

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/indonesia-french-journalists-to-be-freed-24-10-2014,47152.html>

Asia - Indonesia

Free soon

French journalists to be freed after getting two and a half months sentences

24 October 2014

Reporters Without Borders welcomes the imminent release of **Thomas Dandois** and **Valentine Bourrat**, two French journalists who have been held for the past 11 weeks in Indonesia's eastern province of Papua on a charge of misusing their tourist visas to do investigative reporting.

After being sentenced today to two and a half months in prison by a court in Jayapura, Papua's capital, they are to be released next week. The prosecutor requested a four-month sentence but the judge decided to sentence them to a period similar to what they had already spent in pre-trial detention.

Reporters Without Borders nonetheless regrets that were found guilty despite their right under international treaties to gather information as journalists.

"It is a big relief to know that Dandois and Bourrat will soon be released," Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Christophe Deloire. *"Any other outcome would have set a terrible precedent for media freedom in Indonesia. We stress that, according to the principles of international law, they did not commit any crime by courageously undertaking their investigative reporting in Indonesia."*

The journalists' lawyer, Aristo Pangaribuan, told Reporters Without Borders: *"On a practical perspective it's a good news, on monday they will be free. But legally speaking it isn't. This judgement sets a precedent which might be used by the authorities in the future to justify surveillance or arrests of foreign journalists in the region."*

Dandois and Bourrat had received a great deal of international support in recent weeks, including extensive media coverage, many statements by human rights NGOs, appeals by their support committee and a [petition for their release](#) with more than 14,000 signatures.

Indonesia's low ranking in the [2014 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#), 132nd out of 180 countries, is due in part to the lack of transparency and restrictions on reporting in Papua.

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