

# MEDIA ADVISORY

For immediate release: (23 January 2013)

## **MEDIA BRIEFING OPPORTUNITY: WEST PAPUAN INDEPENDENCE LEADER FREED TO TRAVEL**

Following an independent investigation by Fair Trials International, an Interpol 'Red Notice' initiated by the Indonesian government against West Papuan independence leader Benny Wenda has been removed. Benny Wenda fled West Papua ten years ago after being arrested, detained and tortured by the Indonesian military. Exiled in the UK, the 'Red Notice' was issued to prevent him travelling but the investigation concluded that the Indonesian Government had abused the system in an attempt to silence him.

Finally free to travel once more, Benny Wenda is embarking on his first official overseas tour since the removal of the Red Notice to represent the people of West Papua and their struggle against the ongoing occupation by Indonesia.

**He will be available to brief media on the current situation in West Papua, the ongoing human rights abuses being committed by the Indonesian occupation and the peaceful campaign for self-determination. The tour covers:**

- **USA** (*February 1st - 7th*)
- **New Zealand** (*February 8th - 12th*)
- **Australia** (*February 13th - 25th*)
- **Melanesia** (*February 25th - March 8th*)

Benny will visit political leaders, lawyers, activists and supporters in the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea to build support and awareness of the campaign for self-determination for the people of West Papua.

Benny Wenda spoke of his hopes that *"the tour will further raise the voice of the West Papuan people whose cries for freedom and justice have been largely ignored by the international community for the last 50 years"*.

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### **Tour itinerary**

#### **USA** (*February 1st - 7th*)

Starting in the USA, Benny will meet with US Congress members in Washington DC. He will also visit the United Nations in New York and meet with organisations including *Avaaz, Witness, Independent Diplomat* and the *Oslo Freedom Forum*.

#### **New Zealand** (*February 8th - 12th*)

Travelling onto New Zealand, Benny will co-host a launch of International Parliamentarians for West Papua (IPWP) with Catherine Delahunty at Parliament House, Wellington on February 12th.

**Australia** (*February 13th - 25th*)

In Australia, Benny and his lawyer Jennifer Robinson (*co-founder of International Lawyers for West Papua*) will host an event at Parliament House, Canberra on February 13th, attended by politicians and members of the legal fraternity.

Benny will also be visiting Melbourne, Sydney and Perth, as well as meeting with Aboriginal elders in the Northern Territory.

**Melanesia** (*February 25th - March 8th*)

After meeting with exiled West Papuan leaders in Vanuatu, Benny will visit the Solomon Islands. The tour will conclude in Papua New Guinea, where a Parliamentary event in the capital Port Moresby will see both Benny and Jennifer Robinson speak to parliamentarians and also meet with community leaders.

**Notes to Editors:**

Benny Wenda will be travelling with his lawyer Jennifer Robinson and independent filmmaker Dominic Brown.

West Papua was illegally colonised by Indonesia in the 1960s through the intervention of the US and then a sham vote during which people were violently forced to vote in favour of Indonesian control

During 50 years of Indonesian control, thousands of people have been killed, detained, tortured and displaced

No foreign journalists or human rights organisations are allowed to operate inside West Papua so little information about the real situation is known around the world

Benny Wenda is one of the leading voices of the peaceful independence movement and is currently living in exile in Oxford, UK

[www.bennywenda.org](http://www.bennywenda.org)

Footage of WP is available on request

To arrange an interview with Benny or his lawyer please contact:

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**Tour updates:**

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