

Papua New Guinea Riots in January 2024: Exploring the Impact and Securitization Process Behind Instability

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Abstract - Papua New Guinea is a developing country located in Oceania within the specifications of the Melanesian family. Papua New Guinea in the status quo condition still faces various forms of domestic problems that have an impact on internal instability conditions. Acts of unrest are still massive in this country, which has an impact on poor economic conditions and a high poverty rate targeting all levels of the population. In January 2024, the international community was shocked by the news of riots that occurred in several cities in Papua New Guinea namely Port Moresby and Lae, due to the phenomenon of unilateral salary cuts to state civil servants without any further explanation from the government. The rioting by civil servants (police, public sector staff, and other civil servants) and opportunistic parties has had a huge impact on the internal conditions of the country forcing the city into a precarious situation and this phenomenon itself is exacerbated by the vacant position of the security forces due to their participation in this action. The unrest had a huge impact and led to acts of violence, murder, and looting aimed at several shops in the corners of the city. In response, James Marape as the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea declared a national emergency for two weeks and attempted to bring in securitization measures to reduce the larger conflict that could break out at any time.

Keywords: Papua New Guinea, Riot, Instability, Securitization.

I. INTRODUCTION

Papua New Guinea is a country located in the Oceania region and is categorized as a developing country and is still very dependent on foreign aid and

foreign investors as external actors that help the development of their country. Reflecting on the condition of the national economy, Papua New Guinea itself still faces domestic problems that have an impact on hampering the progressive pace of their national economy. Papua New Guinea based on data as of 2022 is still facing high poverty problems, where the data found the fact that in that year the percentage of extreme poverty in this country was at 40% of the total population. Poverty is a form of problem that is present and exacerbated by the social inequality that has long been rooted in its society, this phenomenon is exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 that hit the world without exception Papua New Guinea, this pandemic itself hit the country's national stability in various fields and had an impact on the stagnation of their national economy (UNICEF, 2023).

Papua New Guinea as a country certainly has its own advantages that make them different from other countries, as for the advantages they have namely the high biodiversity in the world which is driven by diversified geographical conditions consisting: mountains, forests and valleys. Papua New Guinea is also known for its rich natural resources and mineral deposits including: copper, gold, natural gas, oil, silver, timber, and fisheries that provide economic benefits to their local communities. Another wealth of Papua New Guinea is the diversification of traditional tribal groups and the diversity of ethnic groups that exist. This gives rise to a very heterogeneous social structure and provides its own unique color. Just like other developing countries, Papua New Guinea still often faces the classic problem of conflict and unrest which is often caused by ethnic group feuds that can trigger various horizontal frictions between other tribes that stand on their group interests.

The international world was shocked by the news of internal riots that occurred in several cities in Papua New Guinea which are Port Moresby and Lae in January 2024. This riot action was initially a form of peaceful protest action carried out by state civil servants and the police as a form of disappointment that was present for their salary cut by 50% without any definite clarity from the government. Initially the civil servants staged a peaceful protest around the Port Moresby parliament building, but it soon turned into a riot that was exacerbated by the intervention of the opposition government which attempted to shape the new perspective of the demonstrators and other people about the poor government of James Marape as Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea. The vacant position of the security forces due to their contribution to the protests disrupted Papua New Guinea's internal security conditions and this was utilized by opportunistic parties to carry out their actions until these riots were created. The riots that were initially present in the city of Port Moresby then began to widen and caused riots in another city namely Lae. The riots that were formed then developed increasingly massive to have an impact on cases of violence, murder, and looting aimed at several shops throughout the city. These riots attracted international attention and discomfort from several international actors because of the impact they had especially in terms of security instability and the economic sector, and the riots themselves ultimately had an impact on the disruption of Papua New Guinea's diplomatic relations with other strategic partner countries.

Understanding the phenomenon and process of unrest in Papua New Guinea through the lens of post-Cold War International Relations Studies, and by using post-positivism approaches where the scope is no longer limited to war and peace which has been dominated by the mainstream of 'realism and liberalism'. The definition of security in International Relations Studies is no longer limited to politics, military and the state. Through the Copenhagen School approach, this perspective is primarily concerned with how security works in world politics. Their approach was developed in the context of post-Cold War calls for a broadened definition of security that sought to incorporate a range of pressing and hitherto neglected issues such as environmental change, poverty, and human rights into the security agenda of states (Williams, 2012).

The Copenhagen School brings a concept of 'Securitization' which interprets that security is a statement by an agent. This concept emphasizes on speech or statement by the agent called Speech Act.

Securitization can be defined as a process where an agent or actor declares an issue, a dynamic, or a particular actor as an 'existential threat' to a particular object. If accepted by the relevant audience, this enables the suspension of normal politics and the use of emergency measures in response to the perceived crisis. Security in this sense is a site of negotiation between speaker and audience, although this is heavily influenced by the extent to which the speaker enjoys a position of authority within a particular group (Ole Wæver, 1993). In the process of securitization, the securitization agent or actor must have the capability to deliver speech or statement in order to be accepted by the audience. Thus, Ole Wæver (1993) states that successful securitization tends to involve the articulation of threats 'only from a certain place, through an institutional voice'. This means that statements in a successful securitization process tend to be made by political elites or government officials as securitization actors.

The concept of securitization is used to understand the measures implemented by Prime Minister James Marape's government in managing the riots that occurred in January 2024. Before that, the social problems inherent in Papua New Guinean society were also elaborated to find out more about the factors that led to the fragility of the country's national condition. In particular the factors that triggered many people to take advantage of the peaceful protest movement of employees or state officials so that later there will be a broader understanding of the phenomenon of the January 2024 riots.

This research also focuses on the implications of the impact of the riots in Papua New Guinea, where the economic sector is the most affected sector and results in internal security instability in this country. The riots also affected Papua New Guinea's diplomatic relations with friendly countries and the emergence of international protests in response to internal issues in Papua New Guinea.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research focuses on three aspects of the unrest that followed the wave of civil service protests in Papua New Guinea in January 2024. The event was a phenomenon of unrest due to the accumulation of inequality in the country that met with the protest movement of civil servants and guardians of public order. As the study conducted by Newburn (2021) examines various studies to understand how crowd behavior, including violent crowd behavior in particular. Recent scholarly attention has increasingly focused on questions of 'how and why' events such as

riots occur, including how they spread, how they end, and most importantly what happens in their aftermath. There are studies that provide ample evidence that social protest can be a transformative tool. However, consideration of the impact of social protests, riots and social disorder is rarely considered. Hence the development of the riot life cycle model, which offers an analytical approach to looking at the phenomenon more broadly. This life cycle model builds on existing approaches and focuses attention not only on the economic, social, political, and institutional features of the landscape that lead to riots, but also seeks to draw attention to the ways in which agents, agencies, and institutions operate when violence has ceased and what the implications of social reactions might be.

Furthermore, the Papua New Guinea riots in January 2024 also received responses from other countries. Including efforts to provide assistance through intervention in the public security sector. Security assistance with intervention by other countries is a form of response from other countries that have good foreign relations. As written by Guzansky (2014) describes the security intervention carried out by Saudi Arabia to help Bahrain deal with the revolutionary protests in the country. The popular revolution in Bahrain erupted not long after revolutions began in Tunisia and Egypt, but it was less visible. Nonetheless, small protests by the Shia majority (who make up about 70 percent of the population) against the Sunni royal family continued. Demonstrations take place regularly, usually in Shia villages outside the capital Manama, and not infrequently escalate into severe violence. Find that the protests in the country pose a threat to foreign relations with Saudi Arabia. Including threats to the survival of the monarchy and the petroleum industry. So Saudi Arabia initiated intervention assistance in the security sector to unravel the revolutionary movement in the country.

Finally, in the process of handling the Papua New Guinea riots in January 2024, the government took action to restore domestic stability as a form of response to the event. For this reason, the steps taken by the government are a form of implementation of the securitization concept from the Copenhagen School, which explains how an issue is dramatized to reduce its intensity. As researched by Cristina Saenz Perez (2023) that after Brexit the United Kingdom carried out a securitization agenda in the field of asylum. Discussing the asylum gap, and focusing on how the Citizenship and Borders Act 2022, and the United Kingdom-Rwanda Memorandum of Understanding for the relocation of asylum seekers

advance the externalization of asylum post-Brexit. Such reforms should be considered within the broader securitization efforts that have characterized United Kingdom asylum and immigration law since Theresa May presented her plans to create a 'hostile environment' for undocumented migrants and asylum seekers.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses qualitative methods considering that the subject matter of the research is a social problem that has quite high complexity. As the post-positivism paradigm states that social reality is holistic, dynamic, and interactive (Sugiyono, 2012). By applying the main approach of literature study. Includes a series of data collection processes from various literatures, reading, recording, and processing the information obtained (Zed, 2003). The analysis of the securitization process in the January 2024 Papua New Guinea Riots uses concepts derived from the thoughts of Copenhagen School thinkers, so the literature study approach allows research to use the results of previous studies that have relevance to the topic under study (Sarwono, 2006).

More specifically, this research uses explanatory qualitative. Explanative qualitative was chosen because it is a relevant method to explain the process of securitization by the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea and the phenomena behind the process. After demonstrations by civil servants and police escalated into riots. The data sources emphasized are secondary data sources. Searches related to the securitization process of the Papua New Guinea Riots 2024 in January documented in various journalism articles as well as official statements of the Papua New Guinea Government reported in news and websites were used as secondary data sources.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The status quo conditions in Papua New Guinea put the country in an unstable situation due to the high number of riots in their cities and the resulting social instability in the country. Right on January 10th 2024, Wednesday morning in Papua New Guinea was shocked by the emergence of riots in the capital Port Moresby, the riots themselves occurred and were driven by opportunistic parties who took advantage of the situation when they saw the decline of their own government actors such as: soldiers, police, public sector staff, and other civil servants who were protesting due to unannounced salary cuts. The salary cut even touched up to 50% of the January salary in the civil service and security professions, this salary cut also came without any explanation from the

government which certainly ignited a sense of dissatisfaction and anger for the state apparatus who spontaneously started peaceful protests at several points in Port Moresby and Lae. Seeing the precarious condition of the country due to demonstrations carried out by civil servants throughout the city, opportunists and government opposition parties in action by muddying the atmosphere by presenting negative narratives about the government and James Marape as Prime Minister who is considered to have failed in carrying out his duties, this action has an impact on the formation of new perspective points that spontaneously arise for several civil society groups to carry out vandalism as a form of opportunity that is present and a form of disappointment with government policies that are deemed deviant (Ronald May, 2024).

The phenomenon of riots that occurred in the capital of Papua New Guinea was exacerbated by the emergence of other riots that occurred in another city in the country namely Lae. The riots that occurred in Lae City itself occurred in the afternoon on the same date. The riots that occurred in the two largest cities in Papua New Guinea itself were initially present as a form of peaceful protest by state civil servants against their salary cuts, but this action turned into chaos and looting of shops in their area by other communities. The peaceful protest that was initially carried out by the state civil apparatus immediately turned into looting and damage at several points of the city due to increasingly heated conditions arising from opposition groups who were alleged to have formed a wrong understanding of the salary cuts for these state apparatus where according to them this salary cut action was carried out by the government without a clear explanation and was considered a form of failure of James Marape's leadership. The looting condition itself occurred due to the late response statement of the Government of Papua New Guinea under the command of James Marape himself in providing a public statement after the conflict conditions had grown bigger, some time after the riots broke out the government stated that the 50% salary cut was present due to a payment system error and had an impact on all employees or apparatus who received salaries from the government, but the masses who attended the peaceful protest movement had been influenced by the perspective of the opposition the day before, which convinced them that unilateral salary cuts had indeed been planned by the government in order to reduce the budget burden as an effort to reduce taxes. Misinformation was also spread with the discourse of tax increases planned by the government further fueling the anger of civil society in the midst of difficult economic conditions.

Although the information about the tax reduction and increase has not been confirmed, the misinformation has had an impact on the riots that have become more massive, which have triggered looting and violence and have resulted in the presence of unstable socio-political conditions in Papua New Guinea.

Root Causes of the Unrest

The social shocks depicted in the phenomenon of the Papua New Guinea Riots in January 2024 contain two types of violence. The first type can be seen easily during the riots namely direct violence. The existence of looting and destruction during the phenomenon is an implication of this first type. Even to the point of causing casualties, it indicates that this type of violence has a direct impact on the injuring of human life. However direct violence does not come out of the blue, especially in Papua New Guinea. As stated by Galtung (1969), fatalities can also arise due to structural violence, which is caused by how social, political and economic structures are organized and become supporting factors for the presence of social shocks.

A theory in International Relations studies brings a new perspective to structural violence namely 'Human Needs'. Human needs theory offers an alternative to power politics, the dominant school of political science. When power politics is applied, the goal of peace is pursued by carefully structuring the balance of power between potential aggressors (Kissinger, 1979). It starts from the assumption that needs are genetically programmed tendencies, common to all human beings across time and space. Instead of viewing needs as motivational constructs to understand individual differences, needs are essentially constant and find their expression in changing environmental conditions (Burton, 1988).

Looking from the perspective of human needs, structural violence occurs whenever there are systematic inequalities in the distribution of economic and political resources in a society. For example, the need for security is constant and becomes apparent only when the environment is perceived to threaten security. Although needs are constant, actions in pursuit of need satisfaction vary in space and time. Furthermore, people will satisfy needs through socially sanctioned activities or if unable to do so, will conspire to satisfy needs through prohibited means (Christie, 1997).

Social problems in Papua New Guinea's long-entrenched society are a form of structural violence. Economic disparity has led to social jealousy among the people, especially towards those with more

economic means. The impact of this jealousy can also be seen in the violence perpetrated against foreign nationals who own businesses in Papua New Guinea. These foreign nationals have more economic means than the local people such as owning businesses and grocery stores. When the riots broke out in January they were targeted for several harmful actions.

As is well known Papua New Guinea is a heterogeneous country with a very high level of diversity. The country is rich in ethnicity and language, so with gaps in the social structure of the community, the potential for horizontal conflict is wide open. This has led to problems such as disputes over land and resources. To make matters worse, tribal wars have become very common in the country, with repeated clashes between tribes causing many casualties. Tribal wars have a long history throughout Papua New Guinea and have become more deadly with the influx of illegal modern firearms in the highlands and the increasing use of hired snipers. The latest tribal war which occurred a month after the riots in Port Moresby and Lae, resulted in more than 80 deaths. This is certainly getting the international spotlight, especially since the country has just finished being rocked by violent protests and riots at the beginning of the year.

Social and Economic Consequences

Economic inequality is one of the major problems faced by Papua New Guinea, this phenomenon itself occurs due to the presence of inequality that is present in social phenomena and economic opportunities within the community. Reflecting on history, the phenomenon of economic inequality itself has existed in this country since the colonization period carried out by Europeans at that time. Papua New Guinea has long been famous for the wealth of biological and mineral resources in their region, one of the advantages that this country has until now is mining which focuses on oil and gas fields. The majority of mining businesses from the past until now are still controlled by foreign parties who often apply reframing of local social forms to meet the expectations of companies and other parties to obtain maximum profit. The action of inequality that is present can also be seen in the case of how companies view women, women are often politically sidelined in efforts to negotiate between landowners and mining companies and have an impact on the difficulty of women participating in the economic sphere that occurs (Bettina Beer and Tobias Schwoerer. 2022).

This ingrained negative impact itself has an impact on the socio-economic description that has been formed since colonization and looking at the

status quo conditions where this problem is a vital issue and still occurs today makes Papua New Guinea as a country of high level social and political instability and has an impact on the high risk of other problems arising from this phenomenon. Riots and rebellions are clear evidence of how the implications of social and economic inequality that still exist today have an impact on massive demonstrations in every corner of the city, large amounts of poverty due to limited economic opportunities felt by local communities and a government system that is still not optimal, forcing them to carry out massive demonstrations to demand rights and hold the government accountable for all the socio-economic problems they face.

The phenomenon of riots that occurred on January 10th 2024 in the capital Port Moresby and Lae City certainly had a massive impact on national instability in Papua New Guinea, this was further exacerbated by the fact that the actors who mobilized and took to the streets in this massive demonstration were filled with members of the state apparatus itself such as members of the police group to other public sector staff who came down as a form of resentment due to a 50% salary cut unilaterally in the month's edition. This condition itself certainly gave a severe blow to James Marape as Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea and other central government actors seeing the increasingly unstable condition of the country. This condition itself forced James Marape to issue a statement of national emergency for 14 days and forced efforts to tighten security by deploying the remaining soldiers around the city to stem any form of further impact that could occur at any time (Chad De Guzman and Armani Syed, 2024).

This large demonstration had a huge impact on all sectors of life in Papua New Guinea. This action had an impact on the riots and violent attitudes made by demonstrators which led to the looting of several shops in the city center, this riot itself also resulted in injuries and the killing of dozens of people in two major cities namely Port Moresby and Lae and other impacts that were present were physical damage targeting many government buildings to shopping centers.

The riots that occurred of course also caused a new form of problem namely the phenomenon of political crisis and public distrust of the government in the case of cutting the salaries of state officials for no apparent reason, this case also had an impact on the great pressure from the community and the opposition felt by James Marape as Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea with various demands present.

Government Responses and Interventions

In response to the riots that occurred in the capital Port Moresby and spread to other areas. The Papua New Guinea government imposed a national state of emergency. Prime Minister James Marape declared a 14-day state of national emergency. This allowed Marape to take the necessary steps to restore stability to Papua New Guinea. Measures such as the dismissal of the Police Commissioner of the Papua New Guinea Police Force and several staff deemed responsible for exacerbating the unrest. Appointing and installing new police leadership to oversee, investigate and restore national conditions. The state of national emergency also restricts any assembly activities by all parties to maintain order including political assemblies by opposition groups.

The Tenth Section of the Papua New Guinea Constitution permits these restrictive measures. Given that these measures have also been taken several times before at the local level during inter-tribal conflicts. Such restrictions certainly impact on the internationally recognized civil and political rights of the people of Papua New Guinea that Marape and his administration are supposed to guarantee (Phil Glover and Warren Doudle, 2024). Article 19 (3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) allows states to restrict the rights of their citizens in certain circumstances, namely (a) to respect the rights or reputations of others, and (b) for the protection of national security or public order, or of public health or morals. This leeway is allowed as long as the state guarantees and respects fundamental rights such as Human Rights and does not discriminate (OHCHR, 1966).

International Response and Impact of Foreign Relations

The internal unrest that occurred in Papua New Guinea in early 2024 dealt a severe blow to the James Marape Government looking at geopolitical conditions and security instability. As a developing country and still very dependent on foreign investors, the riots that occurred will certainly tarnish the name of Papua New Guinea in the international world and will have a major impact on reducing investment levels and prospects for economic cooperation with existing partner countries looking at their unsafe internal conditions. The riots that occurred in January 2024 also resulted in several critical international responses.

One of the impacts of these riots is the strain on diplomatic relations that exist for Papua New Guinea and China, the riots that occurred in Port Moresby and

other cities had an impact on the injury of two Chinese citizens as victims of attacks carried out in the corners of the city and the discovery of reports of looting and damage aimed at several Chinese product stores or companies in Papua New Guinea. The Chinese government lodged an official protest to the James Marape Government regarding the riots that harmed China, this fairly large loss had an impact on the political tensions that existed between Papua New Guinea and China. Responding to this problem, China as a country filed their complaint to the James Marape Government with an impact on the losses that the people of their country face. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Mao Ning said that there are an estimated 20.000 Chinese citizens living in Papua New Guinea, seeing these conditions Zeng Fanhua as the Chinese Ambassador to Papua New Guinea took action namely visiting affected residents and comforting business owners who experienced damage to their shops due to this riot (Ben Westcott, 2024).

This riot that occurred in Papua New Guinea also had an impact on the presence of international responses carried out by Australia and the United States as partner countries. Responding to the riots that occurred, Australia and the United States acted quickly and swiftly to provide security assistance with their trained members to go to Papua New Guinea and fill the vacant security positions. This step taken by Australia and the United States is a form of their seriousness to remain on the side of Papua New Guinea and try to maintain long-standing diplomatic relations to maintain the influence of Australia and the United States as the main security partners in Papua New Guinea.

This riot also received a response from neighboring country namely Indonesia. The Indonesian government under the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Port Moresby coordinated with the Papua New Guinea Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the existing police to increase security for the 1.317 Indonesian citizens and instructed Indonesians there to stay in their respective homes and contact the emergency outline if they needed help (Rina Ayu Panca Rini, 2024). Furthermore, Indonesia as a neighboring country also offered diplomatic assistance to encourage the peace process as soon as possible.

Securitization Processes

Rioting in Papua New Guinea began in the capital Port Moresby on Wednesday, January 10th after Papua New Guinea civil servants and police received only half of their salaries. A rumor that the pay cut was a policy made by Prime Minister James

Marape to lower taxes spread among protesters from among civil servants and police. The demonstration turned into a riot after looting by 'opportunistic people' according to National Capital District Governor Powes Parkop's statement on Facebook on Wednesday January 10th "who have taken advantage of events getting out of hand" (Hillary Whiteman and Heather Chen, 2024). The wave of unrest spread to Lae Township, where the absence of the police caused the riots to spiral out of control.

Public protest movements in various parts of the world including Papua New Guinea are indeed a common occurrence. Protests are carried out as a means of demanding social improvements and solving problems that are of concern to the wider community addressed to the government. Protest movements in the form of demonstrations are a form of social pressure by the community to the government as a state institution that has the authority to make policies and guarantee public order. However, protest movements do not always run without violence, in various events of social protest demonstrations it is not uncommon to get excessive reactions from the government. Usually, the pretext of maintaining 'national order' and so on is used to justify the use of violence by state security forces in the face of waves of demonstrations. Such was the case in the Myanmar people's protest movement that began in 2021 against the Tatmadaw military junta government. The people of Myanmar strongly rejected the takeover of power by the military led by General Min Aung Hlaing, demanding the release of Aung San Suu Kyi who was taken prisoner after being overthrown by the junta government. The deployment of the armed military in response to popular protests was characterized by the use of excessive force in response to popular movements, and ultimately led to many casualties.

The violence that eventually emerges in community protest movements can also come from non-state actors. Not from the police or military, but other actors such as armed groups, separatists, and from the community itself. As happened in Haiti since 2018. At that time the Haitian government planned to remove fuel subsidies. The plan triggered a large-scale public protest movement. They rejected the plan to remove fuel subsidies and then gave demands to president Jovenel Moïse to immediately resign from office. The widespread demonstrations led to the involvement of armed gangs which in turn led to a prolonged political and economic crisis. This led to another escalation in 2024, resulting in around 5.600 fatalities due to armed gang violence (Amnesty International, 2024).

In the case of Papua New Guinea; the riots that culminated in looting, arson, and dozens of fatalities in Port Moresby and Lae urged the Papua New Guinea Government to take immediate action. The violence that occurred in this protest movement was not carried out by the government or certain group actors, looting and burning were carried out organically by the people of Papua New Guinea. It is of course necessary to understand some of the motives for the violence perpetrated by civil society. 'Looters' is the term given to the perpetrators of looting. According to Mueller (2003: 515) the term is used broadly to describe a wide range of activities that differ widely across organizational levels, levels of community operations, scales and objects. In terms of organizational level, looting is used to describe organized and systematic looting (looting by armed groups) as well as unsystematic looting such as mob looting of food warehouses. The term is also used to describe deprivation that occurs at different levels of society, from elite 'looting' of state resources. Economic inequality is a deep-rooted problem in Papua New Guinea, a ticking time bomb that could explode at any moment if the opportunity arises to trigger it.

On Thursday January 11th Prime Minister James Marape declared a national state of emergency. The Prime Minister announced the national emergency would last 14 days and alerted 1,000 defense personnel to react to any escalation of violence (Tim Swanston, Theckla Gunga, and Belinda Kora. 2024). The Papua New Guinean government saw that the demonstrations on Wednesday had escalated into riots. The riots spread and resulted in looting, arson, and loss of life. The level of unrest had reached the threshold required to take immediate emergency action. Prime Minister James Marape acted as a securitizing actor by delivering a speech act that was accepted by the general public in Papua New Guinea, declaring a national emergency. Marape meets the right criteria as a securitization actor, where the decision to apply a phenomenon/situation as a security issue is determined by the speech act of someone who has broad influence or agency, such as a government official, politician, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) activist, and public figure (Hadiwinata, 2017). Thus, when the security issue reaches the threshold, the securitization process is initiated by James Marape's statement.

V. CONCLUSION

The national instability that occurred in early 2024 in Papua New Guinea was caused by riots that spread from the capital city of Port Moresby to the

town of Lae. The riots caused casualties, as well as losses due to looting by opportunistic parties. It all started with government workers having their wages cut without any prior notice or socialization. Although after the escalation of the unrest the government gave an official statement that there was a misunderstanding due to a payment system error that led to the wage cuts, while promising to pay the remaining wages in the following month. However, the government's statement was so slow that it could not prevent the unrest, especially in addressing the widespread disinformation about the wage cut and the new tax plan among the public.

Peaceful protests by government workers and police officers were peaceful at first, but rumors and disinformation began to spread among protesters and civil society. The economic inequality inherent in the social structure of Papua New Guinea became a ticking time bomb that ultimately contributed to the escalation of the situation. Arson, vandalism, and looting of property owned by businessmen and foreigners became the targets of opportunists in the absence of the police to maintain order.

Although these riots only occurred domestically, they triggered a response from external parties. The looting aimed at Chinese citizens, triggered China to give a direct protest and demand that the Papua New Guinea government severely punish the perpetrators who harmed its citizens in the country. Considering the huge impact and demands, of course the protests submitted by China will be dealt with as well as possible, considering that China is one of the major countries that is building closer relations with countries in the Pacific such as Papua New Guinea. Seeing the absence of the Papua New Guinea police and the increasingly uncontrolled riots, a country that has very close bilateral relations with Papua New Guinea namely Australia is collaborating with the United States to intervene in the public security sector in the country in an effort to restore Papua New Guinea's conditions to be much more under control.

The increasingly unfavorable domestic conditions eventually gave pressure to the Papua New Guinea government to immediately take action to prevent the worsening of the riots that occurred. Through the concept of securitization, its application can be seen from how James Marape as Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea made a live broadcast and gave a speech stating that there was a serious national problem faced by the country due to riots in major cities. Once the national condition was declared dangerous, securitization measures were initiated and the government began to implement plans to

restore a conducive situation. A national emergency was declared and the army was included in the efforts.

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