

**Robert F. Kennedy Memorial  
Center for Human Rights  
Indonesia Support Group**

**The Papua Report  
February 2004**

The following is a selection from the second in a series of monthly reports prepared by the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights – Indonesia Support Group providing updates regarding developments in Papua. The RFK Center has monitored and reported on the human rights situation in Papua since 1993.

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**Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu Calls for Review  
of U.N.'s Role in Indonesia's Annexation of West Papua**

Statement By South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

For many years the people of South Africa suffered under the yoke of oppression and apartheid. Many people continue to suffer brutal oppression, where their fundamental dignity as human beings is denied. One such people is the people of West Papua.

The people of West Papua have been denied their basic human rights, including their right to self-determination. Their cry for justice and freedom has fallen largely on deaf ears.

An estimated 100,000 people have died in West Papua since Indonesia took control of the territory in 1963.

It is with deep concern I have learned about the United Nations' role in the take-over of West Papua by Indonesia, and in the now-discredited "Act of 'Free' Choice" of 1969. Instead of a proper referendum, where every adult male and female had the opportunity to vote by secret ballot on whether or not they wished to be part of Indonesia, just over 1,000 people were hand-picked and coerced into declaring for Indonesia in public in a climate of fear and repression.

The U.N. had just 16 observers to this Act for a country the size of Spain. The then Secretary-General's Representative reported on the conduct of the Act to the U.N. General Assembly in 1969, which noted his report on 19 November of that year.

One of the senior U.N. officials at the time, Chakravarthy Narasimhan, has since called the process a "whitewash".

A strong United Nations will be capable of, among other things, acknowledging and correcting its mistakes.

I would like to add my voice to growing international calls for the U.N. Secretary General to instigate a review of the U.N.'s conduct in relation to the now-discredited "Act of 'Free' Choice".

I will keep the people of West Papua in my prayers, and I would like to extend my best wishes and moral support to them in their hour of need.

-- Archbishop Desmond Tutu -- February 23, 2004

In issuing this statement, Archbishop Tutu joins hundreds of other eminent persons, parliamentarians, scholars and others who are supporting an international campaign to urge a U.N. review of its role in Indonesia's Annexation of Papua. For details on the campaign, visit: <http://westpapuaaction.buz.org/unreview>