

The Implementation of Human Rights in Conflict Management in the Papua Highlands During the Administration of Joko Widodo 2019-2024

Istofa Sodiq Daulay, Atep Abdurraqif,
State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta

Correspondence: atep.abdurofiq@gmail.com.

Received: August 09, 2025| Revised August 22, 2025| Accepted September 12, 2025

ABSTRACT:

Background: The conflict in the Papua Mountains is a strategic national issue involving political, security, social, and human rights aspects. During Joko Widodo's administration from 2019 to 2024, Papua has been one of the national development priorities, but various reports indicate that violence and human rights violations against civilians continue to occur.

Aims: This study aims to analyze the implementation of human rights principles in government policies related to conflict management in the Papua Mountains during Joko Widodo's administration from 2019 to 2024, as well as to identify the extent to which these policies are consistent with the principles of justice and conflict resolution.

Methods: This research uses a qualitative approach with a normative legal research method. Data was collected through a literature review of legislation, policy documents, reports from national and international human rights institutions, and relevant academic literature. The analysis was conducted using a descriptive-qualitative method by comparing legal norms and human rights principles with policy practices in the field.

Results: The results of the study indicate that the government has issued several important policies, namely the establishment of the Papua Pegunungan Province, the deployment of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) and the Indonesian National Police (Polri), the implementation of Limited Military Operations, and the acceleration of infrastructure and socio-economic development. These policies have contributed to security stability and improved community welfare. However, their implementation has raised various issues, including human rights violations against civilians, forced displacement, and regional development disparities.

Conclusion: Conflict management in Papua Pegunungan during the 2019–2024 period demonstrates the state's commitment to ensuring security and development, but the implementation of human rights principles remains partial. A more humane, participatory, and equitable approach is needed to achieve sustainable conflict resolution in accordance with human rights principles and social justice.

Keywords: Human Rights, Papua Mountain Conflict, Joko Widodo Administration, Conflict Resolution, Social Justice

Cite this article: Daulay, I., S., Abdurraqif, A.(2025). The Implementation of Human Rights in Conflict Management in the Papua Highlands During the Administration of Joko Widodo 2019-2024. *Social Sciences and Humanities Reviews*, 1(3), 121-129.

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License ©2025 by author/s

INTRODUCTION

The conflict in the Papua Mountains is a serious issue with far-reaching implications for political, social, cultural, and national security dimensions (Iqbal et al., 2024; Lubis, 2022; Sinaga et al., 2024; Sudira, 2022). This region is endowed with abundant natural resources, unique cultural diversity, and a strategic location as Indonesia's gateway to the Pacific (Fatem, 2015; Novan Ngutra et al., 2017; Yanuarti, 2012). However, the reality on the ground reveals that this abundance of potential is overshadowed by prolonged conflicts marked by violence, discrimination, and human rights violations (HRVs). The complexity of Papua's issues makes it a strategic issue requiring in-depth attention, especially during the administration of Joko Widodo for the 2019–2024 period, which has prioritized Papua as one of the national development priorities.

Normatively, Indonesia has affirmed its commitment to human rights protection through various legal instruments, such as Law No. 39 of 1999 on Human Rights and Law No. 7 of 2012 on Social Conflict Management. However, there is a significant gap between these regulations and practices on the ground. Research data and reports from human rights institutions reveal hundreds of cases of violence and human rights violations in the Papua Mountains, most of which affect civilians (Alfarizky & Risyanto, 2024; Indrasari, 2015; Ngabalin, 2020; Putri et al., 2022; Taum, 2015). This fact indicates that the principle of respect for human rights has not been fully integrated into the implementation of government policies, so that the ideal of the law is not fully realized in real conditions.

On the other hand, the central government has initiated various policies as measures to address conflicts in the Papua Mountains. Provincial expansion, infrastructure development, and the deployment of security forces are efforts to reduce conflict while improving the welfare of the community. These measures provide an opportunity for critical analysis of the extent to which these development and security approaches are grounded in the principle of respect for human rights. As such, this research holds strategic relevance for examining the effectiveness of government policies in balancing security aspects with the protection of the fundamental rights of the people of Papua Pegunungan.

Previous studies on Papua have generally focused on political, economic, and social dimensions (Elisabeth, 2012; Hasan & Nugroho, 2022; Kasenda, 2024; Moento et al., 2020), while studies that specifically examine the implementation of human rights in the context of conflict management in the Papua Mountains are still relatively limited. This research gap highlights the need for studies linking government policies with human rights protection practices during the administration of Joko Widodo. Therefore, this study offers a novel approach by presenting a comprehensive analysis of human rights implementation in current conflict management policies, thereby enriching academic literature and providing new perspectives on the dynamics of conflict in Papua.

The selection of human rights variables in this study was based on the consideration that respect, protection, and fulfillment of human rights are the main foundations of democratic governance. Papua Pegunungan was chosen as the research location because the community still faces high vulnerability due to political conflict, discrimination, and limited access to welfare. By placing human rights as the primary variable, this study aims to assess the interconnection between state policies, security approaches, and the real needs of communities in conflict areas, thereby revealing the reality of human rights enforcement in Papua in a more objective manner.

Based on this background, the problem formulation of this study is: to what extent has the implementation of government policies in the Papua Highlands during Joko Widodo's administration (2019–2024) aligned with human rights principles in the management of social conflict? This formulation directs the analysis toward assessing the gap between legal norms and policy practices.

Theoretically, the study contributes by enriching constitutional law and human rights literature in Indonesia, particularly in demonstrating how normative frameworks can be critically applied to conflict-affected regions. It also offers a new perspective by integrating human rights theory, justice theory, and conflict resolution approaches into the analysis of Papua's conflict management. Practically, this study provides recommendations for policymakers to design conflict resolution strategies that are more humane, participatory, and justice-oriented. Such contributions are expected to support sustainable peacebuilding and ensure the protection of civilians in Papua Highlands.

Method

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative approach with normative legal research. The research design is aimed at analyzing the implementation of human rights in conflict management in the Papua Mountains during Joko Widodo's administration from 2019 to 2024. The focus of the study is on analyzing regulations, policies, and practices in the field, with an emphasis on reviewing relevant legal documents and literature.

Participants

Because the research is normative in nature, the research participants are not individuals, but rather legal texts, regulations, policy documents, reports from state institutions, and related scientific publications. Thus, the research participants are better understood as legal sources that are used as material for analysis.

Population and Methods of Sampling, Instrumentation

The research population includes all laws and regulations related to human rights and social conflict management, such as Law No. 39 of 1999 on Human Rights, Law No. 7 of 2012 on Social Conflict Management, and Government Regulation No. 2 of 2015. Additionally, reports from national and international human rights institutions, academic articles, and previous studies are also included in the data population. The sampling method used is purposive sampling, which involves selecting relevant legal sources and literature related to the research topic. The primary instrument used is a document review guideline, taking into account aspects of content validity and construct validity.

Instrument

The research instrument is a *library research* study used to collect primary and secondary data. This instrument is in the form of an analysis guide containing indicators related to the implementation of human rights principles, civil society protection, security policies, and development in the Papua Mountains.

Procedures and Time Frame

The research procedure was conducted in several stages: (1) identification of laws and regulations and policies related to human rights and conflict in Papua; (2) collection of secondary data through journals, articles, reports from human rights institutions, and official government documents; (3) analysis of documents using a descriptive-qualitative approach; and (4) systematic compilation of research results. The research timeline is aligned with the administration of Joko Widodo from 2019 to 2024 to maintain the focus of the study.

Analysis Plan

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive qualitative methods. Primary, secondary, and tertiary legal data were organized and then analyzed systematically to identify patterns, relationships, and conclusions. The analysis was conducted by comparing human rights principles in legislation with policy implementation in the Papua Mountains. The results of the analysis were then interpreted to answer the research questions and achieve the research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Table 1. Research Results in Papua Mountains

Policy	Objective	Positive Impact	Criticism/Human Rights Issues
Formation of the Papua Mountains Province	Strengthening regional autonomy and streamlining bureaucracy	Local governments have greater freedom to manage their regions; public services improve	There are still development gaps between regions
Deployment of TNI/Polri	Maintaining security stability and reducing threats from armed groups	Relative stability maintained; separatist disturbances decreased in some areas	Potential human rights violations against civilians (arrests, violence)
Limited Military Operations (LMO)	Suppressing the activities of armed separatist groups and creating a sense of security	Control over separatist groups has increased; a sense of security exists in some areas	Causing civilian casualties; triggering forced displacement
Infrastructure and Socio-Economic Development	Improving the well-being of the community through education, health, and economic development	Welfare has improved through physical and social development	Does not address the root causes of the conflict; development is seen as top-down

The results of the study indicate that during Joko Widodo's leadership from 2019 to 2024, the government has implemented a number of policies to address the conflict in the Papua Mountains. These policies include regional expansion, deployment of security forces, limited military operations, and infrastructure and socio-economic development. Each policy has strategic objectives, positive impacts, and has also drawn criticism, particularly regarding the implementation of human rights principles.

First, the establishment of the Papua Pegunungan Province aims to strengthen regional autonomy and shorten the bureaucratic control span. This policy opens up opportunities for local governments to be more independent in serving the community. However, there are still development gaps between regions that have caused dissatisfaction among some groups.

Second, the deployment of the TNI and Polri is intended to maintain security and reduce threats from armed groups. This measure has been relatively effective in reducing security disturbances, but it has also drawn sharp criticism due to the potential for human rights violations, such as arbitrary arrests and repressive actions against civilians.

Third, the government implemented Limited Military Operations (OMT) to suppress the activities of armed separatist groups. These operations created a sense of security in some areas, but

also resulted in civilian casualties and forced displacement, raising questions about their compatibility with human rights protection principles.

Fourth, infrastructure development and socio-economic programs have been one of the government's main focuses. Roads, bridges, educational facilities, and health services have been built to improve people's welfare. Although this has had a positive impact on access to basic services, this development is often perceived as top-down and has not fully resolved the historical and political root causes of the conflict.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight that the implementation of government policies in the Papua Highlands has not fully integrated the principles of human rights. While normative regulations guarantee protection for civilians, practices on the ground such as forced displacement and civilian casualties show clear inconsistencies. This demonstrates the theoretical contribution that human rights principles in Indonesia require not only strong legal instruments but also effective mechanisms of accountability to prevent their violation in conflict-prone regions. Thus, this study strengthens the argument that the gap between *de jure* norms and *de facto* practices is a central challenge in human rights implementation. (Ardani et al., 2017; Bagus & Partiah, 2020; 2024; Rizal, 2023). From the perspective of Rawls' difference principle, policies should provide the greatest benefit to the most vulnerable groups, namely the indigenous Papuan population living in conflict areas. However, the findings show that development initiatives, although improving infrastructure and welfare, still leave wide disparities and often neglect the voices of marginalized groups. (Harefa, 2020; Marilang, 2018; Suhardin, 2023). This study contributes theoretically by demonstrating that Rawls' principle is not only a philosophical guideline but also an evaluative tool to measure whether state development policies meet the demands of fairness for disadvantaged communities. (Aghmashhadi et al., 2022; Huang et al., 2023; Keashly et al., 2020) .

Conflict resolution theory emphasizes non-violent approaches, local participation, and neutral mediation. The findings of this study reveal that a security-oriented approach, through military deployment and limited military operations, has created temporary stability but has not provided sustainable solutions. The contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that conflict resolution theory is applicable in assessing government strategies and in pointing out the risks of relying on force without inclusive dialogue. By integrating community participation, traditional leaders, and religious figures, a more sustainable peace can be achieved, in line with theoretical expectations.

This study contributes to the broader theoretical discourse by connecting human rights theory, Rawls' theory of justice, and conflict resolution theory in the context of Papua Highlands. It shows that these three frameworks can be applied simultaneously to evaluate the effectiveness of state policies in conflict management. Theoretically, the study confirms that security and development policies must be critically examined through the lens of human rights and justice to ensure long-term peacebuilding and civilian protection.

Based on the research findings and theoretical framework, several recommendations can be made. First, the government needs to prioritize a community-based conflict resolution approach by involving traditional and religious leaders and civil society organizations as neutral mediators. Second, security policies should be implemented based on the principles of proportionality, accountability, and respect for human rights so as not to cause further trauma to the civilian population. Third, development in the Papua Highlands should be guided by the principle of distributive justice as outlined in Rawls' theory, ensuring that vulnerable groups receive the greatest benefits (Pogge, 2012; Said & Nurhayati, 2021; Singer, 2015; Surovtsev & Syrov, 2015) . Fourth, further research should be conducted using a field-based approach to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and needs of the people of Papua Pegunungan to support the resolution of conflicts in a fair, peaceful, and sustainable manner.

CONCLUSION

This study found that conflict management in the Papua Mountains during Joko Widodo's administration from 2019 to 2024 was carried out through various policies, including the establishment of the Papua Mountains Province, the deployment of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) and the Indonesian National Police (Polri), the implementation of Limited Military Operations, and the acceleration of infrastructure and socio-economic development. These policies demonstrate the state's commitment to maintaining political stability and improving the welfare of the people. However, their implementation still leaves serious issues, particularly regarding human rights violations affecting civilians.

An analysis of these policies reveals a gap between the ideal norms contained in the constitution and legislation and the reality on the ground. Human rights principles, theories of justice, and conflict resolution emphasize the importance of protecting the right to life, equality, and peaceful resolution based on community participation. However, policy implementation in the Papua Mountains still tends to emphasize a security approach, so these principles have not been fully realized.

Thus, it can be concluded that the implementation of human rights in the handling of the Papua Pegunungan conflict during the 2019–2024 period is still partial. Efforts to build and maintain security have been made, but they are not yet fully in line with the principles of social justice and respect for human rights. Therefore, a more humane, participatory, and justice-oriented approach is needed to achieve a sustainable resolution of the conflict in the Papua Mountains.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

I.S.D. is responsible for drafting the manuscript, collecting data, analyzing documents, and compiling the overall research results. A.A. acts as a supervisor who provides conceptual guidance, methodological corrections, and academic supervision in every stage of the research until the final draft is completed.

REFERENCES

- Aghmashhadi, A. H., Zahedi, S., Kazemi, A., Fürst, C., & Cirella, G. T. (2022). Conflict Analysis of Physical Industrial Land Development Policy Using Game Theory and Graph Model for Conflict Resolution in Markazi Province. *Land*, 11 (4)
- Alfarizky, H., & Risyanto, A. P. (2024). Consequences of the Change in Status of the Free Papua as a Terrorist Group in Criminal Law. *Media Hukum Indonesia (MHI)*, 2 (4)
- Ardani, N. A., Amalia, S., & Hertanto, R. (2017). Cultural Relativism in Human Rights. *Jurnal Cakrawala Hukum*, 13 (1).
<https://ejournal.up45.ac.id/index.php/cakrawala-hukum/article/view/329>
- Bagus, M., & Partiah, S. (2020). The Relevance of Human Rights the Theory of Ahliyyah. *Al-Qanun: Journal of Islamic Legal Thought and Reform*, 23 (1), 106–124.
<https://doi.org/10.15642/alqanun.2020.23.1.106-124>
- Elisabeth, A. (2012). Peace and Development in Papua: Political or Economic Issues. *Journal of Political*, 9 (1), 13–13. <https://doi.org/10.14203/jpp.v9i1.444>
- Fatem, S. M. (2015, September 1). *Conservation districts as political action by local in supporting the conservation of biological: A case Tamberau District, West Papua*. National Seminar of the Indonesian Biodiversity
- Fatiha, A. S., Soeharjoto, & Santosa, W. (2022). General Elections as a Form of Democracy in Indonesia. *Journal of Basic and Social Humanities Education*, 1 (3), 345–352.
<https://doi.org/10.53625/jpdsh.v1i3.1159>
- Harefa, O. N. (2020). When Justice Meets Love: A Comparative Study Between John Rawls' and Reinhold Niebuhr's. *SUNDERMANN: Journal of Theology, Education, Science, Humanities, and Culture*, 13 (1), 39–47.
<https://doi.org/10.36588/sundermann.v13i1.31>
- Hasan, H., & Nugroho, Z. (2022). Toward a Peaceful Papua with an Inclusive Development. *Journal of International Relations*, 56–66.
<https://doi.org/10.26593/jihi.v0i00.5973.56-66>
- Huang, Z., Guo, X., Liu, Y., Zhao, W., & Zhang, K. (2023). A smart conflict resolution model using multi-layer knowledge graph for conceptual design. *Advanced Engineering Informatics*, 55, 101887. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aei.2023.101887>
- Indrasari, K. P. (2015). Analysis of the Implementation of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration Regarding Human Rights Violations Against Activists and Human Rights Defenders Papua and West Papua Provinces in 2015. *Jurnal Transformasi Global*, 2 (2).
<https://doi.org/10.21776/jtg.v2i2.29>
- Iqbal, A. L., Akmal, A. R., Hilmy, M. E. H., & Deni, F. (2024). Law Enforcement in Handling Human Rights Violations in Papua. *JURNAL KAJIAN ISLAM MODERN*, 11 (01), 58–65.
<https://doi.org/10.56406/jkim.v11i01.492>
- Iryani, E. (2017). Islamic Law, Democracy, and Human Rights. *Jurnal Ilmiah Universitas Batanghari Jambi*, 17 (2), 24–31. <https://doi.org/10.33087/jiubj.v17i2.357>
- Kasenda, D. (2024). Strategies for Achieving Unity Amid Linguistic Diversity Among Ethnic Groups in Papua: A Sociolinguistic and Language Policy. *Ranah Research: Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, 7 (1), 376–388.
<https://doi.org/10.38035/rrj.v7i1.1205>

- Keashly, L., Minkowitz, H., & Nowell, B. L. (2020). Conflict, Conflict Resolution and Workplace Bullying. In *Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace* (3rd ed.). CRC Press.
- Lubis, A. F. (2022). Handling Conflicts Among Indigenous Communities in West Papua Through an Anthropological by the Indonesian National *Jurnal Pustaka Mitra (Center for Access to Research Serving the Community)*, 2(1), 10–13.
<https://doi.org/10.55382/jurnalpustakamitra.v2i1.113>
- Marilang, M. (2018). Reconstructing the Epistemology of John Rawls' Theory of Justice. *Unsulbar Law Journal*, 1 (1), 41–56. <https://doi.org/10.31605/j-law.v1i1.50>
- Mendrofa, O. O. (2024). Restrictions on Religious Based on Justice Theory and Human Rights. *Milthree Law Journal*, 1 (1), 30–61. <https://doi.org/10.70565/mlj.v1i1.2>
- Moento, P. A., Wuniyu, F., & Betaubun, W. L. (2020). Security in the Resolution of Social in Papua. *Jurnal Noken: Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*, 6 (1), 36–48. <https://doi.org/10.33506/jn.v6i1.1106>
- Ngabalin, M. (2020). Racism and the Oppressed: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Nonviolent Struggle Its Implications for Papuan Society. *ARUMBAAE: Journal of Theology and Religious Studies*, 2 (2), 123–136. <https://doi.org/10.37429/arumbae.v2i2.448>
- Novan Ngutra, R., Kumala Putri, E. I., Hadi Dharmawan, A., & Darusman, D. (2017). Extraction of Natural Resources and Community Livelihood Systems Change in the Cycloop Nature Reserve *Sodality: Journal of Rural* 5 (1
- Pogge, T. W. (2012). The Incoherence Between Rawls's Theories of Justice. In *Rawls and Law*. Routledge.
- Putri, S. N., Utomo, M. F. N., Erlangga, R. W., & Hikmah, N. (2022). Analysis of the Relationship Between Armed Criminal (KKB) in Papua and Human Rights Violations *Al - Hakam Islamic Law & Contemporary Issues*, 3(2), 42–53.
- Rizal, M. C. (2023). Legal Protection for Human Rights Defenders from the Perspective of the Theory of Criminal Exemption *Arena Hukum*, 16 (1), 18–41.
<https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.arenahukum.2023.01601.2>
- Said, M. Y., & Nurhayati, Y. (2021). A Review On Rawls Theory Of Justice. *International Journal of Law, Environment, and Natural Resources*, 1 (1), 29–36.
<https://doi.org/10.51749/injurlens.v1i1.7>
- Sinaga, C. B. A., Ariesty, A., & Ningrum, C. S. (2024). Conflict between Immigrant Communities and Local Communities (Case Study: Community in Wamena Papua). *Jurnal Bimala: Basis Invensi Analitik Mahasiswa Sosiologi*, 1(01), 62–78.
- Singer, A. (2015). There Is No Rawlsian Theory of Corporate Governance. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 25 (1), 65–92. <https://doi.org/10.1017/beq.2015.1>
- Situmorang, C. I., Athallah, R. A., Butar, F. S. J. B., & Triadi, I. (2024). The Importance of Strict Law in Defending Human Rights: A Constitutional Perspective. *Journal of Customary Law*, 1 (2
- Sudira, I. N. (2022). Conflict Resolution as a Path to Peace in Papua. *Journal of International Relations*, 82–95. <https://doi.org/10.26593/jihi.v0i00.5974.82-95>
- Suhardin, Y. (2023). The Concept of Justice from John Rawls and Pancasila Justice (A Comparative). *Fiat Iustitia: Journal of Law*, 200–208. <https://doi.org/10.54367/fiat.v3i2.2535>
- Surovtsev, V., & Syrov, V. (2015). Outlooks of J. Rawls's Theory of Justice. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 166 , 176–181. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.12.506>

- Taum, Y. Y. (2015). Violence and Conflict in Papua: Root Causes and Strategies for Resolution. *Journal of Research*, 19 (1). <https://e-journal.usd.ac.id/index.php/JP/article/view/980>
- Wahyuni, R., & Desiandri, Y. S. (2024). Human Rights (HAM) on Freedom of Expression in a Democraticin Indonesia. *Journal of Science and Technology*, 5 (3), 961–966. <https://doi.org/10.55338/saintek.v5i3.2422>
- Yanuarti, S. (2012). Poverty and Conflict in Papua Amid Abundant Natural Resources. *Journal of Political*, 9 (1), 14–14. <https://doi.org/10.14203/jpp.v9i1.446>
- Zulhilmi, A. (2022). Democracy and Humanin the Islamic *Jurnal Darma Agung*, 30 (2), 254. <https://doi.org/10.46930/ojsuda.v30i2.1670>