

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression

Ref.: AL IDN 10/2025

(Please use this reference in your reply)

18 December 2025

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacities as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders and Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 52/4 and 52/9.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning the **reported acts of intimidation and physical attack on Ms. Selly Selegani between 1 and 7 October in Jakarta and Jayapura.**

Ms. Selegani is a Papuan human rights defender, known for her advocacy against the Wabu Block gold mining project in Intan Jaya.

Special Procedures Mandate Holders have addressed reported human rights violations in connection with the Wabu Block in Intan Jaya in previous allegation letters [IDN 2/2023](#) and [IDN 8/2021](#). We thank your Excellency's Government's reply from [24 December 2021](#) to the latter, yet we would like to express our deep concern over the ongoing human rights violations in Intan Jaya and the wider region of West Papua, particularly against indigenous people and human rights defenders.

According to the information received:

Indigenous Papuans in Intan Jaya report violence and repression, including extrajudicial killings, beatings, and raids, by Indonesian security forces since October 2019. The presence of the security forces and the alleged human rights violations appear to be connected to the Wabu Block gold mining project in the region.

Ms. Selegani travelled to Jakarta on 1 October 2025 for her advocacy work. On 2 and 3 October 2025 she met with the Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources, members of the Regional Representative Council, and representatives of the National Human Rights Commission. A group of unidentified individuals, allegedly military and intelligence personnel in civilian clothes, barred journalists from covering these meetings and told journalists they should not report on these meetings. Other groups of unidentified individuals, also allegedly military or intelligence personnel, prevented Ms. Selegani from visiting student dormitories and meeting members of the Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, Indonesia's House of Representatives on those days. On 5 October 2025 she departed Jakarta for Jayapura.

On 7 October 2025 she held a discussion at a student dormitory in Jayapura. After the discussion Ms. Selegani began to experience intimidation and harassment. She received a call from an unknown number. The caller asked for her location and requested to meet her that same day. Later, the same number sent her a message containing photographs of members of the Indonesian National Armed Forces posing together with Papuans who were holding Indonesian red and white flags, and another message saying, “stop talking.” Ms. Selegani interpreted this message as a direct threat connected to her advocacy work. In the past, she has received over 100 photos of similar content, mostly showing soldiers and killed Papuans.

In the evening of 7 October 2025, she was attacked by three masked men on motorcycles. They tried to snatch her bag and phone. She was pushed into a roadside ditch and sustained a bleeding injury. A passing civilian and military personnel assisted her and took her to Waena Health Centre, where she received medical care. Since then, she has remained at home as she fears further attacks.

Without wishing to prejudge these allegations, we express our concern over the reported intimidation and physical attack against Ms. Selegani. These human rights violations appear to be directly connected to her human rights defense work as they occurred during and after her advocacy work to protect and promote human rights in Intan Jaya. It is also concerning that Ms. Selegani was prevented from meeting certain government representatives to advocate for human rights, and that journalists were prevented from covering meetings in what appears to be a deliberate attempt to undermine her work, the right of the media to report on issues of public interest and the corresponding right of the public to receive this information.

We fear that these incidents will have a chilling effect on the work of human rights defenders in West Papua, where defenders, activists, and civilians have been facing intimidation and violence, and worked in a restrictive environment with heavy police and military presence for several years.

In connection with the above alleged facts and concerns, please refer to the **Annex on Reference to international human rights law** attached to this letter which cites international human rights instruments and standards relevant to these allegations.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, we would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please provide information on how you intend to ensure that gold mining in Intan Jaya and any thereto related activities, particularly actions of security forces connected to these projects, comply with international law, and that human rights defenders monitoring this compliance are protected from any kind of retaliatory acts.

3. Please provide information about whether any investigation has been carried out into the alleged violations by Indonesian security forces in Intan Jaya, and if any perpetrators have been brought to justice. If no investigation or prosecution took place, please explain why.
4. Please provide information on how your Excellency's Government will ensure that journalists are able report on the work of human rights defenders and advocates, as well as any other information of public interest in relation to the gold mining projects in Intan Jaya, without any undue restrictions or fear of retaliations and in an enabling and safe environment.
5. Please identify measures you will take to ensure that Ms. Selegani and other human rights defenders can exercise their right to protect and promote human rights without threats, intimidation, physical attacks, or any other form of retaliation.

This communication and any response received from your Excellency's Government will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) within 60 days. They will also subsequently be made available in the usual report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

While awaiting a reply, we urge that all necessary interim measures be taken to halt the alleged violations and prevent their re-occurrence and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person(s) responsible for the alleged violations.

We may publicly express our concerns in the near future as, in our view, the information upon which the press release will be based is sufficiently reliable to indicate a matter warranting immediate attention. We also believe that the wider public should be alerted to the potential implications of the above-mentioned allegations. The press release will indicate that we have been in contact with your Excellency's Government's to clarify the issue/s in question.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Mary Lawlor
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders

Irene Khan
Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression

Annex

Reference to international human rights law

In connection with above alleged facts and concerns, we would like to draw your attention to articles 6, 19, 21, 22, 27 of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), acceded to by the Republic of Indonesia on 22 February 2006.

Article 6 of the ICCPR affirms the inherent right to life, which must be protected by law and safeguarded against arbitrary deprivation.

Article 19 of the ICCPR guarantees the right to freedom of opinion and the right to freedom of expression, which includes the right “to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media”. This right applies online as well as offline, protects the freedom of the press as one of its core elements and includes not only the exchange of information that is favourable, but also that which may criticize, shock, or offend.

In its [general comment No. 34](#), the Human Rights Committee stated that States parties to the ICCPR are required to guarantee the right to freedom of expression, including “political discourse, commentary on one's own and on public affairs, canvassing, discussion of human rights, journalism, cultural and artistic expression, teaching, and religious discourse” (CCPR/C/GC/34, para. 11). The Committee states that article 19 also covers the right of a free press and other media able to comment on public issues without censorship or restraint and to inform public opinion and a corresponding right of the public to receive media output.

The Committee further asserts that there is a duty of States to put in place effective measures to protect against attacks aimed at silencing those exercising their right to freedom of expression (para. 23). Recognizing how journalists and persons who engage in the gathering and analysis of information on the human rights situation and who publish human rights-related reports, including judges and lawyers, are frequently subjected to threats, intimidation and attacks because of their activities, the Committee stresses that “all such attacks should be vigorously investigated in a timely fashion, and the perpetrators prosecuted, and the victims, or, in the case of killings, their representatives, be in receipt of appropriate forms of redress” (para. 23).

Any restriction on the right to freedom of expression must be compatible with the requirements set out in article 19(3) ICCPR. Under these requirements, restrictions must (i) be provided by law; (ii) pursue one of the legitimate aims for restriction, which are the respect of the rights or reputations of others and the protection of national security or of public order (*ordre public*), or of public health or morals; and (iii) be necessary and proportionate for those objectives. The State has the burden of proof to demonstrate that any such restrictions are compatible with the Covenant, and restrictions must always be “the least intrusive instrument among those which might achieve their protective function” ([CCPR/C/GC/34, para. 34](#)). In this context, we underscore that the Human Rights Committee has found that “It is not compatible with article 19(3), for instance, to invoke such laws to suppress or withhold from the public information of legitimate public interest that does not harm national security or to prosecute journalists, researchers, environmental activists, human rights defenders, or

others, for having disseminated such information.” (CCPR/C/GC/34 para. 30).

Article 21 recognizes the right of peaceful assembly as a cornerstone of democratic participation. Restrictions may only be imposed when necessary to protect national security, public safety, public order, health, morals, or the rights of others. Article 22 protects the right to freedom of association, including the right to form and join trade unions. Limitations are permitted only under law and when necessary, in a democratic society, with specific allowances for restrictions on armed forces and police. Article 27 safeguards the rights of ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities to enjoy their culture, practice their religion, and use their language. It ensures that such communities cannot be denied collective expression of identity within their societies.

With regard to the expressions made by the human rights defenders, we would like to refer your Excellency’s Government to the fundamental principles set forth in the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, also known as the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. In particular, we would like to refer to articles 1 and 2 of the Declaration which state that everyone has the right to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels and that each State has a prime responsibility and duty to protect, promote and implement all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Furthermore, we wish to call the attention of your Excellency’s Government to the provisions contained in the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/144, which in its article 5 declares that ‘[f]or the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, at the national and international levels: (a) To meet or assemble peacefully’. We also wish to refer to article 6 points (b) and (c), which provides for the right to freely publish, impart or disseminate information and knowledge on all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to study, discuss and hold opinions on the observance of these rights.

In this context, we would also like to refer to Human Rights Council resolution 22/6, which called upon States to create a safe and enabling environment for the work of human rights defenders; and Human Rights Council resolution 31/32 which in paragraph 2 calls upon all States to take all measures necessary to ensure the rights and safety of human rights defenders, including those working towards realization of economic, social and cultural rights and who, in so doing, exercise other human rights, such as the rights to freedom of opinion, expression, peaceful assembly and association, to participate in public affairs, and to seek an effective remedy. It further underlines in paragraph 10 the legitimate role of human rights defenders in mediation efforts, where relevant, and in supporting victims in accessing effective remedies for violations and abuses of their economic, cultural rights, including for members of impoverished communities, groups and communities vulnerable to discrimination, and those belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples.