

5 March 2021

Indonesia: Two West Papuan human rights defenders detained

On 3 March 2021, West Papuan human rights defenders **Roland Levy** and **Kelvin Molama**, were forcibly taken from their respective student dormitories in East Jakarta and Central Jakarta, by a group of plain-clothes individuals. It was only later confirmed that the individuals who had detained them were part of the Criminal Research Unit of Polda Metro Jaya regional police. Both defenders are currently detained at the Polda Metro Jaya police station.

[Roland Levy](#) is a West Papuan student human rights defender. As a coordinator of the Alliansi Mahasiswa Papua - AMP (West Papua Student Alliance) for Jakarta, he leads discussions on democracy, human rights violations and the rights of freedom of the press, and is involved in media outreach for the Alliance. He has also coordinated initiatives focused on the State's responsibility to resolve tribal conflicts in Timika in 2017, and West Papua's right to self-determination. [Kelvin Molama](#) is a West Papuan student human rights defender and an active member of the AMP. He has been actively involved in the group's human rights activities including the organisation of discussion forums and protests against the human rights violation in West Papua.

On the morning of 3 March 2021, fourteen plain-clothes individuals in four vehicles entered the premises of Yahukimo student accommodation and forcibly removed human rights defender Kelvin Molama. The individuals, believed at the time to be police or intelligence officials, did not present any warrant for detaining the defender. Other residents of the dormitory witnessing the detention were prevented from taking photos of the incident. At about the same time, fellow student human rights defender Roland Levy was also taken away by plain-clothes individuals from his student dormitory in the Senen area of Central Jakarta. No warrant was presented for his arrest.

Later that day, individuals close to the human rights defenders were able to confirm that both defenders had been detained by officials from the Criminal Research Unit of Polda Metro Jaya. Roland Levy and Kelvin Molama have both been threatened with formal arrest under Article 170 and Article 365 of the Criminal Code, which relate to of violence and theft. The exact reason for their arrest has yet to be provided to the human rights defenders, yet they remain detained at the Polda Metro Jaya police station, where they have had access to their lawyers.

Human rights defenders on the ground believe that the arrests were made as a pre-emptive measure, to slow the momentum of the growing protest movement in West Papua, and intimidate and discourage those involved in the movement. Since the peaceful demonstrations led by West Papuan student human rights defenders in August 2019, many of these defenders have been subjected to relentless threats, intimidation and harassment by Indonesian officials. Veronica Koman, a lawyer and woman human rights defender who worked closely with the defenders has been [targeted](#) with various forms of harassment, such as the inclusion of her name on the country's wanted list and threats that an Interpol red notice would be issued in her name.

Front Line Defenders is extremely concerned for the safety of Roland Levy and Kelvin Molama, as it believes they are being targeted for their legitimate and peaceful work for the protection of human rights. Front Line Defenders condemns the increasingly hostile environment for human rights defenders in Indonesia, specifically those from West Papua, working on the rights of West Papuans and human rights issues more broadly.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Indonesia to:

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the detention of human

rights defenders Roland Levy and Kelvin Molama with a view to ensuring their protection and release, publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;

2. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Indonesia and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.