

CSI calls on UN to address the rights of the Indigenous Peoples of West Papua

Argues that deforestation threatens traditional way of life

ZURICH, SWITZERLAND, September 25, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Christian Solidarity International (CSI) has called on the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to consider the threats facing the traditional economies of the people of West Papua.

In an [oral statement](#) at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on September 24, CSI's Abi McDougal pointed out that the Indonesian government's planned National Strategic Projects pose a threat to the way of life of the Indigenous Peoples of West Papua.



CSI's Abi McDougal delivers an oral statement at the UN in Geneva. screenshot: un web tv

Work has already begun on clearing 19,000 hectares of indigenous land in Merauke. This is part of a planned two million hectares intended for the National Strategic Projects.

"Though the program proclaims the goal of improving the economy, such deforestation disrupts traditional ways of life, and prevents West Papuans from accessing sago, a staple food traditional to local communities," McDougal said.

Protests against President Subianto's administration are growing across the country. As militarization increases in response, indigenous communities are particularly vulnerable under the Indonesian military's recently expanded power, she added.

"How can the Indonesian government uphold in practice the right of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination, including to freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development?" McDougal asked.

On September 22, the World Council of Churches and Franciscans International hosted a side [event](#) organized at the Human Rights Council about the human rights situation in Indonesia one

year into President Prabowo Subianto's administration, with a focus on indigenous groups in West Papua.

Although the legal framework for the recognition of Indigenous Peoples exists, attaining recognized status is prohibitively difficult in practice, said Dorteia Wabiser, an indigenous researcher and environmental advocate with human rights group PUSAKA.

Joel Veldkamp
Christian Solidarity International
+41 76 258 15 74

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