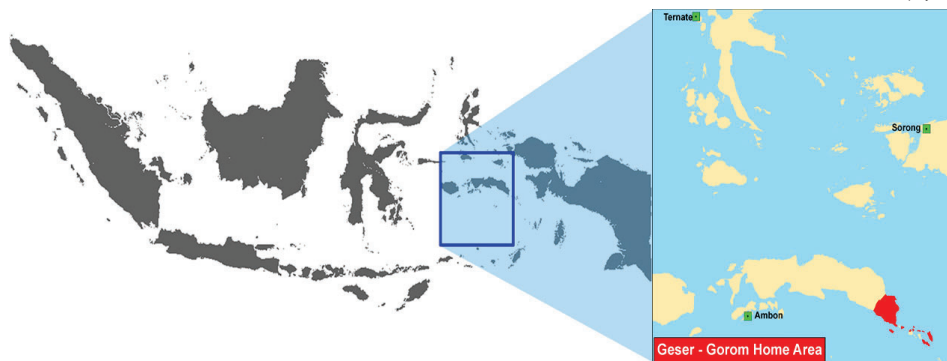


# GESER-GOROM



Kari Muller



Map by RD

| Demography  | Geser Language                                  | Status   |
|---|---|--|
| Location: Maluku<br>Population: 35.000<br>Major religion: Islam | Bible: No<br>Jesus Film: No<br>Online Media: No | Believers: 0 <sup>(335)</sup><br>Engaged: No<br>Indigenous church: 0 |

## Identity and Location

The Geser-Gorom people live on Gorom Island as well as the eastern end of nearby Seram Island, in the province of Maluku. There is a confusion with respect to the name of this people group: all who live on the island of Seram are called the Seram people. Meanwhile, each group on the island also have their own respective people group names, such as Wemale, Alune, Naulu and Lumoli.

People who live on Seram are also sometimes collectively called the Alifuru (literally, "Original people"). Seram Island is also frequently called Nusa Ina (literally, 'Mother Island'). These names of the island and people illustrate that the people believe their island to be the birthplace of the human race.

The Geser-Golom language is in the Banda-Geser grouping, which also includes the Banda, Bati and Watubela languages. There are three dialects of the Geser-Gorom language: Gorom Laut, Mina-Mina Gorom and Kelimuri.

## Society and Culture

The Geser-Gorom people are primarily farmers and fisherman. They farm rice, potatoes, sweet potatoes, bananas, peas, sago and coconuts. Their staple foods are rice and sago. Historically, the Geser-Gorom were famous for their Kabasa ceremony, revering the spirits believed to influence the harvest.

The Geser-Gorom practice a patrilineal extended family system, and newly married couples usually live near the husband's extended family. Fathers typically lead each family and are expected to provide living needs. Wives typically take care of children, cooking, and other

household duties.

Nuclear families function as the basic social unit in Geser-Gorom society. Several families form an extended family (keluarga besar) also known as rumah tua, in which the eldest family members are the leaders. Numerous rumah tua group together to make a Soa which is led by a Soa chief. When the Soa gather together they form a negeri (or hena) which is led by a king.

A king is assisted by a council group called Badan Saniri Negeri (Saniri Domestic Agencies). This council is composed of the customary chief, Soa leaders (landlords who served to overcome the problem of inheritance and land disputes), Kawang (security chief) and Marinyo (interpreter of news). Since the time of Japanese occupation in World War II, this system of leadership is starting to disappear.

## Beliefs

The Geser-Gorom hold to Islam as their faith. Down through the generations they have applied a mixture of Islamic and tribal law. Alongside orthodox Islam, the Geser-Gorom continue in animistic and mystical beliefs, so their form of Islam is mixed with animism.

## Needs

On a small scale the Geser-Gorom need to become familiar with appropriate technology and its uses. There is a need for increased opportunity to train and prepare for the work force. Improving the quality of both formal and informal education could also have great value for Geser-Gorom society. Limited electricity and clean water prevent further development. Their health care is also an issue of concern.<sup>(E-RD)</sup>