

KOMPAS.com - The government is sending reinforcement to Papua ahead of the July 8 presidential election by deploying three platoons of the elite police Mobile Brigade (Brimob).

Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs Widodo A.S. said two platoons would be sent from Jakarta and one from Makassar, South Sulawesi. Earlier in April, two Brimob platoons were sent from Jakarta and Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi.

Widodo arrived Monday in Papua with Home Minister Mardiyanto, Indonesian Military (TNI) chief Gen. Djoko Santoso, National Police chief Gen. Bambang Hendarso Danuri, State Intelligence Agency (BIN) chief Syamsir Siregar and 15 other officials from the various security agencies.

Widodo said the visit was held to gauge Papua's readiness to hold the election.

"With the recent escalation in security problems, we are sending three more Brimob platoons," he said after arriving in Jayapura.

The two-day visit will see the entourage meet Monday evening with Papua and West Papua leaders, including governors, provincial legislative councils, the Papua People's Council, the regional General Elections Commissions (KPUD) and Elections Supervisory Committees, and the Jayapura mayor and regent.

On Tuesday, the entourage will meet with the Cendrawasih Military Command chief, Jayapura Main Naval Base chief, Jayapura Air Force Base chief, Sarmi regent and Mamberamo acting regent. Security in Papua has deteriorated since the April 9 legislative polls.

A day before polling day, a Molotov cocktail was found in the Tami River estuary. On polling day, the Abepura Police station was attacked, while the rector's office at Cendrawasih University was set on fire.

Other incidents in Jayapura included the shooting of civilians in East Koya and a fire at the Papua KPUD office. There was also an attack on police officers collecting ballots in Tinggi Nambut, Puncak Jaya regency, and the seizure of the Kapeso airstrip in Mamberamo Raya regency in early May by a group of 150 armed men allegedly led by a military deserter.

Police stormed the airfield early Saturday after weeks of negotiations. Three people were killed and six others injured in the incident.

Papua Police chief Insp. Gen. F.X. Bagus Ekodanto identified the leader as Dekcy Imbiri, allegedly skilled in battlefield strategy and assembling makeshift firearms. Bagus said the police

had yet to identify the unit Dekcy was from.

Cendrawasih Military Command chief Maj. Gen. A.Y. Nasution, however, denied the claims, saying only two soldiers had a last name Imbiri.

"One is stationed in Serui and the other is dead," he said. (**Angela Flassy**)