Open Letter on Possible Sale of Apache Helicopters to Indonesia
March 30, 2012

As organizations concerned about human rights in Indonesia and West Papua, we are writing to urge the U.S. government and Congress not to allow the sale of AH-64 Apache attack helicopters to the Indonesian military (TNI). Providing these helicopters would pose a direct threat to Papuan civilians, who have been the target of deadly TNI assaults for many years.

The sale of this weapons system to the TNI -- notwithstanding its long record of disregard for civilian casualties, corruption, human rights violations and impunity in East Timor, Aceh and elsewhere -- would only increase the suffering of the Papuan population.

Indonesia's Deputy Minister of Defense Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin told the Antara news agency, that Indonesia intends to buy eight AH-64 Apache helicopter from the United States.

The heavily-armed AH-64 is a highly lethal weapon which can be used to escalate conflict within Indonesia and in West Papua. These aircraft will substantially augment the TNI's capacity to prosecute its "sweep operations" in West Papua and thereby, almost certainly lead to increased suffering among the civilian populations long victimized by such operations.

TNI "sweep operations," including several now underway in the Central Highlands region of West Papua, involve attacks on villages. Homes are destroyed, along with churches and public buildings. These assaults, purportedly to eliminate the poorly armed Papuan armed resistance, force innocent villagers from their homes. Papuan civilians either flee the attacks to neighboring villages or into the surrounding forests where many die or face starvation, cut off from access to their gardens, shelter, and medical care.

The AH-64 is designed for air to ground attack. It can operate day or night and is armed with high caliber chain guns. It is also equipped to fire missiles.

Congress must be notified of major weapons sales. We urge Congress to oppose the sale of these helicopters.

Signed,

East Timor and Indonesia Action Network
West Papua Advocacy Team
Asia-Pacific Solidarity Coalition (APSOC)
Asian Human Rights Commission
Australia East Timor Friendship Association of South Australia Inc.
Australia West Papua Association - Melbourne
Australia West Papua Association (Sydney)
Australians for a Free East Timor
Baltimore Nonviolence Center

Nonviolence International
Office of the Americas
Ohio Valley PEACE
Pace e Bene Australia
Pantau Foundation Jakarta
Partij voor de Liefde, The Netherlands
Pax Christi Aotearoa-New Zealand
Pax Christi Australia
Pax Christi Australia (NSW)
Pax Christi Metro New York
Pax Christi New Orleans
Baptist Church, Papua, Indonesia
Byak Regional People’s Parliament (Biak, West Papua)
Campaign for Peace and Democracy
Center For Creative Activities, Philadelphia
Columbus Campaign for Arms Control
ETAN-Madison
East Timor Action Network / Portland
East Timor National Victims “74-99” Association
East Timor Religious Outreach
Episcopal Faith East
Faith-based Network on West Papua (FBN)
Fellowship of Reconciliation
Foreign Policy In Focus
Foundation Pro Papua, The Netherlands
Franciscans International
Genesee Valley Citizens for Peace
Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space
Green Delaware
Health Alliance International
Hunter East Timor Sisters, Australia
Indonesia Human Rights Committee, Auckland New Zealand
Hunter East Timor Sisters, Australia
Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice, Ann Arbor, MI
International Federation for East Timor
International Labor Rights Forum
International Lawyers for West Papua
International Platform of Jurists for East Timor
Japan East Timor Coalition
Jews Against Genocide, USA
Justice for Palestine Matters, Australia
KontrS, Indonesia
Koalisi Anti Utang, Indonesia
Land Is Life
La’o Hamutuk - Timor-Leste Institute for Development Monitoring and Analysis
LEPOCO Peace Center
Massachusetts Peace Actionon
Metta Center for Nonviolence
Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Justice and Peace Centre, Australia
Moana Nui Action Alliance
Mornington Branch of the Australian Greens Victoria
Neighbors for Peace, Chicago
Nicaragua Center for Community Action
Pax Christi Victoria (International Christian Peace Movement)
Peace Action
Peace Action of Washington State
Peace House, Ashland, OR
Peace Island Foundation, Boston, MA
Peace Movement Aotearoa
Philippine Workers Support Committee
Puget Sound Nuclear Weapons Free Zone
Quaker Peace & Service Aotearoa New Zealand
Rogue Valley Peace Veterans
Shomer Shalom Network for Jewish Nonviolence
Socialist Party of the Netherlands
Stg. Timor Lorosae Solidarity (TLS), The Netherlands
Stichting Akar, The Netherlands
Swedish East Timor Committee
Swedish Free Papua Association
TAPOL
Urban Poor Consortium (UPC), Indonesia
Vereniging Pauwervrouwen in Nederland – the Netherlands
Veterans for Peace NYC Chapter 34
Voices for Creative Nonviolence
Volunteers for International Solidarity
War Resisters League
War Resisters League, Chicago Chapter
War Resisters League, Portland
WarIsACrime.org
Watch Indonesia, Germany
WESPAC Foundation
West Papua Action Network, USA
West Papua Netzwerk, Germany
West Papua Solidarity Wellington
Western New York Peace Center
Wheaton Franciscan Sisters
Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice, Madison