

Indonesia: Prabowo approves recruitment of 1,000 Special Autonomy soldiers in West Papua

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Toyiban, Manokwari — Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto has approved a program to recruit 1,000 Special Autonomy non-commissioned officers (Bintara Otsus) which was proposed by the West Papua/Kasuari/XVIII Regional Military Command (Kodam).

Kodam Kasuari commander Major General Ali Hamdan Bogra explained that the recruitment of the 1,000 Bintara Otsus would be done in cooperation with the West Papua provincial government and all regency and municipal government. Participants that can take part in the recruitment will be indigenous Papuan women and men.

“The candidates will come from all regencies and cities in the territory of West Papua. Participants can register themselves with the closest Korem [Sub-Regional Military Command] and Kodim [District Military Command] in their respective areas”, said Bogra in Manokwari on Monday September 7.

Bogra said that the participants who are accepted will be trained at military battalion headquarters (Rindam) throughout Indonesia bearing in mind that the Rindam XVIII/Kasuari’s infrastructure is still limited.

The hope is, said Bogra, that the Bintara Otsus can be deployed back to regencies and cities throughout West Papua as motivators to mobilise the youth generation to step forward in safeguarding the stability of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

Kasuari/XVIII Chief of Staff Brigadier General Ferry Zein said earlier that they are currently discussing the program with governors, regencies and mayors through West Papua province. It is hoped that the program will be paid for by Special Autonomy funds.

“It’s hoped that this program will be an opportunity for indigenous Papuan women and men to have a career as a TNI [Indonesian military] member”, said Zein.

Zein said that Kodam Kasuari still needs many personnel new units that they want to establish and it is hoped that local people can fill this deficit. He said that Kodam Kasuari is still quite new and still growing, adding that they are pushing for the formation of five new Kodim and one Korem in Fakfak to support Kodam Kasuari’s work.

“West Papua is vast, Kodam only has one Korem at present. Because of this it must be augmented by at least one more Korem. We will form a brigade, so we need many personnel to fill it”, said Zein.

Zein explained that over the last few years indigenous Papuan women and men have been prioritised in the recruitment of new members and Kodam is allocating 80 percent of positions to local recruits.

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P.S.

Translated by James Balowski. The original title of the article was “Menhan Prabowo setuju perekrutan 1.000 Bintara Otsus Papua Barat”.

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