

Indonesia: KNPB asks police not to create uproar over Papua activist Victor Yeimo's release

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Jayapura - West Papua National Committee (KNPB) spokesperson Ones Suhuniap is asking Jayapura city police chief (Kapolresta) Senior Commissioner Victor Makbun to stop creating a commotion in the media about a planned thanksgiving meeting to welcome the release of Victor Yeimo.

According to Suhuniap, Makbun does not need to be overly excessive in response to Yeimo's welcome. Papua activist Yeimo, who is also the international spokesperson for the KNPB, will be released from the Abepura penitentiary on Saturday September 23. Earlier in May, the Jayapura District Court sentenced Yeimo to eight months in prison for treason over the anti-racism demonstrations and riots in Jayapura in 2019. "The statement by the Kapolresta is as if the KNPB organisation will create a commotion, but it is the Kapolresta's statement itself that is in fact creating a skewed opinion and a commotion. The Kapolresta does not need to create a subjective public opinion about the KNPB without evidence that can be justified", Suhuniap said on Thursday September 21. Suhuniap claimed that in every activity the KNPB does in fact prioritise the values of humanity and democracy, uphold human rights and respect the laws and regulations of Indonesia. He then stated that on the contrary, every activity by the KNPB attracts provocation from the police. "At every single peaceful demo or religious event, the police always creates a provocation, with the latest being on August 15, 2022, when the KNPB was holding a peaceful demo, instead the police committed violence and torture", he said. The KNPB in suspects that thorough Makbun's statement the police have in fact something bad planned for Yeimo's release. "We can believe that the statement publically expressed by the Kapolresta is a way of creating a commotion and preconditioning to frighten the ordinary Papuan people. We are sure there is a plot to criminalise the activity welcoming Victor Yeimo", said Suhuniap. "We ask that the Jayapura Kapolresta not create a skewed public opinion or create an uproar", he said. The KNPB itself, said Suhuniap, in welcoming Yeimo's release, will hold thanksgiving prayers and a joint meal that is being planned by the Papuan People's Front Against Racism (RPMR), which has up until now been campaigning for Yeimo's release. "As believers who have faith in God, the RPMR fights racism and is planning thanksgiving prayers, because worship is part of the human rights guaranteed under Indonesian law. The thanksgiving itself will be joined by all the organisational movements, social organisations, associations, church groups, traditional [communities] and the ordinary Papuan people who are anti-racist". "All Papuans who are victims of racism will be involved in the thanksgiving for Victor Yeimo's release. We once again convey to the police, more specifically the Jayapura city police chief, not to create a skewed opinion. The thanksgiving for the release of Victor Yeimo does not need to be politicised with subjective sentiments." "To the people in the land of Papua, especially Papuans in the cities of Jayapura, Sentani and Kaerom and surrounding areas, please come peacefully and take part in the thanksgiving prayers. We also convey to non-Papuans in organisations and personally who are against the practice of racism, please join the prayers [as well]". Meanwhile the Jayapura district police are planning to deploy a number of personnel to provide security when Yeimo is

released on Saturday.

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Translated by James Balowski

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