

TEMPO *Interactive*, Jakarta: Papua police said on Tuesday (19/5) personnels from its elite squad have been sent to Mamberamo raya regency after a number members of Free Papua Organisation seized a village in the regency demanding their detained friends to be released.

The information came a day after regional police confirmed on Monday a seizure in Kapeso village in Mamberamo Hilir Subregency which began on Sunday (17/5). A small airstrip in the village was held by the group, and the Morning Star flag of the Free Papua Organisation reportedly flown in the village. Unconfirmed report said the seizure was to protest over the arrest of their members and to demand immediate release of its members.

Spokesman for Papua Regional Police Adjutant Senior Commissioner Nurhabri said a team from Mobile Brigade elite squad has been sent to the village, and later in the day said the team was sent along with negotiators from local church, tribal leaders, and regional officials.

Other information said Papua Police to deploy more personnel from the elite squad to the village supported by the air force helicopter on Wednesday (20/5).

No clear information on the size of the group or the size of squad sent by authorities to the area. Papua Police Chief Inspector General Bagus Ekodanto refused to identify the group as the Free Papua Organisation while spokesman for Indonesia Police, Inspector General Abubakar Nataprawira said on Tuesday the group was driven by three members of the separatist group which recruited local youth to seize the airstrip.

The group reportedly equipped with firearms and a single sideband communication radio.

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