



CAROLINE LUCAS
GROUP OF THE GREENS/EFA
MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION
MEMBER OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE (SUBSTITUTED)

URGENT FAX- Re: Potential human rights abuses on Dec 1st- using British-supplied equipment.

Jack Straw MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
London SW1A

Dear Mr Straw,

I understand that two British-supplied Tactica armoured personnel carriers fitted with water cannons have been deployed to West Papua. The matter was reported in the Observer newspaper on Sunday 27th November 2005.

I am deeply concerned that the water cannons might be used against Papuans on 1 December, when many public events, demonstrations and flag-raising take place to celebrate West Papua's national day. Celebrations in previous years have been marked by violence by the security forces; last year a number of people were injured when police attempted to seize a flag raised by independence supporters.

I have also received disturbing reports that large numbers of Kostrad combat troops have arrived in Jayapura in the past few days, adding to the army's already large presence in West Papua.

These deployments will increase the atmosphere of terror and oppression during a period of heightened political activity. The potential for human rights abuses involving the Tactica vehicles is extremely high. Tacticas were used in Indonesia on many occasions in the 1990s against the pro-democracy movement opposed to the Suharto dictatorship.

Water canons are clearly designed for use against protesters, and the deployment of these weapons runs counter to UK policy that UK-supplied equipment should not be used in the abuse of human rights. The very presence of the vehicles at demonstrations is a powerful deterrent to Papuans wishing to exercise their rights to freedom of assembly and expression and is in itself an abuse of their human rights.

In the circumstances, I call upon you to demand the immediate withdrawal of the Tacticas from West Papua and to insist that the vehicles must not be used or deployed at any public events on 1 December.

I also urge you to express grave concern at the increasing militarization of West Papua, to call for the immediate withdrawal of non-organic troops and newly-deployed territorial command troops, and to condemn all acts of violence and intimidation by the Indonesian military and police which prevent the Papuans from exercising their democratic right to peacefully protest and express their political aspirations.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Caroline Lucas MEP