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# Civilian Protection in Indonesia's Separatist and Religious Conflicts: An Updated Snapshot

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# Civilian Protection in Indonesia's Separatist and Religious Conflicts: An Updated Snapshot

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## Introduction

Conflict and violence in Indonesia today have significantly decreased compared to the early 2000s. The country no longer sees large episodes of violence such as the separatist conflict spearheaded by the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), in Aceh, between 1976 to 2004, or the ethnic conflict between the Madurese and Dayak in Sampit, Central Kalimantan throughout 2001, or the sectarian conflict between Christians and Muslims in Ambon, Maluku between 1999 to 2002 (van Klinken, 2007; Peluso, 2007; Tajima, 2014; Bellamy, 2014). Instead, conflicts today are relatively small-scale and not deadly. The Collective Violence Early Warning (CVEW) Dataset developed by CSIS Jakarta noted that throughout 2021, only 16 percent of all collective violence resulted in deaths (CVEW, 2022).

One reason why the intensity and severity of Indonesia's conflicts have decreased is the security apparatus' increased capacity to intervene in violent incidents (Tajima, 2014; Barron, Jaffrey, and Varshney, 2016;). Due to increased early intervention, Indonesia's police and military officers have been able to quickly stymie incidents of violence before they escalate into large-scale conflicts, ensuring civilians are not caught in the crossfire when things do escalate. Notably, in the early 2000s, interventions occurred in only ten percent of collective violence cases. Between 2006 and 2015, when the intensity and number of victims of conflict significantly decreased, interventions occurred in over half of all incidents of collective violence (Barron, Jaffrey, and Varshney, 2014). The police conducted most of these interventions (55 percent) and in only a small number of cases, it was the military that intervened (3 percent).

However, while violence in Indonesia has generally dropped, two forms of conflict are ongoing: the separatist conflict involving the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB) in Papua and religious conflicts between majority and minority religious groups in Madura, West Java, and West Kalimantan. These two forms of conflict continue to result in high casualty numbers and/or mass infringements of basic human rights. For example, the separatist conflict in Papua has

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resulted in nearly 760 casualties in the past five years alone (Purwoko et. al., 2022) and the 2012 violence by Sunni mobs against Shi'as in Sampang, Madura, resulted in the forced relocation of all the district's Shi'a community (Panggabean and Ali Fauzi, 2015). As of 2022, these individuals had still not returned (Kompas, 2022).

Not unsurprisingly, studies and reports have commonly pointed out that Indonesia's security apparatus has largely failed to effectively protect civilians in the context of these two conflicts. In Papua, civilians perceive the military (TNI) and police (Polri) together with the separatists as an equal perpetrator of violence against civilians— with many Papuans experiencing personal trauma involving elements of the state security apparatus. In various religious conflicts, the military and police are often lenient and passive in the face of mob violence toward religious minorities. In some instances, reports have even stated that police are outright supportive of these mobs — facilitating their coordination along with local governments and religious institutions.

This report aims to provide an updated snapshot of the Indonesian security apparatus' civilian protection practices in both separatist and religious conflicts in Indonesia. Specifically, it asks three questions: *first*, how has the security apparatus operated during Indonesia's religious conflicts and to counter separatists; *second*, what factors have prevented effective civilian protection by the security apparatus during these conflicts; and *third*, how have communities protected themselves in the absence of protection from the state security apparatus. Following this introduction, the report includes a section analyzing these three questions in the context of Papua's separatist conflict, followed by another section analyzing the question in the context of Indonesia's religious conflicts. The final section contains conclusions and policy recommendations.

The analysis conducted in this report drew inspiration from an [Evaluation Framework](#), published by [Center for Civilians in Conflict](#), which is designed to help assess a state's commitment to protecting civilians by evaluating policy and practice across multiple categories and at various stages of conflict. Specifically, this analysis references seven subcategories and 13 unique indicators. The subcategories referenced include 1.3 Oversight of Security Institutions and Policies, 2.1 Use of Force, 2.2 Planning for Operations, 2.3 Community Engagement, 2.4 Mitigating Impact During Operations, 3.2 Civilian Harm Investigations, and 4.5 Criminal Accountability. This report was made possible with the support and partnership of Center for Civilians in Conflict.



## Civilian Protection in Papua's Separatist Conflict

The TNI/Polri have largely failed to protect vulnerable civilians amidst these conflicts. Not only have they failed at protecting civilians against TPNPB operations but, their overuse of force has also led to the unlawful killing of civilians. This section is divided into four parts. First, this section examines the realities of TNI/Polri's civilian protection practices in Papua, using the first-hand accounts of Papua students as illustrative case studies. Second, it provides an analysis of the cultural, structural, and instrumental barriers that prevent effective civilian protection in Papua's conflicts. Third, it explains how Papuan communities protect themselves amid the TNI/Polri's failure to do so. Fourth, it provides examples of ongoing engagement between security forces and communities.

### *The Realities of Civilian Protection During Papua's Separatist Conflict*

Securitization and militarization embodied in conflict and human rights violations are profound situations in Papua. There are two characteristics of conflicts in Papua: vertical and horizontal. Various data sources have revealed that both of Papua's conflicts have escalated in recent years. Data from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset (ACLED), processed by CSIS Indonesia, shows that in 2015 there were only 91 incidents of conflict, while in 2019 that figure had increased to 152 incidents. In 2021 alone, there were 319 incidents. The number of casualties also increased. Over the past seven years, conflicts in Papua have resulted in a total of 503 deaths among civil society, TPNPB members, and security forces (Perkasa, 2022).

Amid these increased conflicts, civilians have been increasingly harmed. TPNPB attacks on Indonesian security forces, for example, have become more frequent and deadly, with more civilian victims. According to an IPAC report, since 2018, there have been over 183 clashes between security forces and TPNPB fighters recorded in Papua and 74 incidents in which one side used violence against civilians (IPAC, 2022). The most dramatic increase in casualties is among civilians who have been killed in crossfire or because they were suspected of being enemy informants. Between 2010 and 2017, 53 civilians were killed in insurgency-related violence. Between 2018 and 2021, the number of reported civilian casualties rose to 125.

Similarly, efforts by the TNI and Polri to curb the TPNPB's movements have also victimized civilians. According to data released by Amnesty International Indonesia, there were at least 26 cases of suspected unlawful killings of civilians by security forces between March 2018 and May 2020, violating key civilian protection regulations in the TNI and Polri Law (UU TNI and UU Kepolisian). All 26 cases happened when security forces used excessive force to handle peaceful protests, incidents of public disorder, and attempts to arrest criminal suspects or as a form of

misconduct by individual members of the security forces (Amnesty International Indonesia, 2020).

### Illustrative Case Study: Papuans' Personal Experiences of Security Apparatus Violence

To further illustrate these general trends, we spoke with various Papuans, mainly students and youths, to capture their experiences in conflict and regarding the activities of the TNI/Polri in dealing with the separatist conflict in Papua. Below are several cases taken from the experiences of Papuan students that illustrate how Papuans perceive and remember the security apparatus' activities during this type of conflict.

The most common TNI/Polri activity that is remembered, is their reckless use of firearms and violence against Papuan civilians. For example, ADN, a female Papuan student from Nabire, Papua, shared several examples of this practice. The first event occurred in Nabire in 2000. As a child, she witnessed police and the TNI suddenly sprawled across the city to respond to the event of raising the Morning Star Flag. Security officers started shooting blindly into the crowd. She ran for safety, and "blood was everywhere" (ADN, Interview, July 8, 2022). There were countless victims of this unreported event, resulting in a mass grave being built by the local community in this location. A few years later, the remains from this mass grave were moved to a public cemetery.

Another Papuan student witnessed the shooting to death of high school students in Paniai in 2014 (AND, Interview, July 8, 2022). This incident happened just before Christmas. At the time, people were setting up Christmas market stalls. Suddenly a car passed without lights. The community warned the car of the dangers of not using lights on Paniai's roads. Inside the car there turned out to be a few security officers. There was a verbal argument between the police officers and the community. At the height of the argument, police officers ultimately beat a few members of the community for speaking out against them (AND, Interview, July 8, 2022).

The following morning, people gathered at Karang Gobai field to ask for justice. High school students also joined. As police continued to ignore the demonstration, the crowd became emotional and threw stones at the police station. Suddenly, the police officers shot blindly at the public, killing four students, and injuring 21, even though their position was not threatened (BBC Indonesia, 2022). Police officers also slapped a few people. Natalis Pigai from the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) came to the location. President Joko Widodo asked for this problem to be resolved. However, no further investigation was reported.

Another interviewee recounted a violent experience related to a local election in Paniai. The Regent of Mekinaipa agreed to give 50 million rupiahs to the election committee. The committee requested the ballots be brought to the village from the Regional Election Committee (KPUD) office. They charged the money because they needed to provide transportation. A verbal argument occurred afterward. A lot of people gathered. The chairman of the Election

Commission (KPU) called the police. The police came and immediately started shooting, and three people died. The regent ran away despite being responsible. For many Papuans, this is one of many examples where the police have acted arbitrarily because no one is willing to enforce the law and hold them accountable.

Another common TNI/Polri activity that interviewees remembered is the outsourcing of police violence to other community organizations. ADN, for example, noted that in 2018 she witnessed what could be described as a “peaceful” demonstration in Yogyakarta on the issue of worker layoffs by the gold-mine Freeport company. The police were on guard. At the same time, a community organization (*ormas*) was also present. Our respondent accused the police of using this organization as a “shield” and as a result, bringing it into conflict with the Papuans youths in Yogyakarta. Indeed, the *ormas* started to provoke the Papuans (ADN, Interview, July 8, 2022). The peaceful demonstration turned brutal. This student witnessed the police hit and drag her friend. His mouth was forcefully opened as a police baton was inserted. This student spent a few days in jail.

One last illustrative example of TNI/Polri activities involved the raping of a Papuan student’s mother in a military vehicle. One other student from Paniai shared his personal traumatic experience with the TNI when he was a child (AND, Interview, July 8, 2022):

“... my mother and I took a helicopter from Enarotali to Timika. It was an army helicopter, and I assumed other passengers would be on board. It turned out that all the passengers were soldiers. Suddenly the aircraft descended midway into a field. The soldiers gave me candy. Ten soldiers raped my mother before my eyes. Once in Timika, immediately, I reported what had happened to my father. My father did not want to sue the soldiers for fear that other family members would become victims. My mother finally died of heavy bleeding.”

### ***Barriers to Effective Civilian Protection During Papua’s Separatist Conflicts***

Ineffective civilian protection practices commonly found during counterinsurgency operations in Papua can be attributed to three significant barriers. *First*, are cultural barriers. These are barriers related to an officer’s understanding and worldview, including barriers to their understanding and education on human rights. *Second*, are structural barriers. These barriers relate to policing regulations, bureaucratic structures, and organizational incentives. *Third*, are instrumental barriers. These are barriers related to the police’s operational and functional capacity, including issues with funding and skills. Below, these three barriers are analyzed in turn.

#### **Cultural Barriers**

There are two main cultural barriers that prevent the effective protection of vulnerable civilians in Papua’s separatist conflict. *First*, the mindset of security officers is such that Papuan civilians and TPNPB combatants are indistinguishable (NGK, Interview, July 4, 2022). An interviewee

stated that security officers often oversimplify, stigmatize, and are outright suspicious of Papuan civilians' status. From the TNI/Polri perspective, 'all' civilians can be separatists or supporters of separatists. Indeed, Papuans are often accused of being members of the TPNPB if they favor different ideologies to the security apparatus and criticize the state's approach in Papua. Now, people are afraid to protest because they fear being labeled TPNPB (NGK, Interview, July 4, 2022).

Research by Ringgi Wangge and Webb Gannon (2020) conducted in Nduga, Papua supports this claim. They concluded that the TNI has failed to convince civilians of their objectives in Nduga. Instead of cultivating good relationships with civilians in Nduga by respecting property and local culture, the TNI have used indiscriminate violence against communities which sustains the history of collective trauma. Consequently, the counterinsurgency operation has failed to obtain civilians' support and instead exacerbated resistance, opposition, and disobedience toward the TNI's counterinsurgency campaign.

A *second* barrier to civilian protection is the lack of understanding of the importance of human rights among officers operating in Papua. Our interview with a staff member at the Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS) stated that there is limited substance related to human rights in the curriculum for security officers. The existing curriculum heavily emphasizes physical exercise. They also mentioned that practices throughout their professional education maintain and reinforce a culture of violence that they are exposed to daily during their training. Ultimately, this culture of violence affects how they behave toward civilians. A National Police Commission (Kopolnas) staff further stated that in the police academy, for example, there are only two credits available to study law and human rights, which is very minimal as a standard.

The report by Imparsial (2011) supports the arguments made by KontraS and Kopolnas. A weak understanding of human rights, which can contribute to a culture of violence, is one of the causal factors driving violations committed by military personnel, including toward civilians. Human rights violations occur because the personnel on duty lack knowledge of human rights and are full of arrogance. Existing human rights materials delivered at the institutional level typically have weak monitoring and evaluation components. Additionally, police officers treat the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) of the Law Enforcement pocketbook as simply a formality as their mindset is such that committing violence toward separatists or people engaging in separatist-like behavior is justifiable (Imparsial, 2014). That said, an interview with a high-ranking police intelligence officer in Yogyakarta dismisses such an analysis. He stated that:

"Human rights education is sufficient. If there is a violation in the field, it is because of personal behavior, bad leadership, and provocation." (BDN, Interview, August 18, 2022)



## Structural Barriers

There are four main structural barriers that prevent the effective protection of vulnerable civilians in Papua's separatist conflict. The *first* problem relates to the quick rotation of security personnel in the province. According to IPAC (2022), security personnel are commonly deployed for six to nine months in a particular area before being recalled or replaced with another unit. Consequently, they will have a limited understanding of the conditions in Papua and lack of knowledge of the terrain. An indigenous Papuan media reporter argued that learning about the Papuan culture is a long process that requires an in-depth approach. At a minimum, it takes "one semester" to understand Papuan culture (RBRT, Interview, July 5, 2022). A Papuan student from Intan Jaya, currently studying in Surabaya, shared her experience in assessing the TNI's actions:

"Every month there is usually a change in TNI rotation. It is a fast rotation. The new soldiers do not know the people. Last time, the TNI used to be able to tell if a person was affiliated with TPNPB or not. The previous soldiers show the pattern of asking among themselves to find out which are part of the TPNPB, and which are not. Now the TNI considers all civilians as TPNPB. They do not bother to investigate right now. The TNI shoot when they found that people could not answer when being interrogated. Three mothers died, and their bodies were found in the woods." (JNE, Interview, July 31, 2022)

Only by understanding culture, security personnel can differentiate which type of conflict should be solved through "adat" or positive laws and what activities are telltale signs of separatists, and which are just civilian activities. One example of this is the Wuon traditional ritual in Maybrat, West Papua. This ritual is an educating process for the community in local seminaries. When participating in this ritual, people isolate themselves in the forest. Due to the lack of understanding about this ritual, the security forces thought these remote people were members of the TPNPB. The community almost clashed with security forces because of their inability to understand Papuan culture (JN, Interview, July 9, 2022).

A *second* structural reason that has exacerbated civilian casualties because of the TNI/Polri's actions is the fertile culture of impunity that surrounds officer misconduct in the region. A report by Imparsial (2011) clearly describes escalating human rights violations committed by security personnel because of the absence of a legal process. Even if some cases were processed, the verdicts did not fit with a sense of justice and fair trial. Impunity of human rights violations shape the perceptions of security personnel regarding these violations and, specifically, that these actions are not considered crimes. Even though they committed violations, their status as security personnel provides them with immunity. In a recent incident, four civilians in Mimika were killed and mutilated by the TNI in suspected gun trade activity. The TNI again accused the civilians of being members of the TPNPB. Six TNI members will be brought to trial. But again, people are skeptical that a fair and transparent trial will occur (BBC Indonesia, 30 August 2022).

Commanders support this culture of impunity through their desire to protect their troops and officers together with their desire to avoid their own culpability. In an interview with a member of the Kopolnas, this individual stated that the punishment for police wrongdoing would indeed depend on their commander's commitment. However, in most cases, commanders will protect their subordinates from any actions taken to hold these soldiers accountable for wrongdoing (PO, Interview, August 4, 2022). Additionally, impunity is also supported by the lack of transparency and monitoring of security personnel as well as military activity (Imparsial, 2011). Theoretically, the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR) and civil society have the right to monitor security policies and their implementation. However, the discourse about security policies in Papua is opaque and closed off to civil society. The government or the Ministry of Defense never formally announced any form or type of security policy implementation in Papua. This explains why obtaining valid information on the troops deployed to Papua is also difficult.

A *third* structural barrier to effective civilian protection in Papua is the security apparatus' ties to businesses. Notably, security officers in Papua often need extra income due to how expensive basic goods there are compared to mainland Java. This incentivizes officers to build close relationships with local financiers and businesses. According to Imparsial, "the relationship between capital interest and security often creates complications for prosecuting human rights violations" (Imparsial, 2011). This mutually beneficial relationship often transforms members of the security apparatus into glorified bodyguards whose roles are to protect these financiers and businesses from the community they victimize (JN, Interview, July 9, 2022). There have been many cases where civilians have become the victims of such business activities, some of which have implicated security officers.

The *fourth* structural barrier to effective civilian protection in Papua is the presence of weak force leadership. Indeed, leadership is vital to uphold human rights and protect civilians. Ironically, there is a tendency for weak and bad leadership among TNI/Polri in Papua. Bad leadership manifests not only in the failure of a leader to punish his subordinates' wrongdoing but also in his inability to control or monitor the activities of his subordinates. In the context of leadership, it cannot be denied that political aspects have an influence. Rarely do leaders have the courage to uphold truth and justice because they will be considered outside the existing 'mainstream policy' in Papua for doing so. Leaders regard the enforcement of truth and justice for marginalized victims as an unpopular action. What is at stake is their position. They are afraid of not being promoted if they carry out 'policies' outside of the mainstream of socially accepted policies.

## Instrumental Barriers

There are two instrumental barriers that have prevented the effective protection of vulnerable civilians in Papua's separatist conflict. *First*, is the security apparatus' indiscriminate sense of fear and paranoia during operations. All parties experience violent trauma in Papua's separatist conflict. On the community side, the collective memory of the violence perpetrated by the state security apparatus exists, which makes civilians afraid of the TNI and the Polri. For members of the security apparatus, there are memories of violence committed by the TPNPB. Hence, throughout their operations, officers always feel that their lives are threatened. Consequently, officers are quick to shoot anyone because they do not want to risk being shot at first if a civilian is indeed a TPNPB militant (JN, Interview, July 9, 2022).

A student from the Regency of Maybrat in West Papua currently studying in Yogyakarta argued that the state plays a substantial role in creating this alarmist and paranoid mindset among security officers. For example, because the state indoctrinates the idea that Papua is a warzone and that most Papuans are supportive of independence and the TPNPB, officers are more inclined to also see Papuan civilians as the enemy that must be conquered and defeated (JN, Interview, July 9, 2022). A student from Paniai in Papua province further explained that if a security officer manages to kill a local Papuan, that would even support his promotion to a higher rank (AND, Interview, July 8, 2022). From his perspective, "killing [a] local Papuan" seems legal, and even necessary to protect oneself.

A *second* instrumental barrier to effective civilian protection in Papua concerns the lack of good human and financial resources available to officers in Papua. A member of Kompolnas reiterated this point, providing a holistic view of why promoting order and protecting civilians faced such challenges in Papua. She argued that human resources in terms of police personnel in Papua are limited regarding quantity and quality (PO, Interview, August 4, 2022). She views some police officers in Papua as "exile" cops — cops that are punished due to bad work. The security infrastructure is also limited, and the budget is a further constraint. These influence planning programs to increase the capacity of police officers.

As mentioned earlier, the low level of security officers' welfare is also a problem. Low welfare levels cause security personnel to lose focus on their tasks and professionalism. Psychologically, when their welfare is insufficient this can affect their level of maturity, which can further affect how they handle violence and deal with civilians. Low-level welfare forces security personnel to supplement their income through illegal activities such as illegal logging, illegal liquor distribution, and so forth (Imparsial, 2011). Civilians usually become victims of such actions, especially when investors confiscate their land illegally. Any civilian protest would involve security officers who commonly use violence to curb such demonstrations. Security personnel

would easily view such protests as separatist in nature. Competition between TNI and Polri over natural resource protection and extraction tends to complicate this situation.

### *Community-Led Civilian Protection Practices*

For many Papuans, they perceive that they have no protector on a day-to-day basis. From their perspective, they cannot rely on the local government for protection, as many perceive them to be “playing it safe” — afraid their position would be taken or removed if they opposed the TNI/Polri to help civilians in conflict. They cannot rely on the help of their own tribal chief as their roles are often only marginally useful in a vertical conflict. If people rely on the security apparatus and are close to them, they are labeled traitors by the TPNPB. Conversely, if people rely on the TPNPB, they are branded a traitor by the security authorities and tortured.

Notwithstanding this general lack of trust, civilians have begun to develop a positive image of security officers who have been stationed in Papua for significant periods of time (approximately ten years). Typically, local people trust these TNI/Polri officers. Our interviews have found that these soldiers tend to give much-needed cultural information to the younger or newly posted soldiers on how to operate in Papua. For example, they give accurate tips regarding how to identify the TPNPB or how to resolve horizontal disputes using local cultures and contexts. When friction occurs between the local community and newly posted soldiers, these “old” soldiers will often mediate and de-escalate the clash.

Despite these developments, however, the Intan Jaya community’s view of the TNI remains largely negative. For the Papuan students that we interviewed, relying on security officers is never an option. Because many Papuans are aware that security officers are trying to engage with them in an “undercover way,” for example, through YouTube and Facebook, Papuans are suspicious of their motives and often distance themselves from these attempts (ADN, Interview, July 8, 2022). As an interviewee stated, people still live in fear:

“People don't establish communication with the army because of fear. Soldiers are seen as demons. Better to hide because all in fear. Especially when they hear sounds like firecrackers, people are traumatized.”

Some minimal engagement does, however, exist between security officers and the community. The students in Intan Jaya, for example, showed how civilians and the army engage (JNE, Interview, July 31, 2022). First, if an individual’s alleged membership in the TPNPB is not proven following an investigation, the military provides compensation in the form of medical expenses, rice, and money. Second, to avoid being accused of TPNPB membership, civilians allow soldiers to keep watch around their homes. Third, the army often lectures the public, primarily through churches, that if a conflict or gunshots are heard, civilians should run and hide in the church or the army headquarters. Fourth, many Papuans were recruited into the army without having to undergo recruitment tests. In such cases, they were not allowed to carry weapons.

Conversely, the TPNPB is also not a reliable protector. Many Papuans view the TPNPB negatively because they often rape and abduct women. The TPNPB often coerces people to provide them with coffee, sugar, and rice. If not provided, the TPNPB threaten civilians with chaos in their villages, not only creating fear of violence but also fear that the TNI/Polri will target these villages because they perceive the civilians to be traitors.

Hence, for many Papuan communities, the way to protect themselves is to not be involved with the activities of any armed actors. If caught siding with the TPNPB or the TNI/Polri, Papuans will be judged using local mechanisms, namely death by hanging. This applies to both men and women. They will also be beaten to death with whips. If civilians interfere with the affairs of the TPNPB and the army, their communities will consider them to be traitors.

In this situation, communities have commonly agreed on several laws to protect themselves. First, it is safer to stay at home if there is a problem. People are not allowed to flee the village. Second, if people want to go to their fields, they must report it to the army so that they are not suspected of being TPNPB and shot. Third, if people want to leave their homes, they must be back at home by two o'clock in the afternoon. Fourth, burning garbage that imitates the sound of lighters and then explodes is forbidden. Fourth, community members are not permitted to tell soldiers or anyone else about anything related to the TPNPB. Doing so can lead to either death at the hands of the TPNPB or being interrogated by soldiers. Ultimately, the only protectors that Papuans can rely on are themselves.

### ***Security-Community Engagement***

Efforts to protect civilians must start with building and strengthening engagement with security forces. Improving relations between security forces and communities is not easy considering the complexity and types of conflict in Papua. According to one source, in horizontal conflicts, the security apparatus is usually not openly involved in the conflict. In the horizontal conflict in Papua, the TNI/Polri are present to provide 'protection' to the community and often interact with the community because they do not have any special interests.

This is exemplified during conflicts among different tribes and ethnic groups (*perang suku*). Tribes and ethnic groups abide by customary law to resolve conflict and often rely on a principle of balance to examine the number of victims from each party. Before the tribal war is carried out, the police will be informed, and the community will negotiate with the police. The police must give approval for the tribal war. The police will determine the place of the tribal war, its boundary line, day, and date. If the war crosses the line, the police have the right to give warning shots. The police fire warning shots when the conflict escalates beyond the war line and could damage public facilities. Once the conflict is dealt with, parties participate in a burning stones ritual (*upacara bakar batu*) and eat together as a sign of peace. (NGK, Interview, July 4, 2022).



In the case of vertical conflicts in Papua, the TNI and Polri have struggled to implement security strategies that have a positive impact on the protection outcomes of communities and civilians. One of the reasons for this, as noted above, is the security apparatus' inability to distinguish between TPNPB and civilians.

Despite the complexity of the problems above, there have been efforts to build positive rapport between civilians and security forces. For example, the Binmas Noken program is an ongoing police operation focused on ensuring the dignity of the Papuan people. As part of the program, police carry out humanitarian missions and are involved in social and community services related to improving the economy, education, and health of the communities in the highlands of Papua.

The Binmas Noken program combines the concept of Binmas, meaning community policing, with Noken, a traditional woven bag that symbolizes dignity, civilianization, and life for Papuans. A member of the Kompolnas argued that the Binmas Noken program has been successful in supporting the de-escalation of the conflict in the highland of Papua (PO, Interview, August 4, 2022). However, additional research is required to understand whether this program could support de-escalating conflict and protect civilians throughout Papua.

## **Civilian Protection in Indonesia's Religious Conflicts**

Like counterinsurgency operations in Papua, the security apparatus has largely failed to protect vulnerable civilians during religious conflicts. However, unlike counterinsurgency operations, this failure comes not from the security apparatus' overeager use of force, but from their lack of force. This section is divided into three parts. First, this section examines the police's civilian protection practices during religious conflicts, using the Sintang incident as an illustrative case study. Second, it provides an analysis of the cultural, structural, and instrumental barriers that prevent the effective protection of civilians during religious conflicts. Third, it explains how vulnerable communities, such as the Ahmadiyya in Sintang, protect themselves amid the police's failure to protect them.

### ***The Realities of Civilian Protection During Religious Conflicts***

Compared to the early 2000s, the frequency and intensity of religious conflict in Indonesia have decreased significantly. Between 1999-2003, Indonesia experienced large-scale communal violence between Muslims and Christians in Poso, Halmahera, and Ambon, which resulted in over 14,800 casualties (Barron, Jaffrey, and Varshney, 2014). In 2021, data from the CVEW Dataset found that identity-based conflict, a portion of which is religious-based, only comprised 4.8 percent of the total number of collective violence incidents in that year. More importantly and in stark contrast to the early 2000s, identity-based conflict in 2021 has resulted in a little over 40 casualties.

However, this does not mean that religious conflicts no longer matter. In the past decade, Indonesia has experienced several violent incidents targeting vulnerable religious minorities that have resulted in massive violations of human rights. In 2011, a mob of 1,000 people attacked the Ahmadiyya community in Cikeusik, Banten, chanting that “the blood of Ahmadiyya is halal.” They proceeded to kill three members of this community (Burhani, 2013; Breidlid, 2013). In 2012, a Shi’a community in Sampang, Madura, became the target of hate speech and violence from the local Sunni community. In December of that year, a mob of 500 people burned Shi’a communities’ homes and forced them to permanently relocate to a different province (Formichi, 2014; Panggabean and Fauzi, 2015; Ahnaf et. al., 2015).

In various instances of religious conflict, studies and reports have found the police to be ineffective at protecting vulnerable civilians. In the 2011 Ahmadiyya Cikeusik incident, despite knowing about the mob’s size and intentions (KontraS Surabaya, 2012), the police only deployed 59 officers on the day of the attack (Panggabean and Fauzi, 2015). When the police realized they were overwhelmed, their request for backup came too late. In the 2012 Shi’a Sampang incident, the police presence on the day of the attack was even smaller. Notably, only one police officer and one military officer were present. When reinforcements came, accounts from victims and bystanders noted that they “merely sat in the prayer room next to the madrassas” (Panggabean and Fauzi, 2015).

#### Illustrative Case Study: Civilian Protection During the 2021 Ahmadiyya Mosque Burning

Police failure to protect vulnerable civilian groups during policing operations around religious conflicts still occur today, as evident by the 2021 Ahmadiyya mosque burning incident in Sintang, West Kalimantan. This incident occurred on September 4, 2021, in Balai Harapan Village, Sintang District, West Kalimantan (Y, Interview, July 27, 2022). The point of contention underlying the conflict was the renovation of the village’s Ahmadiyya mosque, which began in 2019. Accounts from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) commonly noted that the community fulfilled all the necessary administrative responsibilities to rebuild the mosque — the local non-Ahmadiyya citizens in Balai Harapan were supportive of the process and the regent of Sintang district even agreed to come to the mosque’s opening (Y, Interview, July 27, 2022; S, Interview, July 20, 2022).

However, in mid-2021, a campaign of rejection and hate speech towards the Ahmadiyya mosque from the Sintang Muslim Community Alliance (AUIS), an organization comprised of individuals from Sintang City, began. They erected banners opposing the mosque renovation across various sites and called for Muslims to reject the Ahmadiyya in Friday prayers (Y, Interview, July 27, 2022). A few days before the day of the incident, representatives from AUIS sent ultimatums to the local government. They pressured both the Vice Regent of Sintang District (who was the acting head of the district government at the time as the Regent was ill) and the governor of West Kalimantan

to close the mosque, arguing that if the government did nothing, they would take matters into their own hands (Y, Interview, July 27, 2022).

Despite the government issuing a decree soon after to close the mosque, the AUIS mob still came on September 4 to burn the Ahmadiyya mosque in Balai Harapan. There were 70 people in total, most of whom were citizens from Sintang City and only a few of whom were locals from Balai Harapan (Y, Interview, July 27, 2022; S, Interview, July 20, 2022). In a matter of hours, the mosque was destroyed. Although no Ahmadiyya were hurt, many of them are traumatized — feeling that their safety and rights were not a concern for the security apparatus (S, Interview, July 20, 2022; Y, Interview, July 23, 2022). After the event, the perpetrators were given such short prison sentences that they were free only weeks after their trial (Y, Interview, July 27, 2022). The Ahmadiyya mosque in Balai Harapan was permanently closed.

While the police were present throughout the conflict's escalation, their attempts to de-escalate and protect Ahmadiyya's right to safety and freedom of religion failed. Three characteristics of the police's activities during the Ahmadiyya Sintang incident are particularly representative of broader civilian protection practices during religious conflicts. *First*, like most other religious conflicts in the past decade, during the Ahmadiyya Sintang conflict, police were able to gain sufficient prior information about the event and perpetrators (A, Interview, July 21, 2022). Aside from their constant coordination with the local intelligence branch and the local National and Political Unity Agency (A, Interview, July 21, 2022), the police's forewarning capacity is made possible by their community policing systems which have been in place since 2005 when they were first developed. Through intensive patrols, frequent face-to-face interactions, and longer deployments, police have been able to increase their rapport with local communities and collaborate with them to collect information on potential disturbances before they occur (ICG, 2012).

In the case of the Sintang mosque burning, the police were aware of the threat. In fact, the Ahmadiyya community informed the police about signs of potential violence as this first appeared as hate speech banners in Sintang City (Y, Interview, July 27, 2022). On the day before the burning, police were also able to inform the Ahmadiyya community with near certainty that the mob was still set to come to the mosque (S, Interview, July 20, 2022). Similar forewarning was present in other religious conflict cases. Before the anti-Ahmadiyya violence in Cikeusik occurred, for example, police already knew about the event by engaging with local ulamas and residents (Panggabean and Ali Fauzi, 2015). Knowledge of the mob was even clear enough for police to make reports about its size and origin (KontraS Surabaya, 2012).

*Second*, even with sufficient forewarning of violence, conflict prevention often fails to protect vulnerable targets because police officers often side with perpetrators who generally come from the majority population. The police's majoritarian bias is evident in some of their conflict

prevention institutions, such as the Police Community Partnership Forum (FKPM). The FKPM is a police-community forum that is often used to find a local solution to prevent large-scale social unrest (Meutia, 2016). Commonly, these local solutions point to reconciliation between conflicting parties that are based on “local customs,” norms, and traditional laws (Meutia, 2016). This is particularly problematic in the context of religious conflict as the championing of local customs often means prioritizing the majority’s mindsets, rules, and preferences over minorities’ rights.

In practice, this bias for the majority is evident in the police’s various conflict prevention attempts. Days before the Sintang mosque burning incident, for example, police met with the AUIS and the Sintang Regency government to de-escalate tensions. However, instead of persuading the perpetrators to stop by convincing them that their action may violate other communities’ protected rights, the police instead did so by giving them guarantees that the government would “deal with the Ahmadiyya” (Y, Interview, July 27, 2022). Indeed, on the day of the burning, instead of making sure that the Ahmadiyya mosque was protected, police urged Ahmadiyya to not conduct Friday prayers at their mosque because it “may be attacked by the mob” (Y, Interview, July 27, 2022).

*Third*, when conflict prevention attempts fail, police are often largely passive and/or ill-equipped to deal with the perpetrators during the day of the conflict. In the case of the Sintang mosque burning, for example, accounts from CSOs and victims noted that the police did little to nothing to stop the mob from reaching the mosque, despite their larger numbers (S, Interview, July 20, 2022; Y, Interview, July 27, 2022). A CSO member recalled that police were only able to insist that the mob “just hammer it, but don’t burn the mosque” (S, Interview, July 20, 2022). Eventually, the mob did both. For a whole month after the event, police left hate speech banners against Ahmadiyya hanging in Sintang City (S, Interview, July 20, 2022).

This pattern of police being passive and/or ill-equipped during the day of the conflict is also evident in previous cases of religious conflict. As noted above, in the 2011 Ahmadiyya Cikeusik incident, there were only 59 officers posted to protect the Ahmadiyya community (Panggabean and Fauzi, 2015). Although backup eventually arrived, a total of 400 police and military officers, they were too late (KontraS Surabaya, 2012; Panggabean and Fauzi, 2015). By that time, the mob had begun throwing stones at the police blockade and, as the latter faltered, continued to kill three Ahmadiyya (KontraS Surabaya, 2012). In the 2012 Shi’a Sampang case, where there was only one police and one military officer stationed during the beginning of the attack, backup only consisted of 25 armed members of the Police’s Mobile Brigade (Panggabean and Ali Fauzi, 2015).

## ***Barriers to Effective Civilian Protection During Religious Conflicts***

As with what occurred in Papua, ineffective civilian protection practices commonly found during the policing of religious conflicts can be attributed to three significant barriers: cultural barriers, structural barriers, and instrumental barriers. Below, these three barriers are analyzed in turn.

### **Cultural Barriers**

There are two key cultural barriers that have prevented the police from effectively protecting vulnerable civilians during religious conflicts. *First*, police officers still have a lack of understanding of human rights and civilian protection. In most cases, police only prioritize preventing deaths and physical violence against the victims of religious conflicts while ignoring the protection of individuals' other rights (S, Interview, July 20, 2022; T, Interview, July 26, 2022; Y, Interview, July 27, 2022). Therefore, when mobs attack mosques or erect hateful and aggravating banners rejecting the identity of a community, police do not feel a strong need to halt these actions — despite these acts violating an individual's rights to freedom of religion or belief, resulting in feelings of insecurity and communal trauma (Y, Interview, July 27, 2022; T, Interview, July 26, 2022).

This lack of understanding of civilian protection is largely the result of the police's suboptimum human rights education curriculum (ICG, 2012). For example, non-commissioned officers, who make up 90 percent of the police force, are only required to complete five to seven months of education before they can be deployed in the field (ICG, 2012; PO, Interview, August 4, 2022). Despite being mandatory, courses on human rights comprise only a small portion of their education, amounting to around 100 hours of the total seven months (A, Interview, July 22, 2022; PO, Interview, August 4, 2022). Instead, a heavier educational emphasis is placed on physical training and regiments (A, Interview, July 22, 2022). Once in the field, most police officers are "too lazy to read [human rights] guidelines, and they'll tell you they've never seen them because they don't care" (ICG, 2012). Hence, in practice, most police officers believe that implementing human rights principles is at best situational and at worst polemical (Panggabean and Ali Fauzi, 2015).

A *second* cultural barrier to effective civilian protection during the policing of religious conflicts is police officers' personal bias for the "majority" which at times influences tactical decisions in religious conflicts (B, Interview, July 14, 2022; A, Interview, July 22, 2022). As an interviewee from the National Police Commission stated, stationed police officers are often individuals who originate from that community. While this is good to develop a positive rapport between police and civilians, it also means that they often carry the same biases and norms that most of the population harbors (PO, Interview, August 4, 2022). Some Resort Police (Polres) in conservative



Muslim areas, for example, have been known to use the Arabic language during their ceremony (A, Interview, July 21, 2022).

While in most cases these norms are benign, they become a problem when trying to prevent religious conflicts as such conflict often occurs between mobs from the majority religious group against individuals from minority religious groups. In these instances, a preferential bias towards majority norms and ideologies often results in the police siding with the perpetrator. For example, in religious conflicts targeting minority Islamic sects such as Shi'as and Ahmadiyya, police are known to often refer to the fatwas and directions from the local Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) to determine how to proceed with the prevention, despite the MUI being known to have biases against minority Islamic sects (A, Interview, July 21, 2022). An Ahmadiyya interviewee stated that while most officers do not let their personal preferences influence their actions in the field, these norms create a dilemma that makes it harder for them to act decisively against mobs from the majority (Y, Interview, July 27, 2022).

### Structural Barriers

There are four main structural barriers that have prevented effective civilian protection during the policing of religious conflicts. *First*, local government institutions in the area are supportive of the perpetrators (Y, Interview, July 27, 2022). In the Sintang mosque burning case, for example, the mob was granted an audience with the provincial and district governments (S, Interview, July 20, 2022). When they gave the government an ultimatum to “deal with the Ahmadiyya,” local governments complied and sealed the mosque under the pretext of fulfilling “Muslim’s aspiration” (CNN, 2021; S, Interview, July 20, 2022; Y, Interview, July 27, 2022). In the 2012 Shi’a Sampang case, the regent at the time actively campaigned on “getting rid of the Shi’a” to win political support from local Sunni ulamas (Ahnaf et. al., 2015).

This outward support from other government institutions for the perpetrators makes it difficult for police to prevent conflicts from escalating. With the support of an area’s regent and/or governor, mobs can easily ignore the police’s attempts to persuade them to disband. If the police attempt to discredit or criticize these regents’ and/or the governor’s stance, the latter could lodge a complaint which can significantly affect the career promotion prospects of the police chief in charge (PO, Interview, August 4, 2022). It is often better, therefore, for police chiefs to “play it safe” and not oppose the regent and/or governor for supporting the perpetrators (PO, Interview, August 4, 2022). In some cases, police personnel are involved in semi-legal/illegal economic activity by working for key elites in the provinces, including local politicians and leaders (Haripin and Siregar, 2016). Opposing them on issues such as this would be damaging to their long-term relationships and financial cooperation.

The *second* structural barrier to effective civilian protection during religious conflicts is the abundance of national-level regulations that are intolerant towards the rights of religious minorities. The most often cited regulation is Indonesia's 2008 Joint Ministerial Decree on Ahmadiyya which prohibits Ahmadiyya mosques from proselytizing (Budiwanti, 2009), and the 1965 Blasphemy Law that enables the state to jail minority religious sects whose practices are seen as "deviant" and "insulting" to the majority interpretation of the religion (Amnesty International, 2014; Basuki and Satria, 2017). The prevalent use of these regulations by violent mobs, as a pretext to justify their anger and actions towards religious minorities, makes it harder for police to outright refute their demands during preventive mediation (S, Interview, July 21, 2022; Y, Interview, July 27, 2022).

When there are progressive regulations and guidelines that aim to protect minorities, they are often poorly socialized and implemented at the grassroots level. For example, the National Police Chief Regulation No. 8/2009 on the Implementation of Human Rights Principles and Standards and the Implementation of the Duties of the State Police provides a detailed guideline on how human rights standards should be implemented in policing practices, however, police officers often ignore such regulations (KontraS Surabaya, 2012). Similarly, the 2009 Police Circular on Hate Speech has clarified that police officers are allowed to process hate speech cases without having to wait for complaints or unrest, but in practice, police still wait for complaints and unrest before they proceed (A, Interview, July 21, 2022; S, Interview, July 21, 2022).

The *third* structural barrier to effective civilian protection during religious conflicts is local officers' reliance on intelligence from the majority religious group for operational efficacy. As noted by a watchdog CSO, there is often a close relationship between "the police and the majoritarian mob" during religious conflicts (A, Interview, July 21, 2022). Their close relationship is one consequence of community policing. Because local officers need to gain up-to-date operational intelligence about potential conflict on a day-to-day basis, they often are expected to build contacts with key community figures (e.g., ulamas) (Meutia, 2016). Unfortunately, these close ties with ulamas, which are useful for intelligence gathering, make it difficult for police to reject them outright when they lead mobs against vulnerable minorities.

In practice, the relational ties that have developed throughout police officers' professional careers often prevent them from going against the majority during their policing activities. Some acknowledge that even if the demands of the majority may be lawbreaking and infringing on human rights, they would not be able to ignore those demands and instead would have to treat them as a parameter they cannot tamper with (Panggabean and Ali Fauzi, 2015). In some instances, these ties have led to actual biases during operations that have favored the majoritarian mob. For example, in the 2011 Ahmadiyya Cikeusik case, police-mob relations were so close that police often "relinquish[ed] mediation meetings [between the mob and victims] to the mob leaders" (A, Interview, July 21, 2022).

The *fourth* structural barrier to effective civilian protection during religious conflicts is the impunity surrounding police who make bad policing decisions. Even today, police officers whose operational decisions lead to failed civilian protection are often not tried for their mistakes. When they are tried, officers are often only processed through an ethics committee (A, Interview, July 22, 2022). Due to the high camaraderie between officers involved in these trials, there is often little to no punishment. Even when the National Police Commission can investigate cases of impunity, they are often only able to provide recommendations and are unable to change the actual punishment (A, Interview, July 22, 2022). For example, the police officers in charge during the 2011 Ahmadiyah Cikeusik case were only disciplined for 21 days for negligence, despite this negligence resulting in the deaths of three people (DetikNews, 2011).

### Instrumental Barriers

There are two instrumental barriers that have prevented effective civilian protection during the policing of religious conflicts. The *first* instrumental barrier is officers' fear of community backlash if they apply heavy-handed tactics. Because of the smaller number of police officers present at the beginning of religious conflicts, these officers often fear that forcefully pushing back against the mobs will lead to a confrontation between them and the mobs that will overwhelm the police (KontraS Surabaya, 2012; Panggabean and Ali Fauzi, 2015; Y, Interview, July 27, 2022). As an officer noted during the 2012 Shi'a Sampang conflict, "fine if a few people come, but if hundreds or thousands? We are also humans, if it's possible, yes, we'll hold, but if not, then what can be done" (Panggabean and Ali Fauzi, 2015). Considering all this risk, police officers believe that it is far safer and easier to simply evacuate the victims to prevent deaths as opposed to stopping the mob (Panggabean and Ali Fauzi, 2015).

*Second*, is the lack of financial and human resource capacity of police officers to prevent and de-escalate conflict once they are informed. Notably, the spearhead of the police's prevention efforts, the Bhayangkara Community Security and Order Trustees (Bhabinkamtibmas), is often understaffed (Meutia, 2016). Theoretically, one Bhabinkamtibmas officer is supposed to oversee one village, but in practice, they can oversee up to eight, and rarely all of them are provided the necessary operational vehicles to cover these areas (Meutia, 2016; PO, Interview, August 4, 2022). Additionally, while Bhabinkamtibmas officers are adept at developing information networks, as most of them originate from the village in which they operate, not all of them have the skills to mediate conflict. Although special conflict resolution materials exist in Bhabinkamtibmas' special training, not all of them have participated (Meutia, 2016).

Moreover, Bhabinkamtibmas officers are often also underfunded. Financially, all preventive and preemptive funds in the police only make up a small portion of the overall budget (PO, Interview, August 4, 2022). On average, 50 percent of funds go to personnel costs and only 30 percent of funds go to operational costs, only part of which are preventive (PO, Interview, August 4, 2022).

As an illustration, Bhabinkamtibmas officers are only given an operational budget of IDR 1,2 million per month which amounts to three liters of fuel per day (PO, Interview, August 4, 2022). Considering that these officers must monitor up to eight villages and pay for unaccounted operational costs such as lunch with community leaders, the money is far from sufficient to enable effective preventive operations (PO, Interview, August 4, 2022).

### *Community-Led Civilian Protection Practices*

This section examines Ahmadiyya communities' strategies to protect themselves. These communities have two important strategies to protect themselves during religious conflicts. *First*, they connect themselves to a dense progressive network that can advocate for their safety. Knowing that they would not have any agenda-setting power alone, Ahmadiyya communities, under the direction of the Jemaat Ahmadiyya Indonesia (JAI) organization, have made it a practice to involve local and national level CSOs in advocating for their protection. For example, as the hateful rhetoric against the Ahmadiyya community in Sintang escalated, they reported these developments to the central JAI branch in Jakarta (S, Interview, July 20, 2022). The central JAI branch then coordinated with other progressive non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as SETARA Institute, Imparsial, and KontraS to advocate for swift action by the central government and the media which would in turn pressure local governments to protect the community (Y, Interview, July 27, 2022).

Unfortunately, however, this strategy is not fully sustainable as this relies on the agenda-setting abilities of well-known CSOs based in Jakarta. Because these CSOs are based in Jakarta, they cannot repeatedly go back and forth to areas such as Sintang to advocate for local governments or draft media reports (S, Interview, July 20, 2022). Ultimately, Ahmadiyya communities in areas such as Sintang will need to rely on local CSOs. Unfortunately, however, Sintang does not have many local CSOs or media outlets that could act as an advocacy network for them once national-level CSOs' concerns are focused elsewhere (S, Interview, July 20, 2022; Y, Interview, July 27, 2022). When the Sintang Ahmadiyya community tried to establish local networks, several mobs threatened to kill community members and threatened those who wanted to protect them (S, Interview, July 20, 2022).

The *second* strategy that Ahmadiyya communities employ is conducting internal conflict response training among their members. This conflict response training includes capacity building on documentation, trauma healing, and navigating the legal system (Y, Interview, July 27, 2022). For example, the central JAI branch often provides seminars to its communities on what can and should be answered during investigations, how they should take photos and record videos that would help identify perpetrators and become proof of violence, or how to prevent being sued for misinformation or defamation during the sharing of one's experience in conflict (Y, Interview,

July 27, 2022). Additionally, each Ahmadiyya community has a mubaligh (leader) assigned by the central JAI branch that rotates across communities. Through these mubalighs, the JAI can share best practices across communities, ensuring that they learn and adapt against violence together (Y, Interview, July 27, 2022).

## Conclusions and Policy Recommendation

The capacity of Indonesia's security apparatus to protect civilians during conflicts in which they deploy operations leaves much to be desired. The TNI and Polri often fail to protect civilians in both counterinsurgency operations against the TPNPB's separatist violence and the policing of religious conflicts. In the context of Papua's separatist conflict, the TNI/Polri's reckless use of force in the field has directly led to civilian harm — making them equal enemies to the people as the TPNPB. Conversely, in the context of Indonesia's religious conflicts, the Polri's mostly passive use of force has enabled mobs' hate speech to escalate into direct violence and conflict — resulting in actual deaths of religious minorities and mass violations of their right to security and freedom of religion or belief.

While barriers to civilian protection practices in both conflicts are complex and different, there are five barriers that are commonly found between the two. The *first* is a poor understanding of human rights, which has led officers stationed in Papua to ignore key human rights guidelines and officers involved in religious conflicts to ignore the protection of civilians' rights outside of "physical safety." The *second* is officers' dependence on external actors, be it officers in Papua who are dependent on businesses for money or Bhabinkamtibmas' reliance on majority community leaders for operational intelligence, which prevents these officers from acting against them when they target vulnerable civilians.

The *third* common barrier is the culture of impunity that prevents officers from being punished when they make the wrong decision which leads to civilian casualties. The *fourth* common barrier is officers' fear of being attacked. Whether it is officers' paranoia during operations in Papua or officers' fear of backlash during religious conflicts, this reality incentivizes them to be unnecessarily aggressive and shoot first, as in Papua, or be passive to avoid the wrath of mobs. The *fifth* common barrier is officers' lack of resources, be it in the form of skilled human resources in Papua or sufficient financial resources for preventive operations in the context of religious conflicts. Both have ultimately curbed effective civilian protection initiatives.

Amid the security apparatus' failure to provide effective protection to civilians in these conflicts, we have found that victims of violence have developed their own strategies to remain safe and protected. For Papuans, this strategy ultimately relies on communities maintaining their independence from both the TPNPB and the TNI and Polri. For Papuan communities, siding with either party is perceived as a treacherous act to their own community, resulting in their flogging



and/or hanging. For Ahmadiyya, their survival strategy contrastingly relies on communities maintaining connections to other progressive CSOs. By immersing themselves in CSO networks, they can quickly send alarms to the public about oncoming violence and strongly advocate for their protection to local governments.

### ***Policy Recommendations***

To increase the efficacy of civilian protection in both Papua's separatist conflict and Indonesia's religious conflicts, this policy report proposes the following recommendations:

#### **General Recommendations**

1. **The state needs to address officers' inadequate understanding of human rights.** This can be done by placing a heavier emphasis on human rights classes in the education of commissioned and, particularly, non-commissioned officers. This involves increasing the number of hours/credits that officers need to take on human rights subjects before graduating but also incorporating a human rights framework into the teaching material of other subjects that officers are required to learn (e.g., community policing, investigation). Additionally, these human rights courses should also be implemented in pre-deployment trainings to ensure that officers are able to accurately contextualize and humanize the population they will be operating among.
2. **The state needs to address the *de facto* impunity of security officers whose misconduct leads to civilian deaths and/or mass violations of civilians' rights.** This can be done by holding trials that include allegations of police misconduct in civilian courts. As it currently stands, officers accused of misconduct are adjudicated before police ethics committees or tried in military courts. Additionally, impunity can also be curtailed if the state makes investigations more transparent. This could be done by opening Kopolnas' misconduct investigations to the public and making the resulting "recommendations" binding and enforceable.
3. **The state needs to increase skilled human resources and budget allocation to units that directly deal with conflict prevention,** including the TNI/Polri's Papua counterinsurgency units and local stations' conflict prevention units (e.g., Bhabinkamtibmas). This includes ensuring that the officers stationed in Papua are not "exile cops" but are instead high-achieving officers that are set for promotion. Bhabinkamtibmas officers must receive sufficient operational funds for them to engage with the communities they are responsible for. Increasing resources for these units can also reduce their dependence on external actors for financial support and operational intelligence.

4. **Civil society organizations need to empower existing local strategies that vulnerable communities have devised to protect themselves during the conflict.** It is important, however, for this empowerment to be locally tailored and bottom-up — building on the local wisdom and practices that vulnerable communities already have. This can mean empowering or creating district-level human rights NGOs in areas where Ahmadiyya communities exist to ensure they have a local network that can quickly respond to early warnings. This can also mean empowering the independence of Papuan communities, so they are able to avoid reliance on the TPNPB and or TNI/Polri for welfare.

#### Papuan Separatist Conflict Recommendations

1. **The state needs to remove quick rotation systems when deploying officers to Papua.** Evidently, the speed at which officers come and leave Papua prevents them from meaningfully understanding and appreciating the complexities of Papua's culture — resulting in the rash and reckless use of force that risks injuring civilians. Alternatively, the state needs to increase the amount of time officers stay in Papua between rotations and ensure that during the first few months of their deployment, they are embedded in a local non-rotation unit.
2. **The state needs to make and enforce clear SOPs for officers on how to differentiate civilians from TPNPB combatants, and what to do when such differentiation is not possible.** As noted above, it is this inability of officers to differentiate between the two that has led to many “shoot first, identify later” incidents. Importantly, however, this SOP needs to be complemented by a change in how officers are trained and socialized to view Papuans. In many instances, Papuans are not supportive of the TPNPB and those that do are possibly forced to do so out of risk of being targeted by the TPNPB.

#### Religious Conflict Recommendations

1. **The state should revise intolerant legislation that mobs can misuse to justify their violence towards religious minorities.** As noted above, there are currently several national-level regulations that mobs often use to justify attacking religious minorities. These include the 2008 Joint Ministerial Decree on Ahmadiyya and the 1965 Blasphemy Law. By using these laws as a pretext, local police are unable to fully argue against mobs or dismiss their claims during conflict prevention meetings. By revising these laws, mobs would not have any legal pretext to justify their claims for attacking religious minorities, allowing police to be sterner in addressing them.

2. **Civil society organizations need to hold local state institutions and politicians accountable when they support violent mobs that target religious minorities.** As noted above, it is hard for the security apparatus to prevent a conflict that can lead to civilian harm when every other government official or institution is supportive of the actors that initiate this violence. Hence, it is important for civil society organizations to hold these actors (e.g., politicians, regents, governors) and institutions accountable when they do so, either through formal complaint channels to national watchdog institutions such as the Komnas HAM or through electoral platforms.

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