

Indonesia: OPM rejects peace talks with Jakarta unless mediated by UN

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Jakarta — The West Papua National Liberation Army-Free Papua Organisation (TPNPB-OPM) has rejected peace talks with the government if it is only mediated by National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM). They are also asking President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo to be prepared to sit down with them at the negotiating table.

TPNPB-OPM spokesperson Seby Sambom said that they want the peaceful dialogue or negotiations to be mediated by the United Nations (UN) because the armed conflict in Papua is already on an international scale.

“In principle we agree if the negotiations are in accordance with UN mechanisms, but we are not interested in Indonesia’s methods,” said Sambom in a written release on Friday March 25.

Sambom said that they also do not want to hold the dialogue in Indonesia but want it to be held in a neutral country in accordance with UN mechanisms.

“The negotiations must be held in a neutral country, in accordance with UN mechanisms,” he said.

Sambom remarked that President Widodo must be aware and must have the courage to sit down at the negotiating table with the TPNPB-OPM’s negotiating team. He also reminded Widodo that the UN is an international institution which can act as a mediator in resolving armed conflicts.

“In the statement to Jakarta we are asking that Indonesian President Jokowi be aware and have the courage to sit at the negotiating table with the TPNPB-OPM’s negotiating team together with all the delegates from the organisations which are struggling [for independence],” he said.

Earlier, the Komnas HAM claimed it would initiate peace talks between the government and the OPM. The Komnas HAM also claimed that the proposal for talks had been agreed to by the government, ranging from President Widodo, Coordinating Minister for Security, Politics and Legal Affairs Mahfud MD to the TNI (Indonesian military) and Polri (Indonesian police).

Last week, Komnas HAM along with the Komnas HAM Papua representative office began sounding out peaceful dialogue by meeting with a series of groups in Papua on March 16-23.

In the initial stage, Komnas HAM is endeavoring to hear and ask for the views of key parties on the issue, especially the OPM, both those within the country as well as those overseas. The other key people are religious, traditional community and intellectual figures.

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