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Papua New Guinea has been defending its agreement to repatriate 700 West Papuans to neighbouring Indonesia.

Papua New Guinea's Foreign Minister, Sam Abal, says there's nothing new about his country's officials working with their Indonesian counterparts.

The agreement between the two nations' leaders was announced last week after a meeting also attended by the Indonesian military commander.

Mr Abal says it's always been the case that his government helps facilitate the return of Papuans who have fled Indonesia should they want to return.

“There have been for some time quite a few people from West papua on this side but it's always been our wish to process them, whether they decide to stay in PNG, where there's always the opportunity for citizenship, but where they're not able to do that they can be repatriated to a third country. But the best option we always look at is to see if they be returned and be accepted over there (Indonesia)”

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