

Media Restrictions on Papua

Understanding the Impacts

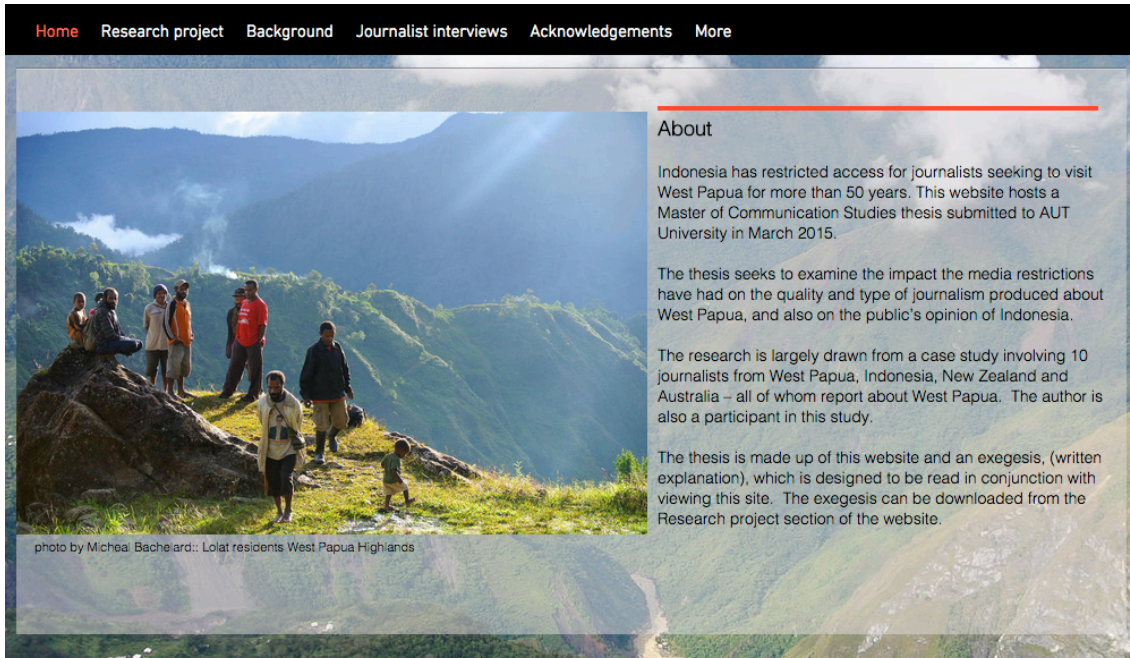


Figure 1: The home page of the author's *Media restrictions on Papua – Understanding the impacts* website. <http://karen4279.wix.com/mediarestrictionswp>. Copyright 2014 Karen Abplanalp.

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An Exegesis and Microsite submitted to
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Pacific Media Centre, School of Communication Studies

Supervisors: Professor David Robie and Dr Allison Oosterman

Microsite artefact: <http://karen4279.wix.com/mediarestrictionswp>

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Abstract

Indonesia has restricted access for journalists seeking to visit West Papua for more than 50 years. On May 10, 2015, shortly after this thesis was submitted, Indonesia's President, Joko Widodo, announced the media restrictions on Papua were to be lifted. The apparent change in policy is yet to be tested. According to Papuan journalist Victor Mambor, no foreign journalist has tried to visit Papua since Widodo's statement (Mambor, personal communication, June 19, 2015).

Using the concepts of Peace Journalism, this research exegesis and microsite artefact seeks to examine the impact the media restrictions have had on the quality and type of journalism produced about West Papua, and also on the public's opinion of Indonesia.

The research is largely drawn from a case study involving 10 journalists from West Papua, Indonesia, New Zealand and Australia – all of whom report about West Papua. The author is also a participant in this study. The thesis includes a web-based artifact incorporating a series of video interviews with the 10 journalists.

This thesis finds that media restrictions directly impact on the quality of journalism produced about West Papua and create serious risks for journalists and their sources, and impact negatively on Indonesia's international image. If the aim of the restrictions is to control and limit negative reportage about West Papua, then this study finds that they do the opposite. The media constraints severely limit the possibility of positive and unbiased reportage. The study provides suggestions on how to mitigate these risks.

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http://karen4279.wix.com/mediarestrictionswp?_ga=1.143519409.504836401.1416371840#!Enrico-Aditjondro/cjds/8964D314-DOFA-4F11-B6DF-56BA3A433934 Copyright

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[1840#!Johnny-Blades/cjds/DBD2DB40-AF3B-4177-B5ED-05A455270CB0](#) Copyright
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Authorship

I, Karen Abplanalp, hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.

..... DATE

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Mark Davis - part 1



Endy Bayuni



Andreas Harsono



Victor Mambor



Mark Davis



Michael Bachelard

Figure 2. The Journalists Interviews page of the author's *Media restrictions on Papua – Understanding the impacts* website. <http://karen4279.wix.com/mediarestrictionswp>. Copyright 2014 Karen Abplanalp.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Indonesian territory of West Papua, sharing a border with Papua New Guinea, is a place very few people in New Zealand have heard about, despite the fact it has one of the region's closest and longest running conflicts (Blades, 2014).

Formerly a Dutch colony, Indonesia gained control of the territory in 1969 during a controversial United Nations administered vote, which offered 1000 West Papuan's the choice of voting for Indonesian rule or independence. Media restrictions have been in place since this time amidst reports of human rights abuses, conflict and struggles for independence (Bachelard, personal communication, June 24, 2014).

According to Victor Mambor, West Papuan journalist, publisher and chairperson Papua branch of the Alliance of Independent Journalists, press freedoms are fraught and being a journalist in West Papua is dangerous. Journalists in West Papua have been killed and are intimidated by the Indonesian military and police (Mambor, 2014).

While the rest of Indonesia entered a new era of press freedoms in 1999, with the fall of Indonesian President and military dictator Suharto, West Papua is the only Indonesian territory which remains closed to foreign media (Maryadi, personal communication, November 7, 2013).

This thesis builds on the research and momentum undertaken while a student at AUT University, from which a multiple-award winning investigative article '*Blood Money*' was produced. The article investigated the New Zealand Superannuation Fund (NZSF) investment in the controversial US-owned Freeport copper and gold mine, Grasberg, West Papua, for *Metro* magazine, as its lead feature in the December 2011 edition.

West Papua has been described as the financial jewel in Indonesia's crown, with the Grasberg mine providing a third of Indonesia's tax revenue according to Dr Denise Leith (Leith, personal communication, October 29, 2011).

The author and the research participants interchange the use of Papua and West Papua to describe the Indonesian region of Papua. The official name of the region is Papua; however West Papua is sometimes referred to in acknowledgement of the region's name prior to becoming part of Indonesia.

1.1 Background and Methodology



Figure 3. Map showing the two provinces of Papua. Retrieved from <http://papuaweb.org/goi/pp/index.html#peta>. Copyright West Papua Web.Org. Reprinted with permission.

The Indonesia-ruled Melanesian region of Papua, Figure 3, (comprising the provinces of Papua and West Papua) on the island of New Guinea has been under a virtual media blackout since 1969 when Indonesia controversially gained control of the country.

However Papua was originally one province and the division of the region into two provinces in 2003 was a deliberate tactic by the Indonesian government to weaken the independence movement according to Endy Bayuni, senior editor at *The Jakarta Post*.

Papua is a large province, and the government is carving it up. Initially in 2003 they planned to carve it up into three provinces, but now they have settled for two because it is very difficult to start a new administration in the new provinces. The reason given

by the government is that it is too large to administer as one province, so they decided to have two provinces. I see it differently. I think this is a strategy on the part of the Indonesian government to weaken the movement for independence which is growing in Papua. This is the classic divide and rule technique that Indonesia learned from Holland, our former colonisers, that is exactly what they did here from 1602 when they colonised Indonesia for three and a half centuries. As Bayuni explains:

If you look at the independence movement in Papua, the strongest part is actually in the Eastern part and so the strategy is to divide and weaken the movement in the eastern part in the Papua province (Bayuni, personal communication, 7 November, 2013).

Although Indonesia has claimed territorial control of West Papua since 1969, most Papuans are Melanesian Pacific Islanders and have mainly Christian or animist spiritual beliefs. Indonesian migrants to the region are mostly Muslim, have an Asian culture and look towards Java as their heartland (Abplanalp, 2011). There has been an active Papuan independence movement for decades. There are also persistent reports of human rights abuses at the hands of the Indonesian military and police against indigenous Papuans (Abplanalp, 2011). In 2004, the Yale Law School's Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic (Brundige et al., 2004) found what it called strong evidence of genocide against indigenous Papuans (Abplanalp, 2011).

The historical and contemporary evidence set out strongly suggests the Indonesian government has committed proscribed acts with the intent to destroy the West Papuans as such, in violation of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the customary international law prohibition this convention embodies (Brundige et al., 2004).

International journalists, researchers and human rights organisations are restricted by the Indonesian government from entering West Papua. These restrictions take the form of a difficult and complicated visa application process made to the

Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Only a handful of journalists have gained official permission to report from the region in the last 50 years (Harsono, 2014).

As a result, Papua has remained largely ignored by New Zealand and international mainstream media for four decades, leaving it a media 'black spot' (Perrottet & Robie, 2011).

In October 2011, the New Zealand-based *Pacific Journalism Review* produced a special media freedom report which stated that in one year there had been "two killings of journalists, five abductions or attempted abductions, 18 assaults (including repeated cases against some journalists), censorship by both the civil and military authorities and two police arrests (but no charges)" (Perrottet & Robie, 2011).

Methodology

Using the emerging discipline of Peace Journalism (Galtung, 1969, 2003; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005; Keeble, Tulloch and Zollman, 2010; Hackett, 2011) as a framework, this exegesis aims to promote peace rather than conflict. This idea was the underlying theme during the production of this thesis. During the interviews with the journalists, my own writing, research, the applications for my journalist visa, producing the videos and the site – the underlying question is: Is this going to increase understanding or lead to more conflict?

Kemmis (2011) says Participatory Action Research (PAR) seeks to involve the participants who reflect critically and self-critically. It is often used in social justice research and this involvement will generally lead to some wider social good or improvement.

While some may argue that it may seem idealistic, there is a growing movement among journalism academics and journalists themselves, who are focused on peace

and social justice as important and achievable goals. Along with this, the study of journalism as a valid research practice is gaining more momentum with a need to encourage, acknowledge and reinforce the use of journalism methodologies (Bacon, 2012; Nash, 2013; and Robie, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015).

The decision to produce a creative artefact for the thesis also intersects with the Peace Journalism theorists' recurrent theme of creativity which is valued and put forward as an essential means towards ending conflict, not only within the profession of journalism, but within the scholarly examinations of Peace Journalism (PJ) (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005).

Lynch & McGoldrick (2005, p.84) suggest that creativity is a vital factor in determining peaceful outcomes; creativity both in media approaches and in ways in which conflict is resolved.

Lynch & McGoldrick (2005) assert the importance of applying rigorous scrutiny to journalism and journalist practice if journalism is to be credible and purposeful. They argue that through this reflection a journalistic transformation will come about. A common PJ premise is that the journalist has a personal influence on a story, challenging the traditional notion of a practice of accepted 'objectivity' in journalism. Journalists are seen to be part of a story and it is important their own values and influences are considered.

This led to a decision to research my own experience and that of other journalists as a way of gaining a deeper understanding of the impacts of media restrictions with the intention of approaching the study with peace rather than conflict as the goal. Throughout the research participants were asked to critically evaluate their experience of the media restrictions on their profession and on themselves.

Dick (2000) has argued that action and research coexist and feed off each other. It is suggested a pattern of action followed by evaluation, then action is taken, followed by research evaluation in a cyclic pattern.

While the method sits alongside participatory action with this approach, the difference noted is the action, in this case interviews, my own reportage about Papua and my reflections during this time, become part of the creative artifact presented.

Romano (2010) points to the similarities of Peace Journalism to time consuming, fact-based traditional journalism, but also asserts Peace Journalism goes further than fact-finding by attempting to research not only the complexity of facts, but also research the intention and context of who is presenting issues: looking not only at areas of conflict, but also areas of agreement and similarity.

This feature evolved from ideas and research questions developed following a feature article *Blood Money (Abplanalp 2011)* I wrote that was published in *Metro*, a leading New Zealand current affairs and lifestyle magazine reporting issues and society, in December 2011. The paper included below is from a presentation I made for the Journalism Education and Research Association Australia conference in October 2013 as part of this project. The paper is also presented on the website.

The research was conducted according to Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee approval No 13/219, September 16 2013.

1.2 Blood Money – Writing with media restrictions in place

Written for the Journalism Education and Research Association of Australia (JERAA) 2013 Conference



Figure 4. Opening double spread of the *Blood Money* article on the author's *Media restrictions on Papua – Understanding the impacts* website. http://karen4279.wix.com/mediarestrictionswp?_ga=1.143519409.504836401.1416371840#!writing-a-story-with-media-restrictions/c3h2

Blood Money is an example of investigative journalism that was published during my postgraduate studies in Communication Studies at AUT University in 2011.

I will discuss three topics:

- University is a good home for writing *Blood Money*;
- Attempting to write a story using the concepts of Peace Journalism; and
- Writing a story centred on a territory that restricts the entry and work of foreign media.

The feature story, *Blood Money*, was published in the Dec 2011 issue of *Metro* magazine.

The article investigated the New Zealand Superannuation Fund's (NZSF) investment in the controversial US-owned Freeport copper and gold mine at Grasberg, West Papua.

The Grasberg mine is located in the remote highlands in West Papua. Mining operations began in 1973 and are expected to continue until 2041.

The mine has been at the centre of human rights and environmental abuse allegations for most of this period. The *Blood Money* investigation sought to establish how the NZSF laid claim to being a 'responsible investor' while remaining involved in the mine.

For the four decades prior to publication of this story, the two Indonesia-ruled Melanesian provinces comprising West Papua on the island of New Guinea had remained largely ignored by New Zealand mainstream media (continues in Appendix 1).

The paper is presented on the Media Restrictions on Papua – understanding the impacts microsite, here: <http://karen4279.wix.com/mediarestrictionswp#!writing-a-story-with-media-restrictions/c3h2>. The paper can also be found in appendix 1.

1.3 An account from multi award winning Australian journalist, Mark Davis, of his first visit to West Papua, in 1995



Figure 5. Taken from the video interview with Mark Davis from the author's *Media restrictions on Papua – Understanding the impacts* website. http://karen4279.wix.com/mediarestrictionswp?_ga=1.143519409.504836401.1416371840#!Mark-Davis-part-1/cjds/5520bd1d0cf21933cd38c918 Copyright 2014 Karen Abplanalp.

The video in Figure 5 provides a vivid description of what it was like to report from West Papua as discussed in an interview by Mark Davis:

It was one of the first stories I ever did and I don't think any journalists had ever been there before. There had been a killing around the Grasberg mine.

In the darkest of the Suharto days. They, being the military and the mine itself, were brutally killing people around that mine for the interests of that mine. They were purging the hills around it of indigenous people. Burning the villages down, killing them, forcing mountain people to move down onto the coast.

I had an opportunity to go there, there had been at least 20 people killed, and the Australian government had some concerns about it at the time, not expressed very heavily, but nevertheless they had concerns, and the Australian ambassador [to Indonesia, Alan Taylor] was going on a visit there, and I went with him.

It was an absolute shock to me to go to some of these villages; you would take weeks to walk to them. They choppered us in to these destroyed villages, with the inhabitants walking out of the bush and rebuilding little shelters. But all the pigs had been killed, the gardens destroyed, houses burnt down. You could see the place had been obliterated and the people were very scared of course. But they took the opportunity, because we had a camera, to say what had happened. They very bravely narrated the story of how their village had been destroyed, because Kelly Kwalik – he was this ghost like kind of figure, had come in and raised a flag.

These were the outsiders, they were the ones that declared themselves enemies of Indonesia, they were lightly armed. Kelly Kwalik was the leader of the bush rebellion. He was up in the mountains, being hunted, for more than 20 years. He went up there in 1975, I think and never came in. They called his group the outsiders. They were a fantastic bunch of people, they were quite remarkable.

Their resistance really was to raise this flag. They had an original flag from 1963 and they would walk through the mountains and perform a ceremony. They would come to a village and build a big pole and build a bush platform and everyone would salute him and they would raise this flag. And that was the act of rebellion. That was a very deadly act of rebellion, as it still is. But then it was brutally enforced so if the authorities heard there had been a flag raising, particularly around this filthy mine, at that time (it is still not the best), then it was just a disgrace that Americans, Australians and British were involved in it in anyway. It was this mountain, this mine, built on blood, that's what they mined, they mined blood.

I remember this wonderful old guy, surrounded by Indonesians and officials and he said, "I want to talk". At this time they had burnt the village down but they were trying

to force the village to relocate down to the coast. There is no relationship between the mountain people and the coastal people, you can't even walk it. He said, "The mine, these Freeport people, they want us to move down to the coast, they said they've got some land for us on the coast. And I said, we agree, we are happy to do that on one condition. If you can take these trees and these hills and this river...if you can take them down to the coast...then we will go!" Fantastic...everyone glared at him and I thought ...these are very cool people, these are deeply cool people. So that started many years of going back there (Davis, 2014).

1.4 Key research questions

What is the experience of reporting about Papua with media restrictions in place and what concerns do these restrictions raise?

What impacts do media restrictions have on the work of journalists?

Journalists have chosen to report from Papua without official permission. What issues does this raise and is reporting without a visa worth the risks involved?

What are the consequences of the media restrictions on Indonesia's public image?

1.5 Media Restrictions in West Papua

It is widely believed that media access to Papua is severely restricted. All of the thesis participants confirmed this. In order to report from Papua, journalists first need to obtain special permission to visit.

In 1995, Mark Davis was one of the few foreign journalists known to gain official permission to visit West Papua in decades (Davis, 2014). In 2014, 19 years later, Davis was granted permission to visit Papua again. By early 2015, Davis, along with a few other Australian journalists, including Michael Bachelard, were granted access.

When making an application for access to Papua, a journalist first needs to supply the Indonesian Foreign Ministry with a list of the people the journalist intends to interview. The ministry needs the dates and times of interviews and the interviewees must send confirmation on their letterhead of those dates and times. The journalist must also supply information about what you want to report on. This process can easily take months to complete, eliminating the possibility of reporting 'news'. Your application is then submitted to the Clearing House for approval. The 'Clearing House' is made up of representatives from Indonesia's main government departments, including military and police.

If the journalist's application is successful, he or she are also required to include and pay the travel expenses of an Indonesian intelligence officer.

Jakarta-based writer and researcher, Andreas Harsono, from Human Rights Watch cites dozens of unsuccessful attempts for visa applications made by journalists to visit Papua recently. Others, such as Bayuni (2013) and Parrottet and Robie (2011), confirm this point. This includes the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Frank La Rue.

La Rue was denied going to Papua in 2013, despite an invitation from the Indonesian Government for him to visit Indonesia. He submitted his itinerary and it included Papua. Once the word Papua was inside the programme, he was denied [permission] to come here (Harsono, 2014).

The result is that the region has remained virtually sealed off to outside scrutiny for more than 50 years. Until November 2014, only a handful of foreign journalists had been granted journalist visas to Papua.

According to Endy Bayuni, chief editor of *The Jakarta Post*, the policy in Jakarta 'restricts', rather than completely bans, foreign journalists and foreign researchers from visiting Papua.

Many foreign journalists based in Jakarta have tried to get that special permission. Many of them failed, and one or two managed to get that permission. So it is not an actual ban, but they just make it difficult. The reason cited by the Foreign Ministry is the security situation in Papua and that this restriction is imposed for the good of the visitors (Bayuni, 2013).

But Bachelard disputes that Papua is unsafe for foreigners:

It is not a war zone anymore, not to the extent it once was. I think they want to restrict foreign press going in there, but headline reason has always been security:

you are not secure if you go there, we may have blood on our hands. That excuse is more tenuous than it used to be (Bachelard, 2014).

The Papua visa application process is extremely difficult and time consuming, requiring endorsements from people from within Indonesia and Papua explains Radio New Zealand reporter Johnny Blades, who has reported on Papua for more than 10 years. It is difficult getting hold of people, there is the language barrier and the phone lines to Papua area dreadful:

While the Indonesian authorities still say, “Look no one is banned, there is no ban.” It’s an effective ban in a way because you just can’t get these applications off the ground (Blades, 2014).

Blades’ most recent application, in 2014, for a research visa to Papua was unsuccessful. He says he will keep trying.

When Bachelard was asked why he thought the joint application for a visa from the author and Māori Television was unsuccessful, he replied:

I applied twice, I got in twice and I don’t think I went easy with my story on them so I *don’t* know. Whenever you have a process that is done behind closed doors and with a lack of transparency, there is no real way of judging what's going on or why you have been accepted or not accepted (Bachelard, 2014).

Dr Budi Hernawan works for the Human Rights Centre at the University of Indonesia visiting Papua on a regular basis. Journalists are not a unique group requiring special permission to access Papua, says Dr Hernawan. International organisations, researchers, humanitarian workers, human rights investigators and the United Nations are also restricted. Hernawan explains that in the past, the restrictions also applied to Papuans.

Before 1998, even a local had to have a special permit to travel from one city to

another city. Even for social purposes, if you want to visit your relatives or family in another city or village, then you needed to have special permission. Those are gone now, thankfully. But, I think the practice remained until 2011 (Hernawan, 2014).

Michael Bachelard was the Indonesia correspondent for *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* from January 2012 until January 2015. He visited Papua in 2013 and again in November 2014. Bachelard had one less hurdle to go through compared to most foreign journalists – he already had a journalist visa for Indonesia and was based in Jakarta, giving him closer access to department officials. He did, however, still need to get special permission and his application was put through the Clearing House. According to Bachelard, by 2014, and for two years, the Indonesian Foreign Ministry has been saying journalists could visit Papua.

Bachelard was sceptical of this claim, as he knew foreign journalists had unsuccessfully attempted many times to obtain permission to visit Papua. Despite this, the message coming from the former Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr Marty Natalegawa, was for journalists to apply.

The Foreign Minister has been promising on the record in forums like the Jakarta Foreign Correspondents Club... 'You can go to Papua, just put in your application and go (Bachelard, 2014).

On October 11, 2014, Joko Widodo became Indonesia's new President who has promised to remove the media restrictions on West Papua.

I certainly know that the advice has been given to his [President Widodo's] government - ease the media restrictions and free the prisoners from the human rights people who are now for the first time being listened to, that is their advice (Bachelard, 2014).

Bachelard says he did not receive the support of the Australian government for his application, despite the fact that he was seeking to investigate Australian government

spending in Papua.

If I didn't know this already, not getting the Australian government support would have alerted me to the fact that the situation there is pretty tenuous for actors from the West, in any field, be it aid or NGOs. It is something the Indonesian government is very sensitive about and the Australian government didn't want to be seen giving me any support whatsoever (Bachelard, 2014).

Chapter 2

Actions informing the research

2.1 Introducing the research participants

I sought journalists and writers who have published stories about West Papua. Two of the participants, Mark Davis and Michael Bachelard are the most recent foreign journalists to have been granted rare official permission to visit Papua. I became aware of four of the journalists and writers through my research and writing about West Papua while based at the Pacific Media Centre at AUT University, headed by Professor David Robie.

Dr Robie also taught a postgraduate Asia Pacific journalism paper which I took. This paper introduced me to West Papua. Prior to 2011 I knew nothing about the region or the fact that it was longest running conflict closest to New Zealand. There is considerable detail available on the AUT website about Robie and the Pacific Media Centre (<http://www.aut.ac.nz/profiles/david-robie#sthash.WBahoOR7.dpuf>).

I found most of the participants by researching media reports about West Papua. I searched for stories and writers that focused on peace building. I would then approach the journalists and writers directly and begin my discussions with them about their work and their interest in this study. All but two journalists I approached responded enthusiastically to being involved with this study. Two of the journalists I approached who had reported from within West Papua did not respond to my requests for engagement.



Figure 6. Taken from the video interview with Victor Mambor from the author's *Media restrictions on Papua – Understanding the impacts* website. http://karen4279.wix.com/mediarestrictionswp?_ga=1.143519409.504836401.1416371840#!Victor-Mambor/cjds/2B303B8A-2A10-4A7C-9032-DBF62AEB4F62 Copyright 2014 Karen Abplanalp

Victor Mambor (see Figure 6) is a West Papuan journalist and editor, and is the chairperson Papua branch of the Alliance of Independent Journalists. Mambor travels extensively campaigning for media freedoms in West Papua. I first interviewed Mambor in November 2013 by Skype during my field trip to Indonesia and included his comments for the stories for Radio New Zealand International. Mambor visited New Zealand in August 2014 where he was the keynote speaker at a conference 'West Papua, The Pacific's secret shame'. Mambor was interviewed on 3 August 2014 in Auckland.



Figure 7. Taken from the video interview with Mark Davis from the author's *Media restrictions on Papua – Understanding the impacts* website.

http://karen4279.wix.com/mediarestrictionswp?_ga=1.143519409.504836401.1416371840#!Mark-Davis/cjds/AB034F68-E753-4732-93B2-93F78ADFBD0D Copyright 2014 Karen Abplanalp

Mark Davis (see Figure 7) is one of Australia's foremost video journalists who has reported on West Papua for more than 20 years. Davis has won a Logie and 5 Walkley Awards, including the Gold Walkley award for the story *Blood Money*, in 2000, which investigated the funding of pro-Indonesian militias in Timor-Leste.

Davis first came to my attention in June 2014 when he was granted rare permission to visit West Papua. Davis was one of just a handful of journalists in the last 50 years to have been granted access to Papua. Davis produced a ground breaking story titled 'West Papua's new dawn?' for *SBS Dateline* which reported on the struggle for Independence and sought to find out if changes have taken place.

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/dateline/story/west-papuas-new-dawn>

I approached Davis shortly after his visit to West Papua in June 2014 to find out what it was like to visit and to discuss the media restrictions. Davis was warm and engaging. His story is remarkable in another way: In 1995, Davis accompanied Australia's

ambassador to Indonesia, Alan Taylor, who was visiting West Papua in the wake of a high number of killings around the Freeport mine earlier that year. At that time, Davis was the one of the few foreign journalists known to gain official permission to visit West Papua in decades (Davis, 2014). Davis continued over the next 20 years to produce stories about West Papua. He is a highly experienced investigative journalist who has reported from around the world.



Figure 8. Taken from the video interview with Endy Bayuni from the author's *Media restrictions on Papua – Understanding the impacts* website.

http://karen4279.wix.com/mediarestrictionswp?_ga=1.143519409.504836401.1416371840#!/Endy-Bayuni/cjds/9B11BAD3-6EA5-4474-A122-8AF0085FB0DE Copyright 2014 Karen

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Endy Bayuni, shown in Figure 8, is the senior editor at *The Jakarta Post* and served as its editor-in-chief in 2004-2010. Bayuni is a highly regarded international expert on media freedoms and Indonesian politics. He writes regularly for publications including *the Guardian* and the *Washington Post*. I approached Bayuni for the first time in 2011 to ask if he would be interviewed for *Blood Money*, after reading some of his reports on West Papua. At the time Bayuni was spending a year as a Senior Fellow at the East

West Centre office in Washington in 2011. I remained in regular contact with Bayuni during this project, including interviewing him in Indonesia on 7 November 2013. Bayuni has acted as a kind of mentor over the last four years, assisting and advising me with research and writing about Papua.



Figure 9. Taken from the video interview with Dr Budi Hernawan from the author's *Media restrictions on Papua – Understanding the impacts* website..

http://karen4279.wix.com/mediarestrictionswp?_ga=1.143519409.504836401.1416371840#!Dr-Budi-Hernawan/cjds/091E89B0-A8C7-45FB-9965-5D594762F01E Copyright 2014 Karen Abplanalp

Dr Budi Hernawan (Figure 9) works for the Human Rights Centre at the University of Indonesia visiting Papua on a regular basis. Prior to this Hernawan spent 14 years based in Papua where he worked for human rights organizations. He is a research associate at Franciscans International, an NGO accredited with the United Nations operating from Geneva and New York. I first contacted Hernawan in 2011 after reading his stories about Papua that were published in *The Jakarta Post*. At the time he was completing his Doctoral thesis, *'From the theatre of torture to the theatre of*

peace: The politics of torture and re-imagining peacebuilding in Papua, Indonesia' (Hernawan, 2013). The thesis investigated the politics of state-sponsored torture in Papua conceptualised as a 'theatre' and proposed community peace building systems in Papua. Hernawan was one of my sources for *Blood Money*. During this time, on 19 October 2011, security forces attacked Hernawan's friary. The forces were hunting for members of the Papuan People's Congress who had attended a peaceful political rally and had escaped the shootings earlier in the day. Hernawan was interviewed from Indonesia by Skype on 28 October 2014.



Figure 10. Taken from the video interview with Enrico Aditjondro from the author's *Media restrictions on Papua – Understanding the impacts* website.

http://karen4279.wix.com/mediarestrictionswp?_ga=1.143519409.504836401.1416371840#!Enrico-Aditjondro/cjds/8964D314-D0FA-4F11-B6DF-56BA3A433934 Copyright 2014 Karen Abplanalp

Indonesian journalist Enrico Aditjondro (Figure 10) grew up in West Papua and has made many visits to Papua as a journalist and media trainer. Aditjondro is the vice-chairperson of Engage Media, <http://www.engagemedia.org/>, which publishes *Papuan*

Voices, documentaries made by Papuans about issues concerning everyday Papuan life.

While living in Papua, Aditjondro became best friends with his neighbour, the son of Papuan cultural leader Arnold Ap, who was shot by the Indonesian military on April 26, 1984.

Arnold Ap was a cultural man he is a museum curator. He set up a group in the 1980s called Mambeta, which was very very famous and at that time. I think the government and the military saw that as a threat and in the end had him arrested for some dummy convictions. Eventually he was kind of let go and shot, shot dead. I always say to people I am not Papuan by blood, but I am definitely Papuan by heart. It is something I really care for, a passion for – there has got to be something we can do together (Aditjondro, 2014).

In July, I read a feature story about Aditjondro where he talked about his work and passion for Papua and approached him to discuss being part of this study. Interviewed by Skype 18 July 2014 and 24 August 2014.



Figure 11. Taken from the video interview with Nick Chesterfield from the author's *Media restrictions on Papua – Understanding the impacts* website.

http://karen4279.wix.com/mediarestrictionswp?_ga=1.143519409.504836401.1416371840#!Nick-Chesterfield/cjds/2D423F79-40F7-4FEC-9EE6-E9F15473A097 Copyright 2014 Karen Abplanalp

Nick Chesterfield (Figure 11) is the coordinating editor of West Papua Media. Chesterfield has been involved in West Papua issues since 1999 and working as a journalist for West Papua since 2007. He has been doing 'safe witness' journalism trainings over the last few years: "This is to give people the capacity to bring out credible information from West Papua in a safe and secure manner without them getting hurt by the security forces when they are gathering information" (Chesterfield, 2014). Chesterfield was interviewed on 2 December 2014 in Auckland.



Figure 12. Taken from the video interview with Paul Bensemann from the author's *Media restrictions on Papua – Understanding the impacts* website.

http://karen4279.wix.com/mediarestrictionswp?_ga=1.143519409.504836401.1416371840#!Paul-Bensemann/cjds/7E235FF9-B8D1-480F-A7FA-E258147D332B Copyright 2014 Karen Abplanalp

New Zealand journalist and academic specialist on West Papua, Paul Bensemann (Figure 12), reported from West Papua in 2013 on a tourist visa. Bensemann has been interested in West Papua for more than 30 years. In 1986 when he was working as a public relations officer at the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bensemann was asked to help a New Zealand journalist wanting to visit West Papua. Bensemann found that diplomatic colleagues did everything they could to obstruct the visit (Bensemann 2014). A Skype interview with Bensemann was conducted on 11 December 2014.



Figure 13. Taken from the video interview with Andreas Harsono from the author's *Media restrictions on Papua – Understanding the impacts* website.

http://karen4279.wix.com/mediarestrictionswp?_ga=1.143519409.504836401.1416371840#!Andreas-Harsono/cjds/3F9F1377-668C-4EC3-9D0E-5C4E3DA4609B Copyright 2014 Karen Abplanalp

Jakarta based journalist and researcher, Andreas Harsono (Figure 13) of Human Rights Watch Indonesia. Interviewed by Skype, 24 June 2014. Harsono was interviewed for *Blood Money* in 2011. Harsono is a human rights expert and has reported as a journalist and human rights researcher about Papua for many years.



Figure 14. Michael Bachelard (right) during his second trip to Papua in November 2014. Photo copyright Michael Bachelard, reprinted with permission.

Michael Bachelard (Figure 14) was the Indonesia correspondent for *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* up until January 2015. He visited Papua in 2013 and then again in November 2014 (see Figure 14). I interviewed Bachelard by Skype on 24 June 2014 after his first visit to West Papua and then again on 4 December 2014 shortly after his second trip.



Figure 15. Johnny Blades working in the field in Papua New Guinea. Image copyright Johnny Blades, printed with permission. Taken from the interview with Johnny Blades from the author's *Media restrictions on Papua – Understanding the impacts* website. Video http://karen4279.wix.com/mediarestrictionswp?_ga=1.143519409.504836401.1416371840#!Johnny-Blades/cjds/DBD2DB40-AF3B-4177-B5ED-05A455270CB0 Copyright 2014 Karen Abplanalp

Johnny Blades (see Figure 15) is a writer and a journalist for Radio New Zealand International (RNZI). Blades specialises in reporting about Melanesia and has written about West Papua for the last ten years. Blades most recent application to visit Papua was rejected. He is currently writing a book about Melanesian society and politics. Blades and RNZI under the leadership of news editor Walter Zweifel have reported comprehensively about West Papua for more than 15 years. RNZI, along with the Pacific Media Centre are the only media organisations in New Zealand that report about West Papua consistently. I interviewed Blades on 28 June 2014.

There was a sense of caution on my part, in terms of reporting, when you know what you are writing could affect the chances of journalists being able to report from Papua

in the future. Despite the potential for an official backlash, the participants were candid in their interviews, and if at any point an area was discussed that was deemed too risky, the participant could request the information be kept off the record. Most people, however, felt free to express their views. A negative result for this thesis would to have in some way been responsible for any of the journalists not being able to report from West Papua. All of the participants had over the years shown a huge commitment to covering West Papua, despite the limits to press freedoms.

2.2 Field trip to Indonesia in 2013 - publishing stories about the media restrictions

A field trip to Indonesia in late 2013 (Figure 16) marked a turning point in this project. A comparison with Timor-Leste is often made when international media and academics discuss West Papua. The field trip gave me an opportunity to discuss this comparison and the media restrictions with Indonesian media, parliamentarians and with Timorese journalists. The trip also gave more first hand experience reporting about West Papua.



Figure 16. Journalists from the Asia Pacific region gather at the Bali Media Forum, 2013, which the author attended as part of her field trip to Indonesia. Photo by Karen Abplanalp.

Probably the most memorable moment was seeing the presidents of the two former hostile neighbors, Indonesia and Timor-Leste, stand together in peace and referring to each other as 'best friends'. I wrote a story for the *Sunday Star Times* based on the theme of peace and reconciliation (Abplanalp, 2013). Just prior to the field trip the Papuan Governor, Lukas Enembe, announced that foreign media were free to visit Papua (Abplanalp 2013). It seemed that this thesis would possibly end there. Why carry on if the restrictions are lifted? The announcement drove most of the research for the next six months.

2.3 The author's application for a journalist visa to West Papua

In July 2014, I decided to apply for a journalist visa to visit West Papua. This was probably the most significant change in direction for the thesis. Up until that point my own visit to West Papua was out of the question for reasons of safety to myself and source protection. The turning point happened for three reasons and all three events happened with months of each other.

Michael Bachelard (Bachelard, 2014) and Mark Davis (Davis, 2014), were separately granted rare access to West Papua. Interviews and discussions with both Davis and Bachelard about their visits, the media restrictions, encouraged me to apply for my own visa.

In June 2014, during the Indonesian presidential election campaign both of the leading presidential candidates promised to lift the restrictions on foreign media's access to Papua. This was the first time access to Papua had been the subject of a presidential campaign as a big issue. Journalists and other groups had been asking the Indonesian government to lift the media restrictions for more than 20 years according to Andreas Harsono (Harsono, 2014).

This is a change because it is now being liberated in the presidential campaign and this is the first time ever in a presidential campaign access to Papua is being a

subject of the campaign, it is change (Harsono, 2014).

I approached Māori Television to discuss the idea of reporting from West Papua with me as reporter and researcher, given that the media restrictions were easing. Māori Television supported this proposal and we applied to the Asia New Zealand Foundation for a media grant for the trip and were successful in our application. We took great care and time with the application. It took several months to gather the required documentation. The frustrations and difficulties involved with getting a journalist visa approved were experienced first-hand. I thought the visa application would be a good opportunity to put into practice some of the ideas gained from this research. I would use this to guide the type of stories we were aiming to cover and the way in which we were going to cover the stories.

I followed Bachelard's strategy of looking for a story with New Zealand government involvement and received the support of an NGO (which cannot now be named due to the fear of upsetting the Indonesian authorities) to look into a project it was running in Papua. We quickly gained enthusiasm and support for the story from Papuan sources and officials.

Just as the application was being submitted two French journalists, Thomas Dandois and Valentine Bourrat, were arrested and detained for reporting without a visa. I received emails of concern from friends suggesting that this event and the Indonesian response to the French journalists would have a negative impact on the visa application.

As a result of the arrests of journalists the NGO said it could no longer support the story. The NGO in Papua was 'terrified' of being seen to be talking to journalists for fear its funding would be cut and its ability to operate in Papua would be prevented. We removed all references to the NGO from the application. Instead we continued to deal directly with Papuan officials and other sources in Papua.

The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) was initially

enthusiastic about our interest in doing a story about the New Zealand-funded project. However, MFAT would not supply us with a letter of support for our visa application. We were told by their communications department it would be inappropriate to do so. At the time, Indonesia was blocking foreign aid from Papua. The New Zealand Ambassador to Indonesia, David Taylor, was also unable to support the application. He did, however, offer to be interviewed about the New Zealand-funded projects in Indonesia, including in Papua.

If we could not get a letter of support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for our application we decided to simply request a letter outlining the New Zealand government's involvement with the project in Papua. This letter was forthcoming (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, personal communication, December 22, 2014).

The visa application was unsuccessful. Despite attempts to find out from the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs which of the requirements were not met, it remains unclear on what grounds the visa was rejected. The Indonesian Embassy in New Zealand told us it could not find out why the application was turned down (Indonesian Embassy New Zealand, personal communication, November 14, 2014). Māori Television and I are currently in the process of preparing a second application.

The decision to make a second application was based partly on the fact that Joko Widodo, who had promised to open up West Papua to foreign media, had now become President of Indonesia.

In December 2014 the Indonesian Embassy in New Zealand, along with all Indonesian Embassies around the world were instructed by the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to do everything they could to assist foreign journalists in their applications to visit West Papua (Indonesian Embassy, New Zealand, personal communication, December 23, 2014).

The Indonesian Embassy in Wellington says it will do everything it can to assist. It wants the relationship between New Zealand's media and Indonesia to be positive.

We have been told the Embassy is supporting our application in the spirit of government-to-government relations.

It would seem however that Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not have the only decision making authority over applications. The applications need to be vetted by what is known as the 'Clearing House'. The 'Clearing House' is made up of representatives from Indonesia's main government departments, including military and police. It remains to be seen how much influence the Indonesian Embassy in NZ has over the success of our application.

Dr Hernawan says because there is no comprehensive policy on Papua, Papua remains subject to security sector policy.

The security sector may have their own agenda, [while] foreign affairs may claim they are more open to foreigners engaging in Papua. The tourism department wants to have unhindered access to Papua because it's all about tourism. The same thing with the Department of Culture, Department of Education, they want to have exchange programmes with academics all around the world. But there's no policy that applies to all, so it remains subject to security sector policy (Hernawan, 2014).

The restrictions remain in place because the military in charge of security feel that Papua should be isolated or should be restricted from getting connections with an international audience according to Hernawan. But this is not always the case for other government institutions.

According to Bachelard the information given to the Indonesian government about the situation in West Papua has mainly come from Indonesian military, police and intelligence who have interests in maintaining the media restrictions.

I spoke to a Human Rights activist here who had nine different communications from nine different ministers or ministerial staff in the wake of Joko Widodo's election all asking for his advice on Papua because they were essentially coming from a position of great ignorance. The only people that were interested enough

and committed enough to knowing about it [West Papua] and passing information on was the military, security forces and the intelligence agency. Papua has been through that prism of separatism for so many years. They [Government Ministers] don't necessarily trust the information they are getting from those guys. Those guys have an interest in still being stationed there and they are seeking different information from different sources and that they aren't ignorant that is a great sign but that hasn't happened very much here. But we look as many people do to jump away with hope that quite apart from whether or not he grants freedom to Papua at least give attention and more intelligence policies (Bachelard, personal communication December 4, 2014).

Chapter 3

Impacts of the Media Restrictions

Media restrictions impact not only the quality of the journalism produced about Papua, they also adversely impact those living in Papua, as well as Indonesia's international reputation, and economy.

The impacts can be broken down into three main groups: Isolation, quality of reporting and misrepresentation.

3.1 Isolation and misrepresentation of West Papua

New Zealand journalist Johnny Blades said that when he first started covering Papua, he could not believe that he and others had never heard about the region, especially given its proximity to New Zealand and the fact that it has been the longest and closest conflict to New Zealand.

I couldn't believe that there was this conflict that had been simmering there for so long and hadn't been given the kind of attention other, maybe similar, or at least other conflicts of these last few decades had been given (Blades, 2014).

Dr Hernawan argues there is an isolation policy in place for Papua and that even local families are unwilling to have their children work in the area of human rights and journalism in Papua for fear of reprisal. Working in this sector is a very risky business, he says.

Isolation imposed by the government limits the spaces we can speak out about internally. It gives an impression inside the society that if you speak out to

criticise the government then you are against the government, you are against the proper authorities and you face the consequences (Hernawan, 2014).

Because of the isolation policy, fewer and fewer international donors are allowed to support local NGOs and churches, and this has impacted on the quality and sustainability of the organisations. NGOs and students have been targeted for physical intimidation by the police, Dr Hernawan says. Many of the Indonesian journalists I spoke to said that Papua had been forgotten by their own media and by the Indonesian public.

Andreas Harsono, journalist and Indonesian Researcher for Human Rights Watch Indonesia, says that most journalists in Indonesia do not understand Papua. This is partly because Papua is so far away geographically, culturally and economically from the rest of Indonesia. It is also because of the extensive propaganda organised by the Indonesian military on Papua.

I spoke to then Indonesian MP, Eva Sundari, a member of the Committee for Human Rights and Security, who, to my surprise, said she had not heard that foreign media were restricted to go to Papua until the Papuan governor's announcement. She said the chief of the military had assured her Papua was as free as other regions.

Why if you have freedom of press for Indonesian journalists, but not for foreign journalists, what is the point here? Is there anything you want to hide from foreigners? I cannot accept this, because if we employ a democracy it must be all over Indonesia at the same time, and also if you employ a freedom for press it must also be applied for Papua (Sundari, personal communication, 13 November, 2013).

Some of the stories I filed for Radio New Zealand from my field trip to Indonesia can be found here. They provide an understanding of some of the issues regarding Indonesia, foreign media and West Papua and shaped the direction of my research:

[Indonesia MP opposes Papua ban for foreign journalists](#)

Foreign journalists still facing hurdles to access Papua region.

[Former editor in Indonesia says government must solve Papua issue](#)

[Journalist says Indonesia threatened by foreign media on Papua](#)

[Indonesian journalist says rules on foreign press in Papua should be relaxed](#)

Silencing and keeping journalists out has been an effective way to ensure stories do not circulate according to Bachelard. However, he argues this comes at a cost:

I don't know if West Papuans deserve that. And I don't know if the economy of the province deserves that. You know that comes at a cost, not just tourists ... but it stops investors and business people. It gives a sort of a climate for a region that is not conducive to anyone from the outside world entering it. This is a very profitable place for Indonesia – even if they want to exploit that – it needs to be a bit more relaxed (Bachelard, 2014).

Another impact of the media restrictions is the application process itself is so difficult and seemingly without hope of success. Journalists who have applied are worn down by the process and eventually give up trying, or they do not apply in the first place. This in turn encourages those who are determined to report from the region to make the decision to go in without permission, which puts the journalist and their sources at risk.

Participants face the problem gaining the interest of publishing outlets. Media organisations are very reluctant to support the investment in time and money it takes to send a foreign reporter to West Papua. Especially when they know the journalist has very little chance of gaining official entry.

New Zealand journalist Paul Bensemman has experienced this lack of interest from publishers: “I was told it is an issue that people just do not know about. It's a catch 22 situation. Because people do not know anything about the issue, it is very hard to get anything published on it to educate them on the issue.”

If we assume media restrictions are designed to control what is reported about Papua to keep the lid on 'difficult' stories, then I would argue they are counterproductive and the restrictions cause significant problems for Indonesia's international image.

Mark Davis was granted a rare invitation to visit West Papua in 2013. Having reported for many years on West Papua, Davis was determined to reflect the mood of Papua in an accurate and subtle way. Davis says:

It [*West Papua's New Dawn*] was an incredibly accurate story. I think every mood in the piece was very accurate, nothing is overstated, I wanted to be very precise. It is very easy to go to Papua and tell horror stories, because it is a horror story in a way, but you can't just keep recycling the same piece because it has no nuance in there. It gives you no space for is it a bit worse? Is it a bit better? is it progressing? I didn't just want to go in there and talk about genocide again (Davis, 2014).

Davis found despite the on going human rights abuses there were improvements in West Papua.

There are subtleties there and there are improvements, certainly improvements from the side of the police and of the military. The police used to be as terrifying as anybody. They are not. Now, some of them can be pretty brutal, but they are working according to the law, they have been taught at least about human rights. They will be punished in some way if they breach that. It is a very minor punishment often in many cases, but nevertheless they are achievements that should be recognised. The army is a bit of a different kettle of fish, because in reality the army is sort of above the law a bit. It has been reigned-in in Indonesia. It used to be like that in Indonesia, and that reform has had effect in other parts of Indonesia. Why not for West Papua? Forget talking about independence, I think it is not going to happen. And it is just absolutely a red rag to every Indonesian official (Davis, 2014).

Nick Chesterfield, coordinating editor of *West Papua Media*, says that some journalists and news organisations are not improving the situation in Papua at all because they are recycling a tired old narrative of what the West Papuan resistance movement is. This creates illegitimacy in the eyes of the international community, he argues.

They [journalists] are focusing on this exotic other of guerrillas in the mist, men in penis gourds who represent the only true resistance in the West's demise. What they are refusing to look at is the sophistication of the non-violent movement and the developments of the not so cool, not so glamorous shots that evolve with the slow reality of a movement being built. We are absolutely sick of the constant depiction of armed groups as being the be-all-and-end-all of the struggle, so we just don't help journalists who are trying to recreate the myth over and over again (Chesterfield, 2014).

Chesterfield gives the example of the two French journalists, Thomas Dandois and Valentine Bourrat, who gained international media attention last year when they were arrested and imprisoned for two months while reporting from West Papua. Chesterfield was the fixer for the pair.

They [French journalists] wanted a guerrillas in the mist story, they didn't really have a story in mind. They just wanted to be up there with the guerrillas by which I mean the TPM, the armed wing of the resistance movement (Chesterfield, 2014).

Michael Bachelard upon returning from his visit to Papua argues that the media restrictions cause a narrow range of stories to be reported about West Papua, and that this type of reporting is a disservice to the region and its residents.

I think there is interesting nuanced stories to be told in West Papua that aren't being told, because it is so black and white. And of course, in some ways it has to be black and white if you can't get in. So there is a stack of stories to be told there, including the mixed feelings of many Papuans. There is political spectrum, as there is in every country, and we deprive Papuan's of that spectrum in the way we report

it. It is as if the whole country is for independence, well the whole country is not for independence (Bachelard, 2014).

In 2013, as part of my field trip to Indonesia, I attended the Indonesia-hosted Bali Democracy Forum and the sister conference, the Bali Media Forum. More than 70 journalists predominantly from the Asia Pacific region gathered to discuss issues of media freedom and media bias.

All of the media forum participants I spoke to agreed Indonesia has good press freedoms. On raising the question of press freedom in West Papua the majority of the journalists I spoke to agree Papua has been forgotten not only by Indonesia but also by the media.

The issue of press freedom in West Papua was not on the agenda of the Bali Democracy Forum or the Bali Media Forum.

Bayuni who also attended the forums says, “It is clear that the agenda or the problem of Papua has been forgotten. Mostly Indonesian people see the issue in Papua is not their problem, it is the problem between the Indonesian government and the local, provincial Papua government.”

3.2 Quality of journalism and bias

Radio NZ journalist and writer Johnny Blades says the media restrictions are a huge impediment not only in terms of accuracy; it also means any of the good efforts Indonesia say they are making cannot be reported on. Indonesian officials are reluctant to go on the record about West Papua.

We can't accurately report about Indonesia's efforts to develop the region, which we are told by some officials, is happening. So you wonder why they don't let us in, let us have a look, let us see the good efforts that are being made to develop living

conditions for the West Papuans as Jakarta says are being made (Blades, 2014).

Without having access to the region, journalists are left trying to report from afar. This imposes difficulties of verification of stories and also with getting people who are willing to go on the record about West Papua. Indonesian officials are reluctant to go on the record when speaking about West Papua, according to Blades.

West Papua journalist, editor and publisher, Victor Mambor, says the media restrictions give people the impression Indonesia has something to hide.

Mambor campaigns for press freedoms inside Papua and on the international stage. He says press freedom is fraught. There is also a problem with bribery and fake journalism on the part of local and Indonesian journalists. Some journalists are corrupt and the ones that are not corrupt are self-censoring themselves or are biased, he says.

Indonesian journalists also write about what has happened in West Papua but it is infiltrated by the government. The government spend a lot of money to local media to Indonesian media. The police, they give the money to Indonesian journalists, military also. So we need another journalist, like foreign journalists to enter West Papua to tell the true story (Mambor, 2014).

The few foreign journalists that have been granted access have been required to have an intelligence officer accompany them. Chesterfield argues this makes it impossible for an international journalist to produce a nuanced, fair, safe story in West Papua by going through official Indonesian visa channels.

To get an official Indonesian visa you have got to provide payment and funding for an Indonesian intelligence agent to accompany you at all times and there is absolutely no way that is safe in any way for your sources (Chesterfield, 2014).

Bachelard argues it is counterproductive for the Indonesia government to have the media restrictions in place if the purpose of the restrictions is to somehow prevent the government's loss of West Papua.

By stopping people going for the reason that they don't want them to be separated means that encourages brave reporters or reporters who want to make their mark to go and do what the French journalists did and to meet separatists. Once you have done that undercover you will attempt to write a story that justifies the rule breaking or whatever you have done to get there which may not be a fully rounded story. I want to be able to write fully rounded stories about Papua because Papua is much more interesting than simply a black and white issue about freedom fighters or separatists against an oppressive state (Bachelard, 2014).

The media restrictions make it difficult for journalists give a rounded picture of West Papua or to represent stories in a way that is unbiased and accurate. If the reasons for the restrictions are to control the image of Indonesia, it raises the question: Does Indonesia want to have predominantly negative stories told about West Papua?

3.3 Issues surrounding reporting in West Papua without a journalist visa

The majority of journalists have reported from Papua without official permission. By sending in journalists unofficially media organisations risk having their access to Indonesia removed.

Bachelard had considered reporting without official permission, but was told very firmly by his news desk not to. Having a correspondent in Indonesia was very important to Fairfax and it was not something they wanted to risk losing.

Two Sydney correspondents have been kicked out in the past, not for reporting on West Papua...we've lost our accreditation in the past and it is not something we want to repeat (Bachelard, 2014).

Regardless of the risks to the publisher, reporting without permission would also be too dangerous for the journalist, Bachelard said. He spoke of two journalists – one an Australian, who had been imprisoned for 12 months in 2002 – who were in the country and not even publishing.

This raises the questions: Is it worth it for journalists and media organisations to try to report from West Papua? Do the Papuan people want foreign journalists to visit without permission?

The most recent journalists to visit Papua without permission were two French documentary makers, Thomas Dandois and Valentine Bourrat, who were working for the French-German TV channel *Arte*. In August 2014 Dandois and Bourrat were caught, arrested, imprisoned and eventually deported by the Indonesian authorities, causing an outcry from press freedom organizations around the world.

The arrest and imprisonment of the pair happened one month after the Indonesian presidential candidates had announced that they would ensure that media restrictions to West Papua would be lifted.

Chesterfield was the fixer for the pair. He is critical of the actions of the pair, which he says have resulted in serious consequences for the people they dealt with during their stay. However, Chesterfield says the French journalists lack of adherence to source protection protocols was unusual and most journalists he has advised take the issue of source protection very seriously.

There was a lot of information given to Valentine and Thomas about the safe places they could visit, stories which hadn't been covered very much and also the stories which had too much coverage and were subject to a lot of propaganda and misinformation. In particular we warned them about who were safe people to work with and who were compromised Indonesian intelligence agents. We also held them to a very strong source protection policy from West Papuan media, but unfortunately it seemed they deliberately breached a lot of the aspects of that source protection policy. Their conduct certainly alienated a lot of people inside Papua. This was before their arrest and obviously their conduct was not exactly clandestine, so it was only a matter of time before they got arrested (Chesterfield, 2014).

The main reaction to the pairs' arrest by thesis participants was one of concern for the safety of the French journalists' sources. A large number of Papuans who were associated with the journalists suffered serious consequences according to Chesterfield.

They have put a lot of indigenous journalists, fixers, stringers and even sources at risk. Several of the people they were working with up in the highlands are still in custody, including Areki Wanimbo, who is a teacher they were speaking with, and also several human rights defenders. There are still three people facing charges, there are five people who were tortured, there are nine people who are on the wanted persons list. One person was murdered (Chesterfield, 2014).

West Papuan journalists and public are at risk of intimidation and violence at the hands of the military and police, according to Victor Mambor.

The police still hitting, beating our people, still kill our people, still bring West Papuan to the jail. The police stabbed my friend a journalist ... and they have not made a report about it. When the journalist was intimidated we made a report, but they have no solution, they have no result. So training is maybe good, but the problem is how to change the institution mind-set about West Papuan people (Mambor, 2014).

Indonesian journalist Enrico Aditjondro grew up in West Papua and has made many visits to Papua as a journalist and media trainer. Aditjondro says that while the French embassy was doing everything in its powers to release the French journalists, the same protections were not afforded to the journalists' sources.

When they were captured they were also captured with however many Papuans who were there as well – the fixer as well as the people they were interviewing. So it's a tricky business and there has to be different strategies for this (Aditjondro, 2014).

3.4 Concerns for safety of journalists and sources

All of the thesis participants considered carefully the issues of source protection when working in West Papua, citing examples of intimidation, imprisonment and in some cases the death of sources that had spoken to foreign media.

Aditjondro says there are great stories in Papua and it is tempting to forget, as a foreigner, you can leave Papua, unlike the people you have interviewed. Issues of consent need to be explained in great detail, he says, especially given the advent of online publishing and social media. He knows of Papuans who thought it would be ok to not have their faces blurred during an interview with foreign media.

In the end the people who were being interviewed were all intimidated and most of them fled, either to different cities or even to different provinces, because they were intimidated.

In one way we really need to get the stories out, but in some other ways you also have to figure out a way to work together with the people there on how to get the stories out and make sure they are safe (Aditjondro, 2014).

During Bensemann's eight-day unofficial visit to Papua, sources that were safest to speak to were with people who had a high profile internationally, as they are protected by their positions. The ones he felt were least safe were those who were 'separatist spokespeople' including human rights workers, church leaders and other journalists. One of his interviews was with independence leader Buchtar Tabuni.

Tabuni and his entourage had to come out of hiding in the bush for the interviews by me in a secret location at great risk to themselves. What I was most afraid of was that I would be jailed, but they had much more to fear than me (Bensemann, 2014).

Bachelard felt safe during both of his visits to Papua. Bachelard had permission to visit.

I didn't feel more unsafe than in any other part of Indonesia. It felt clearly different culturally, ethnically and even the landscape is unique. I didn't feel unsafe at all, even when I was creeping around at night doing stuff I wasn't supposed to do (Bachelard, 2014).

Bachelard was surprised to find people openly wearing Morning Star flags in Papua, particularly in Wamena within sight of the army post.

So the idea of a semi violent police state at all times is one of the things I am going to dispel a bit now. I mean you don't want to be involved in civil unrest or civil

societies, but day-to-day people in villages up where there is a lot of separatist sentiment go about their normal daily lives without fear of being arrested by the police and military (Bachelard, 2014).

Bensemman was approached by many people who wanted to speak with him openly, especially younger activists, but he decided not to identify them, worried they did not understand the potential risk of speaking with him.

I didn't use many of their names because I thought they were in great danger. There are many people who spoke to me who asked me not to use their photographs or names (Bensemman, 2014).

Bensemman said it was very difficult to say if his trip was worthwhile and if it was worth the risks he put himself and others under. However the encouragement he received from Papuan people at times seemed to balance the risks, he said.

The Papuans I met rejoiced and were ecstatic about a journalist getting in there and having someone to talk to. Not one of them said I shouldn't be there. If someone had been jailed or shot because of me I would regret that for the rest of my life (Bensemman, 2014).

Bachelard believes that if you are restricted by law from going to a place to cover something as a journalist, then you are entitled under the United Nations conventions to try to get into a place in covert ways. His justification is that the idea of reporting fully and safely on an area overrides national laws that try to restrict you.

This view differs for example from the view of the official Jakarta Correspondents Club, which is that people shouldn't do that and it differs from the view of my newspaper, which is that we shouldn't do it. Our [newspaper's] view is a pragmatic view that is if we do that we may lose permission to be in Indonesia at all and that would be too big a price to pay, so that is why I have always sought permission to go. I think people should apply, particularly people who are wanting to write about

it and say the restrictions are onerous and still in place. Well, test that before you write it, because I think things are changing a bit (Bachelard, 2014).

Media commentator and human rights researcher Andreas Harsono says it is getting more difficult for him to report safely from West Papua. Fortunately Papua is large, enabling him to move from city to city once he hears he is being watched.

I am a journalist, my background is a journalist and there are scores of Indonesian journalists in Papua who work for the intelligence and my concern is always these local journalists because they are the ones who could easily spot me because my face is more familiar to other journalists than the others (Harsono, 2014).

Despite journalists being intimidated and harassed in Papua, Victor Mambor says he has found a way to work with these conditions. His key method is developing and keeping good relationships with all parties, including military, police, intelligence and the government: "When I hear that something might happen to me, these people tell me so I can prepare myself." The other thing Mambor does to stay safe is to keep a detailed record at all times of his activities.

I have a protocol for myself. I keep a record of all my activities. I write when an SMS or a call comes in that has a potential to be a risk for myself. I write the number and I make a report to the police. I also keep records of my work from the morning until the evening, even at home (Mambor, 2014).

3.5 Comparing West Papua to Timor-Leste

Most international reports about West Papua make the comparison to Timor Leste and Indonesia. This is including my own reporting. However during my field trip to Indonesia, most Indonesians and Timorese were surprised at the comparison between the two and did not see the situation as the same.

It was not until further discussion that they said they could see the similarities in relation to lack of press freedom and military domination of both territories.

Victor Mambor asserts that what happened in West Papua and Timor Leste is different. That West Papua was an independent state after Dutch colonisation and that it is illogical to say that Indonesia is somehow traumatised by their loss of Timor Leste.

Maybe Indonesia has a bad experience with Timor-Leste, but of course we have a different history than Timor Leste. We are not talking to be independent, because we want independence. West Papua was already an independent state after the Dutch colonisation (Mambor, 2014).

Mark Davis cautions against making the comparison, saying it is inflammatory and counterproductive compare Timor Leste and West Papua.

I don't think it is a useful comparison because it is incredibly inflammatory to the Indonesians. Their biggest fear, and I think unreasoned, is that the international community want to take West Papua from them as they did in East Timor, so I don't think it is useful...you don't have to talk about East Timor, you can just talk about West Papua. I am not a media advisor for the Indonesians, but if I was, I would let those [journalists] in. They were burnt. Again, we talked earlier of their trauma of East Timor, instead of blaming some of their own officers for misbehaving in East Timor, they blamed the journalists – who suddenly came in. There was this brief opening where journalists could go into East Timor in 1999. Of course, they came in [and] they reported on what they saw, and there were atrocities. So, instead of blaming the killers, they blamed the journalists. So to this day, in their mind, the whole reason they lost East Timor was because of journalists. So that became the thing ... 'oh you don't' want to replicate that, so just have no journalists' (Davis, 2014).

3.6 The way forward

Enrico Aditjondro believes there is a rise of good journalism in Papua, by the Papuans themselves, and more support should be given to these journalists in the form of media training and by publishing their stories. Aditjondro is a founding member of *Papuan Voices* an organisation which was set up to teach and distribute Papuan stories.

Papuans love to tell stories so basically we urged them to tell the stories through videos, no politics. We talked to people in villages and asked them what they were fighting for. Some people were fighting for their land, some people for their religious rights and others were fighting for how they can put food on the table after they lost their homelands from some oil palm plantations. It's great that a lot of people from Jakarta, from Australia, from New Zealand, the US and others go to Papua to tell stories but it would be even greater if the stories could come out from the Papuans themselves – these stories are more believable in a way (Aditjondro, 2014).

Hernawan agrees a long term goal would be to support local Papuan journalists to tell their own stories and suggests foreign media try to cover as best they can a range of stories, rather than only focusing on reporting about conflict and human rights abuses. This is not only for the benefit of the international audience but also the Indonesian audience.

The Indonesian audience have very limited information because the national media mostly cover political conflict or violence. They have less coverage on daily lives in Papua (Hernawan, 2014).

Mark Davis urges Indonesia to treat West Papua the same way as the rest of Indonesia.

Other parts of Indonesia don't have troops running around killing people, torturing

people or burning their houses down. And that happens in Papua to this day. So treat them like Indonesian citizens. Give them the reformation, the space to have political discussion as has occurred in Indonesia proper (Davis, 2014).

Conclusion

The promise made by Indonesia's President Joko Widodo in June 2014, to open West Papua to foreign media has yet to be fulfilled. Gaining a journalist visa to West Papua remains a difficult, complicated, time consuming process with little transparency.

All of the thesis participants argue the media restrictions are causing a bias in the type of stories that are published about West Papua. The focus of stories tends to be on human rights abuses and conflict. While there is no denying these situations exist, the restrictions limit and indeed do a disservice to the representation of what is going on in West Papua. The two foreign journalists that have had the opportunity to visit West Papua officially recently, Davis and Bachelard, argue the restrictions are causing a very black and white picture of West Papua and that their experience of Papua was different to the picture painted by other reports.

The restrictions continue to contribute to the isolation of West Papua, not only from the outside world, but also from the rest of Indonesia. It seems the restrictions are generating a focus on issues, such as self-determination, human rights abuses and conflict, that the media restrictions were perhaps designed to prevent. The restrictions contribute to the view that Indonesia has something to hide in West Papua and the participants question the logic of the restrictions, arguing that they are counterproductive.

The restrictions contribute to creating an environment that attracts journalists and media agencies interested in reporting on conflict. This in turn perpetuates a cycle of conflict reporting. A way of contributing towards trust-building and towards less biased reporting would be for foreign journalists to seek to report on a range of stories that not only report on conflict, but seek to report on other issues that may be of concern and or of interest to local Papuans.

It is also suggested that support be given to local Papuan voices by assisting with training and with spreading local Papuan stories.

The recent arrest, imprisonment and subsequent deportation of the two French journalists raised the issue of reporting in West Papua without official permission.

So far, because of the media restrictions, most foreign journalists have reported from Papua without official permission. This remains a dangerous option for both the journalist and even more their sources. Is reporting from West Papua without permission worth the risks to the journalist and their sources, or should journalists and media organisations put their efforts into applying for official permission and using the success or failure of the application as a way of lobbying for press freedoms?

Unfortunately, the option of applying for a visa to report on stories other than conflict based stories is unlikely to be available to many foreign journalists, as media organisations are unlikely to financially support a story that carries the uncertainty of being able to be published.

I attempted with my unsuccessful application and my current visa application to increase understanding between with the Indonesian Embassy in New Zealand about the counterproductive impacts of the restrictions. Despite following the guidance from this thesis in terms of attempting to report on a story that was not centred on conflict it remains to be seen if the application is successful.

Postscript

In August 2015 my second application for a journalist and filming visa was successful and I travelled to West Papua with Māori Television Native Affairs producer Adrian Stevanon (see Figure 17). We were one of the first foreign media crews permitted to report from West Papua since President Widodo's announcement in May 2015 stating that he would open access to foreign journalists. We were also the only known New Zealand television crew to have visited West Papua.



Figure 17. Filming in Wamena, West Papuan Highlands August 29, 2015. Photo courtesy of: Adrian Stevanon

While the atmosphere in the places we visited in West Papua was peaceful, two Papuans were shot and killed by the military while attempting to enter a church in the mining town of Timika. While we could film openly in public without being asked to show our permit, media freedoms were restricted. We were followed and watched by intelligence agents on occasion according to our translator Victor Mambor. We risked losing the right to film and the safety of our contacts if we discussed politics or human

rights abuses. We had not applied for permission in our journalist permit to discuss these issues. Our key contact sought reassurance from us on several occasions that we would not attempt such discussions fearing for his safety. He had flown to the capital ahead of our trip to meet with our translator to discuss issues of safety. Our contact referred to the Papuan who was arrested with the two French journalists in 2014 and who was imprisoned for nine months. Protecting our sources was our number one priority.

In New Zealand, the visa application process remains long, difficult and complicated. New Zealand journalist Johnny Blades second visa application was approved on 11 September 2015. Blades application process was as arduous and protracted as his first attempt to gain access. While President Widodo's administration's new regulations to ease the way for journalists are welcome, various officials within Foreign Affairs are still unsure about them, and are not making it easy for foreign journalists to get visas. (Blades, personal communication, 8 September 2015). According to Victor Mambor the application process was fast and easy for journalist Cyril Payen of French public television broadcaster France24. Payen visited West Papua shortly before our trip and had applied for his visa in Thailand. Payen had no difficulty obtaining a visa and was permitted to report about the political situation in West Papua (Mambor, personal communication, 1 September, 2015).

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Appendices

Writing a story with media restrictions in place - Blood Money

Karen Abplanalp October 2013

Written for the Journalism Education and Research Association of Australia (JERAA) 2013 Conference



Image: The opening double spread of the Blood Money feature story, Metro Magazine, December 2011.

Blood Money is an example of investigative journalism that was published during my postgraduate studies in Communication Studies at AUT University in 2011.

I will discuss three topics:

- University is a good home for writing *Blood Money*;
- Attempting to write a story using the concepts of Peace Journalism; and
- Writing a story centred on a territory that restricts the entry and work of foreign media.

The feature story, *Blood Money*, was published in the Dec 2011 issue of Metro magazine. The article investigated the New Zealand Superannuation Fund's (NZSF) investment in the controversial US-owned Freeport copper and gold mine at Grasberg, West Papua. The Grasberg mine is located in the remote highlands in West Papua. Mining operations began in 1973 and are expected to continue until 2041.

The mine has been at the centre of human rights and environmental abuse allegations for most of this period. The *Blood Money* investigation sought to establish how the NZSF laid claim to being a 'responsible investor' while remaining involved in the mine.

For the four decades prior to publication of this story, the two Indonesia-ruled Melanesian provinces comprising West Papua on the island of New Guinea had remained largely ignored by New Zealand mainstream media.

University: a good home for *Blood Money*

Prior to writing *Blood Money*, I had the good fortune of taking an Investigative journalism paper as part of my postgraduate diploma in Communication Studies at AUT University. One of the guest lecturers, one of New Zealand's leading investigative journalists, Nicky Hager, taught me two key things:

1) Most people will talk to you if you ask them. By asking, I managed to create a large network of miners, academics, economists, activists, journalists and editors. This network became the engine room or team that helped create *Blood Money*.

2) Hager warned me of a common public relations tactic, which is to respond to questions by bombarding you with floods of confusing 'facts'. This, according to Hager, is a tactic used by corporations to confuse, overwhelm and ultimately distract attention away from sensitive questions. This public relations bombarding proved to be true of the New Zealand Superannuation Fund (NZSF) and I was grateful to be prepared for this.

Hager ended up becoming a huge support and resource; part of this was giving me access to the Wikileaks cables, which I used for *Blood Money* (he had been one of nine journalists in the world entrusted with the cables at the time).

During my studies, I was also introduced to Peace Journalism. Simple concepts that stuck with me are: Peace is the goal, the little people matter, context is crucial, that my attitude in framing the story had a role to play as a perpetrator of conflict or an agent for peace. These ideas became a guide – a bit like a wise Aunt's voice, or that of a newly calibrated conscience. Throughout the writing process, especially during difficult times, I would stop and ask myself: What would a peace journalist make of this? Is this approach going to add to the conflict or is it going to work towards peace?

I don't proclaim to have done a great job as a peace journalist, or even to have a complete grasp on this huge field of study, but I did attempt to use these concepts as a kind of yard-stick or moral compass.

An example of how this would work is:

During the writing of *BM* a spate of killings associated with the mine occurred. When the NZSF responded to the killings with yet another deluge of PR facts, my response was to get off the phone, rage, yell and call them evil. However this new peace journalist compass caused me to stop, go back and listen to them carefully, despite my distrust, frustration and outrage: to take them at their word, but then to thoroughly investigate their word. This proved to be one of the most powerful choices in terms of the story I was to make.

I then took the Asia Pacific Journalism Paper headed up by Professor David Robie. Robie invited Maire Leadbeater from the Asia Pacific Human Rights Coalition to give a guest lecture about West Papua. I had known Maire through my involvement with the former East Timor Human Rights Committee.

Listening to Leadbeater I was stunned: here was another East Timor or so it seemed. It had been going on for 40 years and I had never heard about it.

Towards the end of the talk, Leadbeater told us that the NZSF was investing in the Grasberg mine, despite human rights abuses and severe environmental damage.

I got home – looked at the Superfund website. It's landing page promoted its ethical investing strategy, and it was a signatory to the United Nations Principals of Responsible Investing.

That afternoon, I happened to be emailing the editor of Metro magazine, Simon Wilson, and in passing, still fuelled by disbelief, asked if he knew that the NZSF invests in the Freeport Gold and Copper mine in West Papua. I told Wilson that it is the world's largest copper and gold mine and the mining operations have been destroying the environment on an outrageous scale for years - including destroying the lives of people in West Papua. Yet the NZSF's website main page publicises the funds commitment to responsible investing.

Wilson decided immediately that NZSF and Freeport Gold & Copper would be a good story for Metro magazine.

For the next two months I researched West Papua, Freeport, Indonesia and the NZSF. Assisting this research was professor David Robie, who suggested I develop the story for an Asia Pacific Journalism assignment. Robie's experience and guidance as a journalist, academic and teacher was crucial to the story, along with his connections and experience having researched, published and taught about West Papua for many years.

Being based at the Pacific Media Centre, which is one of New Zealand's main hubs of information about West Papua, meant I had access to up-to-date information and good leads for sources.

Another benefit for writing a story while a student was the time I had to develop the story – time that journalists working to daily, weekly, or monthly deadlines do not have. I was in a fertile research environment, which, for me, became a good home to write *Blood Money*. Being part of the university also set my 'radar' up to academics as sources. They provided information that had the benefit of years of research, and the checks and balances that academic publishing provides.

Two months later, I went back to Metro editor Simon Wilson with the bones of the story. I sent out a set of questions to the NZSF, Prime Minister, John Key and the Minister of Finance, Bill English.

Within hours of sending out the questions I got this response:

From Simon: "Just had a call from Paul Gregory of the fund, questioning whether we have commissioned you. Somebody's cage has been well and truly rattled!"

A text from an uncle who worked at parliamentary services: "What did you do??? My boss wants to know if we are related."

"Who's your boss?" I texted back

"The Prime Minister!"

Writing a story about West Papua with media restrictions in place

On May 22, 1998, the day after Indonesian dictator Suharto resigned, I arrived in Timor-Leste for my first attempt at fulfilling a dream to be a photojournalist.

I arrived there, posing as a tourist, with the adrenalin kicking in on arrival at the airport and being scrutinised by the Indonesian military. Three weeks later, boarding the plane, I was sweating with fear –fear for the people whose lives would be in danger if the stories I had gathered were discovered.

The Timorese people I met were desperate to have their stories told to international media. The responsibility felt equal to the gravity of the situation: stories of torture, imprisonment, whole families being massacred, viewing massacre sights.

I quickly learnt that I was no Robert Capa, no Max Stahl and that I would probably never attempt undercover work in a military controlled territory again. The stories needed to be told, but, for me, this was not the way to do it.

Like Timor then, West Papua is essentially sealed off to foreign journalists. West Papua has been under Indonesian military domination for more than 50 years. West Papua, like the rest of Indonesia, is a former Dutch colony, unlike Timor-Leste, which was colonised by the Portuguese. West Papua has been described as the financial jewel in Indonesia's crown, with the Grasberg mine providing a third of Indonesia's tax revenue according to Dr Denise Leith, who spent five years researching the mine.

Indonesian authorities have a 'clearing house' in Jakarta where all foreign journalists must apply to get access to Papua. They usually face long delays, making it impossible to respond to current events most are turned down.

I was in Jakarta in October 2013 speaking with Indonesian and foreign journalists, about the restrictions for my masters thesis research. The situation remains the same.

Given the media restrictions in West Papua, along with my reluctance to try and go into West Papua without a visa, how was I going to cover the story?

The foreseeable challenges of covering West Papua from afar were:

- Making contacts on the ground
- Being able to provide a context for events from afar
- Verifying sources and information
- The language barrier
- West Papua is a huge territory covering remote and often difficult terrain.

The first thing I did was read Indonesian media coverage about Papua. Using Nicky Hager's advice: "Most people are willing to talk", I approached these journalists directly. Most became valuable contacts and sources on the ground in West Papua. They were already publishing, so could provide me with context and background of the region. They had also already made decisions about their ability and safety to publish.

Unlike the technology available in 1998 in Timor-Leste, sources on-the-ground often have cell phones and camera phones and access to email. This was crucial for the ease with which we began communicating.

One source I worked with was Franciscan friar and PhD scholar Budi Hernawan, who had worked in West Papua for 14 years. The former chief editor of the Jakarta post, Endy Bayuni, workers and union officials from the PT Freeport mine also became key sources.

Working with these contacts meant we could share information and use each other to verify what was going on in West Papua, particularly because a dramatic turn of events about to unfold would effect us all.



Thousands of Freeport striking miners leaving the Freeport concession area in October 2011. They walked 50km to join thousands of striking miners on their way to join thousands of other miners. Freeport would not provide them with transport to leave the work site. Photo: PT Freeport Miners Union. Reprinted with permission.

On September 15, 2011, around 9000 workers from the Grasberg mine began a strike in what is believed to be the longest and most widely joined strike since the mining company began operations in Indonesia in 1967.

I began receiving documents and videos, which, on translation, revealed intimidation and threats by the government security forces. Buried in one report was an allegation of the attempted murder of a striking miner.

At the same time reports were surfacing that hundreds of military security reinforcements were being sent from Jakarta to the mine site.

Dr Denise Leith explains the relationship between the mine and the state security forces:

Those involved at Grasberg include the hard-core battle-trained troops of Indonesia, trained in unconventional warfare and counter-insurgency. If Freeport now tried to distance themselves from the Indonesian military, or tried to withdraw payments [to] the Indonesian military, I would imagine [the military] would do what they have always done, and they would cause trouble for Freeport, whether it is killing traditional people, or cutting the slurry line...There are many ways they can do it and these are the ways they usually do it. So, the problem is not just that Freeport's security forces have been involved in killings, but that it is likely Freeport does not have control of those forces (Leith, personal communication, October 29, 2011).



Striking miners and police confront each other on October 10, 2011, shortly before the police shot and killed two miners. Photo: PT Freeport Miners Union. Reprinted with permission.

Dr Leith's assessment seemed to be the case. On October 11, 2011, the security forces opened fire on protesting miners, killing two. I was fed video, documents and photos from the morgue and hospital where the injured were taken. Eight days later, during a peaceful, unarmed political rally in West Papua, Indonesian Security Forces raided the rally, killing three and arresting hundreds more. Many of the participants fled to Budi Hernawan's friary seeking safety.

Pacific Scoop, (October 11, 2011) *Indonesian security forces open fire on West Papuan striking miners kill one*. Retrieved October 3, 2013 from <http://pacific.scoop.co.nz>

PMW (Pacific Media Watch), 7680, (October 23, 2011) Indonesian forces raid Papuan independence gathering. Retrieved September 29, 2013 from <http://www.pmc.aut.ac.nz/pacific-media-watch>

These events happened just prior to my scheduled interview with the NZSF. Simon Wilson, *Metro* editor, commented as we walked to the NZSF offices that surely, with the killings, the fund management would need to withdraw now.

Instead, what followed was weeks of discussion, or should I say “fact checking”, with the NZSF. Once again I was bombarded with documents and arguments on how human rights were being monitored by the company, how the NZSF was “engaging” with Freeport to address the concerns of human rights abuses, corruption and environmental devastation.

I realised that the NZSF believed its own PR – it had not allocated the resources to investigate any of the claims Freeport was making, or to investigate the Principals of Responsible Investing it proclaimed to be part of. Checking these claims became one of the most important things I did. The more I checked, the clearer it became that the impressive sounding PR was simply public relations spin. None of the assurances made by the Superfund or Freeport were true.

Nine months after the publication of *Blood Money*, the NZSF divested from the mine, citing human rights abuses and concerns over direct payments to the government security forces as its reason.

New Zealand Superannuation Fund (September 26, 2012), *New Zealand Superannuation Fund excludes four companies on responsible investment grounds* Retrieved October 19, 2013, from <https://www.nzsuperfund.co.nz/news-media/new-zealand-superannuation-fund-excludes-four-companies-responsible-investment-grounds>

This decision was reported internationally. While the Norwegian Superfund had divested earlier on environmental grounds, this was the first time the International mining company had been called to account on human rights and corruption grounds by a government pension fund. The Swedish pension fund has since followed suit.

Denton, J. (2013, October 18). *Swedish Pension Funds Divest Freeport McMoRan Holdings*. Retrieved November 14, 2014, from <http://enews.com/2013/10/18/swedish-pension-funds-divest-freeport-mcmoran-holdings/>

The NZSF then began to change its non-divestment tradition, and begun divesting from other companies for crossing its human rights and corruption standards. A notable divestment, similar to Freeport was the NZSF’s divestment from Canada-based global mining company Barrick Gold Corporation. Barrick has operations in Papua New Guinea and Tanzania and stands accused of human rights abuses and corruption. This new pattern of divestment is also significant because, at the time of writing *Blood Money*, the fund was known to be against divestment. The NZSF CEO Adrian Ore saw divestment as a form of failure.

Looking back, I think *Blood Money* became a tipping point for the NZSF. Many groups, including the Indonesian Human Rights Committee and the Green Party in New Zealand had been lobbying the fund for many years to divest from unethical investments, including Freeport Copper and Gold. These groups provided enormous assistance in the writing of *Blood Money*.

Blood Money was recognised in 2012 by the Journalism Education and Research Association of Australia student journalism awards – the Ossies – winning the Sally A. White Prize for Investigative Journalism, and the Best Feature (print) Award. *Blood Money* also won the Bruce Jesson Award for Emerging Journalist 2012.

I was incredibly lucky to have been part of *Blood Money*, the work of many hands, and supported by a university. Peace Journalism, tempered me, told me to listen and guided BM towards, I hope, goals of peace.

[Link to Blood Money article](#)

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