

West Papuan campaigner Benny Wenda drops in on AUT's PMC



DEL ABC/PMC

Benny Wenda (centre) with wantok students at Auckland University of Technology recently ... representing a "united" Pacific for West Papua.

A LIFELONG campaigner for a free and independent West Papua issued a stark warning to New Zealand politicians when he visited the country recently.

Benny Wenda, a tribal chief of West Papua exiled to the United Kingdom by Indonesia, told the Pacific Media Centre's *Asia Pacific Report* that time was running out for West Papua if governments such as New Zealand did not act.

"If we live with Indonesia for another 50 years, we will not be safe. We will not be safe with Indonesia."

He said the purpose of his visit to New Zealand was to highlight the importance of West Papua returning to its Melanesian family.

"We really need Pacific Islanders, our sisters and brothers across the Pacific—particularly New Zealand and Australia—to bring West Papua back to its Pacific family. Then we can survive.



KENDALL HUTT/PMC

Benny Wenda presents Pacific Media Centre's Professor David Robie with a traditional "bilum" for his journalism about West Papuan freedom.

Otherwise, it will be very difficult to survive with Indonesia," he said.

Since Indonesia took over West Papua following a controversial Act of Free Choice—dubbed by critics as an "Act of no choice"—in 1969, Wenda said his people had suffered.

"Everyday someone is dead, or has been killed, and someone has been stabbed, but no one is brought to justice."

In its rush to claim former Dutch colonies in the Asia-Pacific region following West Papua's self-declared independence from the Netherlands in

late 1961, Indonesia has subjected West Papua to continued human rights violations.

Many West Papuans have been imprisoned for non-violent

Turn to page 2

Mangahas, Blades booked for PMC birthday



IT'S BIRTHDAY time. The Pacific Media Centre is celebrating its 10th anniversary on November 30.

Philippine Centre for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) Malou Mangahas (pictured) and Radio New Zealand International senior journalist Johnny Blades have been booked for this event and will be taking part in a panel on "Journalism under Duress in Asia-Pacific".

Mangahas will talk about the media's challenge over extrajudicial killings in Filipino President Duterte's "war on drugs" and Blades will share his West Papua experience.

Other activities are also planned including a souvenir book on investigative photojournalism, an exhibition and a birthday video, plus the launch of the latest *Pacific Journalism Review* and publication of the *Pacific Journalism Monographs* on the Tuwhera platform.

More information about the celebration on PMC's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/PacificMediaCentre or contact Khairiah Rahman at: khairiah.rahman@aut.ac.nz

Climate change in Asia-Pacific, advocacy journalism in PJR

CLIMATE change research ranging from Australia and Indonesia to Fiji and Vietnam feature in the latest *Pacific Journalism Review* in the first publication to focus on media and global warming in the region.

The edition, published in July, is timely as Fiji prepares to co-host the COP23 global climate change summit in Bonn, Germany, in November

Canadian media academic professor Robert A Hackett argues for an overhaul of the approach by journalists and media groups to "address the need for public engagement and a sense of urgency in the context of global climate crisis".

He advocates peace journalism as a component of a strategy for "both journalists and the public to recover a sense of political agency".

New Zealand investigative journalist Phil Vine, now attached to Greenpeace as a journalist, writes about the dilemmas facing seasoned journalists when joining non-government organisations in an independent media role.

"In order to stem plunging levels of credibility and adapt to the fast changing digital environment while recognising existing biases within traditional reporting, it may be that mainstream media needs to embrace a more inclusive attitude towards so-called 'NGO journalism'," he writes.

Documentary maker Ulrich Weissbach offers a case study on his film *The Solar Nation of Tokelau* while David Robie and Sarika Chand also file a case study on the "Bearing Witness" climate change collaboration between the Fiji-based University of the South Pacific and AUT's Pacific Media Centre by postgraduate student journalists.

Staff and researchers at USP's Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development and School of Government, Development and International Affairs have contributed several papers in the peer-reviewed edition.

* Full papers at AUT's Tuwhera <https://tuwhera.aut.ac.nz/>



Freak office fall sidelines PMC director

PACIFIC Media Centre director Professor David Robie suffered multiple fractures of his right leg late last month in a freak accident, keeping him away from the office for two months.

Dr Robie tripped over an office chair in the PMC office on July 29 while working one evening on publications produced by the centre.

Luckily, Del Abcede, also working there, called an ambulance and he was taken to Auckland Hospital, where he had surgery the next day. Security staff also assisted.

"I guess I'm a bit of a bionic man now with a titanium rod and six screws in my leg," Dr Robie said.

"Amazing damage for such a little foot trip. I don't even have a decent story to tell."

The PMC was out of bounds crime scene-style for a couple of days

while an internal health and safety investigation was held and the "suspect" chair was put on display atop the centre's meeting table.

According to the official AUT accident report, "Dr Robie surmises that as his trajectory was towards a floor-to-ceiling window he tried to fall away from the window, which placed more torsion on his right lower leg, resulting in fractures that required corrective surgery."

The report made a recommendation for a "clean desk" policy and said that had Dr Robie been in the building on his own, "there is the potential that he could have lain on the floor until Monday morning when normal university hours resumed".

As for the PMC director: "I am just itching to get back to work. I am unused to the go-slow patience needed to recover from this injury. I have to be content with working from home as best I can."



Ambulance staff whisk Dr Robie with a "morphine smile" away from the PMC to hospital.

From Page 1: *West Papua*

expressions of their political views and widespread allegations of torture have been consistently made against Indonesian authorities.

Raising West Papua's flag—*The Morning Star*—can lead to 15 years in prison.

Wenda, the 42-year-old founder of the Free West Papua Campaign, has himself been imprisoned, accused of inciting an attack on a police station—despite the fact he was not even in the country at the time.

With foreign media all but denied access to West Papua—des-

pite apparent lifting of restrictions by President Joko Widodo in 2015—much of Indonesia's atrocities remain secret, hidden.

"We are fighting for our independence, but we are also fighting for our land, our forest, our mountains" said Wenda.

Wenda made a presentation to the Pacific Media Centre's director, Professor David Robie, for his contribution to the global West Papuan cause. — *Kendall Hutt*

PMC Events in 2017



West Papuan campaigner Benny Wenda at a seminar at AUT in May.



Tuwhera publishing launch in February featuring the *Pacific Journalism Review*.



Pacific Media Centre hosted Pacific Cooperation Foundation student journalists in June.



30 years anniversary of Nuclear-Free New Zealand celebrated at Devonport in June.

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