

Free Papua founder welcomed with warmth, protest in homeland

Geschreven door Nethy Dharma Somba, The Jakarta Post
dinsdag 24 maart 2009 20:25

Co-founder of the Free Papua Movement (OPM) Nicholas Jouwe returned to his homeland in Papua on Sunday after more than 40 years in exile.

Upon arrival at Sentani Airport in Jayapura, Nicholas received warm welcome from dozens of extended family members. Among those welcoming him were Papua Governor Barnabas Suebu, Papuan-born Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Freddy Numbery, and Papua Police Head Brig. Gen. F.X. Bagus Ekodanto.

Outside the airport gate, however, dozens of pro-independence Papua students staged a rally, stretching out banners read, "Welcome, Immediately End Oppression" and "You Started It, You (Who) Should End It, Welcome".

Protest coordinator Viktor Yeimo told reporters Nicholas's homecoming should end oppression against Papuans. Nicholas gave no response to the protest.

"Pak Nick Jouwe's homecoming should not be politicized, and there should be no certain interest behind his coming back home," Viktor said.

After engaged in a peace talk with Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare Aburizal Bakrie on Friday, Nicholas is scheduled to conduct talks with local Papuan leaders in the country's most eastern province.