

12 November 2021

Indonesia: Threats and attacks against woman human rights defender Veronica Koman's family

On 7 November 2021, two unidentified persons threw a package containing explosives at the house of woman human rights defender **Veronica Koman's** parents in West Jakarta. On the same day, another relative of Veronica Koman's received a package with a dead chicken inside it. Both packages also contained threatening messages against the woman human rights defender and people aware of her whereabouts.

[Veronica Koman](#) is a woman human rights defender and lawyer who advocates extensively for human rights in West Papua. She is a member of International Lawyers for West Papua, an international network of lawyers working to strengthen human rights of the people of West Papua. Previously, she worked as a public interest lawyer at the Jakarta Legal Aid Institute (LBH Jakarta). Veronica Koman is currently in a self-imposed exile in Australia since she faces considerable risks to her security in Indonesia. She faces several charges in Indonesia including alleged "incitement", "spreading fake news", "displaying race-based hatred", and "disseminating information aimed at inflicting ethnic hatred", all believed to be in retaliation to her legitimate human rights work in West Papua.

On 7 November 2021 around 10:30 AM, two unidentified individuals on a motorbike threw two small boxes inside the garage of Veronica Koman's parents' house in West Jakarta. Within seconds, the boxes exploded leaving red paint smeared across the garage. The package also contained a threatening message which stated, "If the police and security forces cannot find Veronica Koman, we will scorch the earth of wherever you hide and of your protectors." The message was signed in the name of "Homeland Defender Militant Fighters". On the same day, around 10:45 am, a package was delivered to the house of Veronica Koman's relative addressed to the woman human rights defender. Later, the police confirmed that a dead chicken was found inside the package with the message, "anyone who is hiding Veronica Koman will end up like this." The Police filed two reports into the incidents on 8 November 2021 under Article 187 on arson, Article 335 Section 1 on offensive act of the Indonesian Criminal Code, and Article 1 section 1 of the Emergency Law on the use of explosives. However, while speaking to the media about the incidents, the police [stated](#) that the threatening messages were about Veronica Koman defending an armed criminal group in West Papua.

This is not the first time that Veronica Koman and her family have come under attack. On 24 October 2021, two unidentified individuals on a motorbike attached a package inside a plastic bag on the gate of Veronica Koman's parents' house. It was noticed by one of the neighbours that the package was on fire and with the help of other residents, the fire was extinguished.

On the morning of 5 October 2021, several people arrived at the local chief's house and inquired after Veronica Koman's house. Later in the afternoon, a man dressed in plain clothes and claiming to be a police officer asked the chief to accompany him to Veronica Koman's house. The person

asked them about Veronica Koman's family and life in Australia and took photographs of her parents and their house. Veronica Koman's parents told him that they rarely communicated with her because of disapproval of her work in Indonesia. The visit lasted for about five minutes.

On 31 May 2021, two individuals on a motorbike came outside Veronica Koman's parents' house and inquired whether the defender lived there. Neighbours have reported witnessing several people observing the house of the defender's parents roughly once a month. On many occasions, Veronica Koman has received photographs of her parents' house by unknown accounts which seem to have been taken from outside the house.

Veronica Koman is on the Indonesian government's watch list and has been threatened with an Interpol Red Notice by the Indonesian police. Police and government authorities have also attempted to invalidate the woman human rights defender's passport and freeze her national and international bank accounts.

Front Line defenders expresses grave concern at the escalating threats against and harassment of Veronica Koman and her family, which it believes is solely motivated by her peaceful and legitimate work in defence of human rights.

Front Line Defenders urges the relevant authorities in Indonesia to:

1. Conduct an immediate and impartial investigation into the series of attacks faced by Veronica Koman's family and guarantee in all circumstances the physical and mental well-being and security of Veronica Koman's family;
2. Immediately and unconditionally withdraw the threats of legal action against Veronica Koman;
3. Immediately and unconditionally cease all further forms of surveillance or harassment against Veronica Koman and her family, as it is believed that these measures are not only solely related to the woman human rights defender's legitimate human rights activities but, furthermore, constitute a direct transgression of her rights;
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Indonesia are able to carry out their human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, in line with Indonesia's international human rights obligations and commitments.