

Indonesian Freeport Workers Fired Upon

By [TOM WRIGHT](#)

JAKARTA--Two Indonesians working for Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Inc. were injured on Tuesday morning when a bus carrying 60 employees to one of the world's largest gold mines came under fire from unknown assailants early Tuesday, a company spokesman said.

It was the latest in a string of similar sniper attacks that have hit convoys of workers and security forces guarding a road that runs to the giant Grasberg mine, which is located in the remote mountains of Indonesia's easternmost Papua province.

Mindo Pangaribuan, a spokesman for the Indonesian unit of Phoenix-based Freeport, said both men were in a stable condition after suffering gun wounds.

Three people - including an Australian - have been killed in attacks on the mine since this summer and other workers and security personnel have been injured. The police arrested a number of alleged Papuan separatists after those attacks but have since said they have yet to conclude their investigations into the attacks. Mr. Pangaribuan declined to comment on the likely source of the violence, citing the ongoing police investigations. Papuan separatists have been waging a low-level insurgency since Indonesia took over the province from the Netherlands in 1969. The Grasberg mine has, in the past, been a focus of separatist violence.

Some commentators say they believe the shootings may have their roots in disagreements between the army and police over fees paid to protect the mine. Freeport, in U.S. filings, said it paid \$8 million in 2008 to Indonesian security forces to defend the mine, mainly for items like housing, food and schooling.

Since the mine began operations in the early 1970s, Indonesia's army was responsible for security. But in 2004, under efforts to professionalize the army as a national defense force, the responsibility for organizing Freeport's security was handed to the police. Still, the army plays an ongoing role in the security operations around the mine, Mr.

Pangaribuan said.

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