Dear (name and title of your parliamentary representative)

My name is (your name) and I am a constituent of yours.

I am writing to you because it has come to my attention about serious concerns regarding the current situation in **West Papua,** just a few kilometres north of Australia’s shores**.**

I was shocked to hear about serious **human rights abuses, military occupation and genocide** in neighbouring West Papua. I learned that West Papua (bordering Papua New Guinea) was a Dutch colony for decades, with the promise of independence and the raising of the West Papuan national flag in 1961.

However, it is with horror that I learned how West Papua was occupied by Indonesia in 1963 and how the West Papuan people had their **fundamental right to self-determination illegally stolen by Indonesia in 1969**. The people of West Papua have since been betrayed by the **Australian government** which has ignored their terrible suffering and their right to self-determination. Since 1963, an estimated **500,000 West Papuan people, approximately 15% of the population have died at the hands of the Indonesian occupying forces.**
The evidence is indisputable that **genocide** has been committed, a paper prepared by the **Yale Law School** for the Indonesian HRC stated, *“****[There is]* in the available evidence a strong indication that the Indonesian government has committed genocide against the West Papuans**”, and **the University of Sydney** concluded that the continuation of current practices in West Papua “**may pose serious threats to the survival of the indigenous people**”.

It is clear that the conflict in West Papua is due to the blatant denial of West Papuan self-determination through the ironically named **“Act of Free Choice”** of 1969. Under the United Nations’ “New York Agreement” promise, all West Papuan adults were to be eligible to vote for either independence or Indonesian rule, in a free and fair referendum.

**This never happened.** The Indonesian government hand-picked just 1,026 people, including Indonesians to ‘represent’ the population. **They forced them at gunpoint to vote for Indonesian rule, a referendum consisting of less than 0.2% of the population, illegal under international law.**

In the words of US Embassy staff: *"The Act of Free Choice (AFC) in West Irian [Papua] is unfolding like a Greek tragedy, the conclusion preordained.* ***The main protagonist, the GOI (Government of Indonesia), cannot and will not permit any resolution other than the continued inclusion of West Irian in Indonesia.”***If this had been a legitimate referendum, allowing ‘one person-one vote’, as required under international law, West Papuans would have voted overwhelmingly in favour of independence.
Once again in the US Embassy’s words *“****95% of indigenous Papuans wanted to have freedom****.”*

Even the UK government formally admitted in 2004 that the 1969 ‘Act of Free Choice’ consisted of, **“*1,000 handpicked representatives … [who] were largely coerced into declaring for inclusion in Indonesia*”.**

Ever since 1963, **the brutal Indonesian military occupation of West Papua has continued unabated and killings and torture by the Indonesian Security Forces occur almost every day. The ICP, an international coalition of NGOs and Human Rights Groups, documented that 135 West Papuan people were tortured by the Indonesian military and police in the third quarter of 2017 alone.** **They also documented that at least 5,361 West Papuans were arrested for peaceful political activities in 2016, up from 1,083 in 2015**, *“in tandem with growing political protest for self-determination.”* **West Papuan people are still imprisoned for 15 years just for raising their national flag.****Clearly the situation in West Papua is getting *worse* not better.**This is a true tragedy right on Australia’s doorstep, just like the genocide and illegal Indonesian occupation of **East Timor.** I am appalled that the **genocide** and illegal occupation of West Papua can continue to be neglected and ignored by the Australian government. **We helped East Timor, why not West Papua?**

We condemn other countries around the world for human rights abuses. **Why are we not condemning the Indonesian government for the genocide in West Papua, our closest neighbouring country?** In the last 5 years, 12 countries have stood up for West Papua’s fundamental right to self-determination, including 8 countries in the Pacific. **If small islands in our region can have the courage to stand up for their neighbours in West Papua, why can’t we too?**

* **As your constituent, I am calling upon you to support the rights of the West Papuan people.** P**lease raise their plight with the Australian government and other parliamentarians**, asking them to support the West Papuan people’s right to self-determination under international law. **In 2017, West Papuans submitted a petition for self-determination to the UN, signed by over 70% of the population.** All they ask for is to have the choice to live in a free country, free from human rights abuses and persecution like us.
* **Please call upon the Australian government to stop training Indonesia’s “Detachment 88” death squads,** responsible for some of the worst human rights violations in West Papua.
* **Please also join the International Parliamentarians for West Papua (IPWP)**, an international organisation, highlighting the inalienable right of West Papua’s self-determination. IPWP already has over 100 members worldwide, including, I am very happy to say, **19 Australian members**. Names and info on joining can be found via the website: [www.ipwp.org](http://www.ipwp.org).

It is time for Australia to do the right thing and stand up for our neighbours in occupied West Papua. **They helped us in World War 2 during our time of need. It is only right that we help them in theirs.**

West Papua is even closer to Australia than Sydney is to Canberra. **If these are not our neighbours, who are?**

I look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely,

(Your Name)