkink 1999), which is when the focus is directed outside or internationally, with the expectation of gaining greater attention at a later stage.

ULMWP is an organisation which consists of three prominent factions of resistance in West Papua: the West Papua National Coalition Liberation Front (WPNCL), the State of the Federal Republic of West Papua (*Negara Republik Federal Papua Barat* or NRFPB), and the National Parliament of West Papua (*Parlemen Nasional West Papua* or PNWP). Before forming ULMWP, the three factions campaigned for self-determination and the independence of West Papua separately, yet they were always well-consolidated. In turn, these organisations realised that West Papua must be a member of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), an organisation of Melanesian countries (Fiji, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu) that also has a vote in UN Assembly. MSG is crucial for the resistance in West Papua

because the allied countries are expected to have sympathy, and can help support West Papua's self-determination (Rusdiarti and Pamungkas 2017).

Both NRPFB and WPNCL once submitted a request to become MSG members. MSG then decided that West Papua should re-register for membership and submit their re-application. There were two ways of doing so: they could choose one of the organisations as a representative and parent organisation, or they could create a new coordination forum outside the three organisations. As explained by Ones Suhuniap (in an online interview on 17 October 2021), the three organisations then decided to form ULMWP. This is a crucial decision because the consolidation of West Papuan, both at home and abroad, is a prerequisite for West Papua to be accepted in the community of Melanesian countries. ULMWP was thus formed so the organisations can coordinate and consolidate better, as stated by Ones Suhuniap (online interview on 17 October 2021):

So the ULMWP was born from KNPB's first resolution in Congress, now the KNPB sees the diplomatic struggle as a personal path, seen from Papuan diplomats abroad. Therefore, KNPB thought to bring these diplomats together, creating ULMWP. Yes, [with ULMWP] we are hoping the diplomats can work together and coordinate, not within a structure of command or structure of government. It is not KNPB. A diplomatic organisation with a coordinating nature so that the state lobby can function within the corridor of coordination instead of a line of command.

KNPB also openly supports IPWP, a group of politicians worldwide who support self-determination for the people of West Papua. Founded by Benny Wenda, a West Papuan independence activist, IPWP was officially established on 15 October 2008. It aims to gain support, socialise issues, and build international awareness of West Papua's independence and the invalidity of the Act of Free Choice (PEPERA) 1969. IPWP has grown substantially; in 2009, fifty members from various countries joined them, and in 2021, they already had around 130 members (Rusdiarti and Pamungkas 2017).

One of KNPB's purposes is to support IPWP, as stated by Benjamin Gurik who was interviewed on 13 September 2021 in Japura: “. . . indeed, at that time, we formed (KNPB) to welcome IPWP . . .”. This reflects KNPB's support for IPWP, which is expected to amplify the issue of West Papua's independence at the international level. At the grassroots level, KNPB plays a role in mobilising the masses and gathering support for IPWP. Through this method, they try to gain more international support for West Papua's

independence (Lawson 2016). Another organisation that has a strong bond with KNPB is ILWP. First established in April 2009 in Guiana, America Union, ILWP is a network of legal professionals that aims to support West Papua’s rights for self-determination and independence. ILWP consists of forty-eight legal professionals from various countries. ILWP’s management holds regular monthly meetings to discuss the progress of their efforts to support self-determination for West Papua (Blades 2020; Rusdiarti and Pamungkas 2017).

KNPB often organises public mass protests for ILWP, such as the protest which took place on 2 August, 2011. KNPB organised community members and students when they gathered to show support for ILWP’s Conference in London, England (MacLeod 2014). KNPB also assists with ILWP’s publications. Meanwhile, ILWP also shows their support for KNPB by: 1) providing legal advice and assisting bilateral and multilateral relations for ULMWP with various delegated countries; 2) conducting research and acting at local, regional, and international levels and submitting it to the UN to support the independence of West Papua; and 3) advocating for the community and social issues of West Papua through articles and interviews/video statements published on ILWP social media.

Below is the description of KNPB’s position among various non-violent grassroots organisations and its relations with interrelated international organisations while fighting for self-determination for West Papua (see Figure 1).

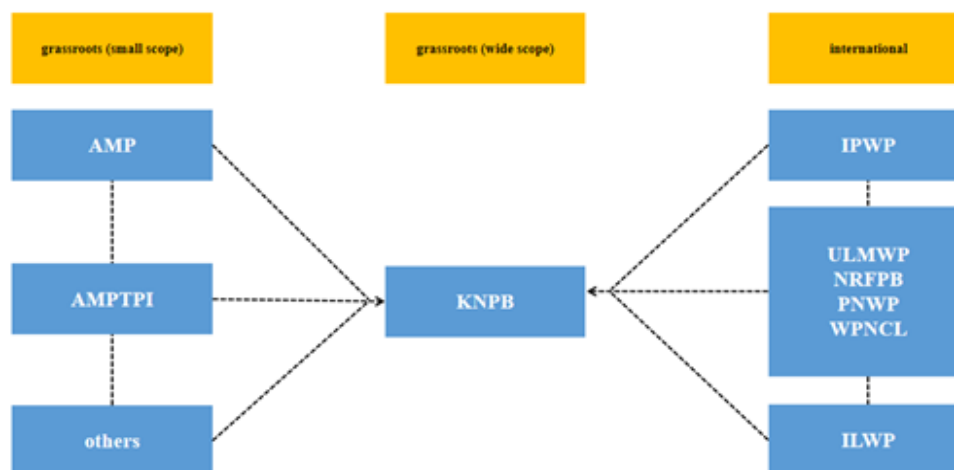


Figure 1: KNPB’s relation among the other organisations.

Source: Authors’ data analysis, 2022.

The Strategy to Gain Attention from International Community

The data on KNPB’s dynamics in the past thirteen years have shown that their movement and accumulation of political sympathy nodes are consistent (see Figure 2). There is also an increase in the frequency of KNPB’s actions. As can be seen in Figure 2, the frequency and variety of actions in KNPB’s movements from year to year show an increasing trend; this trend is influenced by two things: the first is the escalation of repressive response from the security forces, and the second is KNPB’s efforts to attract more attention from the international community.

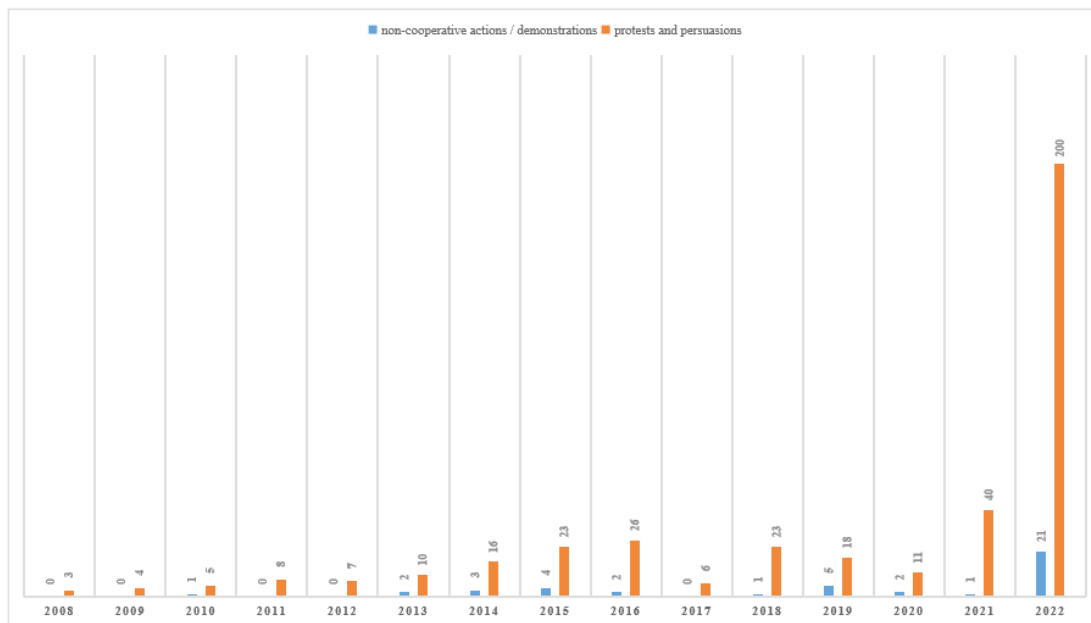


Figure 2: Trends of KNPB actions during 2008–2021.

Source: Authors’ data analysis.

In general, the actions carried out by KNPB could be classified as non-violent resistance movements in the form of protests, persuasion, and non-cooperation. Since 2018, the number of protests and persuasion has continued to increase due to the government’s repressive responses. There were twenty-three protests and persuasion in 2018, and the number increased to forty protests in 2021. Most of the protests carried out by KNPB were dominated by declarations of their official branches and representative offices in Papua. KNPB was trying to build their social movement by developing a stronger presence in West Papua communities and gaining more attention from

international communities. Meanwhile, non-cooperative acts carried out by KNPB during 2008–2021 were dominated by boycotts against government institutions and elections, as well as rejections of government policies. These acts express KNPB's position against the state authority (Sharp 1973). As Benyamin Gurik, interviewed on 13 September 2021 in Jayapura, states:

The discourse at that time was still about IPWP and ULMWP. . . Victor [Yeimo] then built the discourse based on IPWP-ULMWP views that to end this [the conflict], we must have a Referendum with the assumption that the decision that brought us to Indonesia needs reconsideration. That was the result of ULMWP's actions when International Lawyers for West Papua was launched in America, and then the issue was brought up again. Afterwards, KNPB saw that something could be done about this and coincidentally, from 2009 to 2010, the topic of dialogue was also brought up, as Papua Peaceful Dialogue (*Dialog Damai Papua*).

In West Papua, KNPB has routinely carried out various actions to amplify the existence of its transnational intellectual collective network. They have organised various discussions with students of Cendrawasih University in Jayapura and other communities in West Papua. KNPB has also formed a network with West Papuan intellectuals. One of their missions is to inform young intellectuals about the importance of a structured movement with a transnational network, as seen from the statements below:

We learned about KNPB during discussions with some of our friends, and they mentioned about the plan to form a forum. At that time, we called it a media which collected various resistance groups.

- Benyamin Gurik (interviewed on 13 September 2021, Jayapura)

Discussions in each sector and village were routinely held day and night. We prepared mobile projectors and spread information that the discussion was about the Referendum campaign. Almost all Papuans have understood the impact, and this was KNPB's target, that Papuans should know their history. So, that was political education.

- Rolly Iche (online interview on 9 September 2021)

Since its early days, KNPB has often declared its political stance, and that a Referendum for West Papuans is the main purpose of KNPB's resistance. They refused to participate in dialogues with the Indonesian government and also rejected the Indonesian government's development programmes in West Papua.

In an online interview on 17 October 2021, Ones Suhuniap noted that from 2008 to 2021, KNPB also carried out various declarative actions for organisations and institutions aimed at strengthening the narrative about the existence of their organisation and goals. These actions include the Inauguration of Regional KNPB and the declaration to refuse accusations from the government apparatus against KNPB. The declarations of organisations and institutions play a significant role in the action strategy of social movements, as they show it is possible to protest the opposition using a structured method. These declarations stand in contrast to violent resistance, which are usually designed and coordinated secretly using human resources, infrastructure, and expensive facilities. The declarations of KNPB leaders, a big part of their non-violent resistance, can be considered more efficient and effective than violent resistance. In an interview with Buchtar Tabuni on 10 April 2021 in Jayapura, he explained that these declarations have an important goal: social recognition. Social recognition is a crucial aspect in transforming the potential of “social movement” and turning it into “action”. KNPB made a series of declarations to gain this social recognition and strengthen its organisational existence.

It is important to note that up to this point, KNPB always refers to their top leader’s actions as a representation of KNPB as an organisation. All KNPB top leaders have agreed to this approach. The purpose is to deliver a message to the public that the actions taken by the KNPB are official actions from their organisation, even though sometimes the names of KNPB leaders (such as Buchtar Tabuni and Mako Tabuni) still appear alongside their organisation’s name. As explained by Rolly Iche (during an online interview on 9 September 2021), their decision to create this institutional identity is to show the existence of their leadership to their opposition. At the same time, this strengthens the “warranty” of trust within KNPB’s internal and West Papua public, showing that there is always a person in charge of every KNPB action.

Using indictments and appeals, KNPB carried out what social movement theorists describe as meaningful constructions about movements, constructing identities, mobilising emotions, and creating frames for movements. The purpose of these meaningful constructions is to build movement solidarity (Tarrow 2011). In an online interview (on 16 December 2020), Octavianus Mote from the West Papuan Liberation Movement explained that KNPB had made numerous charges against the Indonesian government. These charges created a perception that the Indonesian state has made several mistakes against the people of West Papua. He added that these indictments aimed to build a discourse that a Referendum should be held to solve problems in West Papua.

There are several crucial indictments from KNPB. First, they have consistently stated that Indonesia is guilty of history manipulation (in integrating West Papua into Indonesia). In a declaration delivered by Buchtar Tabuni on various mass media on 12 March 2010, he mentioned their protest against the legal defects of the PEPERA 1969. Bringing up the validity of PEPERA 1969 has been one of the main focuses of KNPB's protests. In February 2014, KNPB made a strong statement: they see the Referendum as the only supreme democratic path to resolve conflict in West Papua. The statement re-emphasised in March 2014 through the social media. KNPB stated that the Indonesian Government Indonesia must change their perception, which has obscured the historical context of the West Papua conflict (Viartasiwi 2018).

Second, KNPB has also consistently declared that Indonesia conducted physical violence that resulted in the deaths of West Papuan activists, despite their peaceful and democratic resistance. For example, in a press conference held on 9 November 2011, prior to KNPB's public protest scheduled on 14 November 2011, the General Coordinator of KNPB Victor Kogoya stated that the people of West Papua have continued to experience a series of violence since Indonesia took over their territory. Until today, West Papuans' discrimination continues as they are labelled separatists. Based on this reason, KNPB has stated that the Referendum is the solution to West Papua's problem. Victor Kogoya said that the Referendum is a political right for West Papua people (Hardianto 2011). According to KNPB, Indonesia has always handled the conflict in West Papua with violence. KNPB's top leaders were also targeted by several Indonesian military officers in West Papua. Mako Tabuni, one of KNPB's leading members, was imprisoned, charged with treason and found guilty of incitement. On June 2012, he was killed. KNPB declared an indictment to the Papuan Police regarding his death (Hernawan 2017).

Third, KNPB stated that the Indonesian government is denying access for a democratic life for West Papua people. For KNPB, self-determination is a universal democratic right. In 2015, KNPB appealed to the church in Papua to speak about self-determination and the freedom of West Papua people. A few days later, KNPB performed a non-cooperative action, firmly rejecting the concept of dialogue between Jakarta and West Papua. They also continued to pressure the police to release KNPB activists. Furthermore, KNPB also accused Indonesia of being guilty of excluding West Papua people from their development plans, namely the Acceleration of Development of Papua and West Papua (Percepatan Pembangunan Papua dan Papua Barat or P4B), and that it has only created new problems for West Papuans. According to KNPB, the acceleration of this development is an attempt to silence the political

aspirations of West Papua people, who were not even involved in the planning of infrastructure development on their own land. According to KNPB, the Indonesian government's development policies (especially infrastructure developments) in West Papua are based solely on economic interests, and benefits only foreign investors, without even considering the welfare of the West Papua people (Chauvel 2019).

It is worth noting that KNPB has consistently linked its local actions with global human rights struggles. One of their efforts is to utilise the mass media, such as the news portals Jubi and Suara Papua. Both media routinely released reports on KNPB activities, including Regional KNPB's inauguration, KNPB's public protests, their opinion on West Papua independence, and the government's response towards KNPB's activities. Jubi and Suara Papua also published KNPB's official political statements, including their demands for a Referendum, their rejections of the expansion of Papua Province, and their protests against excessive military deployment in Papua (Mawel 2019). Suara Papua's website once reported how ULMWP officials warmly welcomed the election and inauguration of KNPB's new board in 2018, Octovianus Mote. Jubi and Suara Papua also reported issues related to the UN's activities in the region, such as the visit of the UN delegations to Papua.

Another key takeaway from KNPB's activities is their power to mobilise the masses, especially at the grassroots level. This can be seen in KNPB's involvement during a series of public protests in August 2019 as a response to racist incidents experienced by West Papua students in Java. It started on 16 August 2019, when a group of Indonesian National Armed Forces (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia* or TNI) personnel stormed the West Papuan student dormitory in Surabaya. These TNI members saw that the Indonesian flag, hoisted by the Surabaya City Government, had fallen into the ditch in front of the dormitory. Not long afterwards, *Satuan Polisi Pamong Praja* (Satpol PP) and other mass organisations arrived and besieged the dormitory for twenty four hours. The Papuan students in the dormitory heard racist cursings from the crowd outside, and stones were thrown at their dormitory. Forty three West Papuan students were detained during the incident. They were released the next day as there was no solid evidence that they had insulted Indonesia's flag. This racist incident caused a wave of public protests in West Papua, such as Jayapura, Fakfak, Manokwari, and Timika. The Indonesian government then blocked internet access in West Papua starting on 21 August 2019 and gradually opened access on 4 September 2019. KNPB played a big part in mobilising the masses during the anti-racism rallies that followed this incident.

CONCLUSION

Since it was first formed in 2008, KNPB has tried consolidating numerous institutions and movements to build a repertoire of daily struggles. From 2008–2021, KNPB built a repertoire of resistance, including modular acts such as demonstrations, public protests, processions, parades, general meetings, and political pilgrimages. Modular actions such as demonstrations and processions, as explained by Gene Sharp (1973), are a technique to mobilise the affective side of the masses, including the sense of being oppressed and being the victims of violence. On an international scale, the action strategies conducted by KNPB have always been consistent and effectively widespread. In West Papua, KNPB's amplification of resistance issues has always relied on networks of similar organisations at the international level, as can be seen from their efforts to maintain the focus of the international public's attention on the Referendum in West Papua. KNPB continues to build a transnational advocacy network with numerous political actors worldwide.

KNPB has also consistently connected their local actions with global independence and human rights movements, and often frames their actions as a part of the struggle against violence towards West Papua people. KNPB's various strategies and actions show that the message they embody is a non-violent movement driven by those who are oppressed. KNPB moreover has alliances with influential figures, local intellectuals, the general public, and the international network, with the shared goal of opposing state authority. Therefore, we can understand that KNPB's movement and non-violent resistance aim to gain public attention, especially from the international public. With their activities, KNPB has tried to push for the Referendum in West Papua as an international agenda. Therefore, even though their activities in West Papua have not been organised optimally, KNPB will continue to use the same approach and preserve their international network to gain worldwide support as they push for the Referendum in West Papua.

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COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

This study followed the ethical standards of the laws of Indonesia and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all main interviewees and related parties of West Papua for this study. The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

NOTES

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