

Intimidation of Papuan rights representative could tarnish Indonesia's image

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Jakarta — The terrorisation of the Papuan chief representative of the National Human Rights Commission or Komnas HAM, Albert Rumbekwan, could have an impact on Indonesia's image as a member of the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Moreover, Amnesty International has sent a letter to the president raising questions about the case.

Komnas Ham coordinator Yosep Adhi Prasetyo said on Wednesday September 26 in Jakarta that Komnas HAM has received a copy of the letter from Amnesty International addressed to the president in relation to the intimidation experience by Rumbekwan, which was passed on by the State Secretariat.

According to Prasetyo, Komnas HAM has been asked to assist in responding to the letter because the intimidation can be seen as a reflection of the government's lack of seriousness in protecting human rights workers and activist in Indonesia. Prasetyo also said there has been a positive response by the Papua regional police to a letter from Komnas HAM and Rumbekwan is now being protected by police.

Separately, Vice President Jusuf Kalla said he was not aware of the letter from Amnesty International to President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono raising questions about the intimidated against Rumbekwan by unidentified persons.

Aside from checking the letter, Kalla will also be requesting a report on the case from those responsible for security in Papua. "I will check and ask them to report", said Kalla following a face-to-face meeting with the National Construction Service Development Institute board of directors at the Vice Presidential Palace in Jakarta.

Many parties have declared their concern about the intimidation experienced by Rumbekwan because as the chief representative of Komnas HAM in Papua, he is a state official and cannot be harassed when carrying

out his duties.

As has been reported, last week Rumbekwan's residence in the Papuan capital of Jayapura was broken into by an unidentified individual. In addition to this, over the last four months Rumbekwan has received threats and been terrorised (Kompas, 24/9). The intimidation began after he met with Hina Jilani, the Special Representative to the United Nations General Secretary. (jos/har)

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