



Indonesia Tightens Police Oversight for Foreign Journalists and Researchers

Issue 13 | June 2025

The Indonesian National Police has issued a new regulation that allows officers to issue clearance letters (“**Police Certificate**”) for certain activities by foreign nationals in Indonesia, particularly those involving journalism and research.

Police Regulation No. 3 of 2025 on Police Functional Supervision of Foreign Nationals (“**PR 3/2025**”) was issued on 10 March 2025 and came into effect on the same day. Although the regulation appears to authorize the police to require journalists and researchers to obtain prior clearance through the Police Certificate – especially in sensitive areas (i.e., conflict-prone areas or other locations deemed high-risk or restricted), such as the 6 provinces of Papua (Papua, Central Papua, Papua Mountains, South Papua, West Papua, and Southwest Papua) – it does not clearly state whether this is mandatory.

This advisory outlines the key provisions of PR 3/2025 and its potential implications for companies employing foreign workers in Indonesia. While the regulation focuses on specific types of activities, its broad language leaves room for wider interpretation. Businesses should be aware of its contents and monitor how it is applied in practice.

A. Key Provisions of PR 3/2025

1. Functional Oversight of Foreign Nationals

PR 3/2025 authorizes the police to monitor foreign nationals in Indonesia through two types of oversight:

This oversight aims to ensure compliance with Indonesian laws and to prevent or respond to threats to the safety of foreign nationals, activities considered dangerous or likely to disrupt public order, and other criminal acts. The National Police chief has said the regulation implements aspects of the recently amended Law No. 6 of 2011 on Immigration (“**Immigration Law**”).

Administrative Oversight: collecting personal data from foreign nationals through their guarantor, such as travel documents and other identifying information, and issuing the Police Certificate, where applicable.

Operational Oversight: active monitoring of a foreign national’s activities, particularly those that may raise legal or security concerns.

2. Documentation Requirements for Foreign Nationals

PR 3/2025 allows the police to request documents from guarantors – such as employers, sponsors, or host institutions – that have arranged housing for foreign nationals. This request may be made through letters or by in-person visits by police intelligence officers (with warrant). The required information may include travel documents and other data deemed relevant by the police.

For foreign nationals involved in journalism or research in specific locations, the guarantor may apply for a Police Certificate on behalf of the foreign national if required. The Police Certificate will be issued through an online system for registering foreign nationals and processing requests. The system is to be operational by March 2027 and will allow guarantors to submit information electronically through the official National Police website. Police Certificates will be issued free of charge and remain valid for the requested period. Until the online system is in place, submissions must be made manually.

B. Additional Considerations

1. Compliance Uncertainty: Is the Police Certificate Compulsory?

While the wording of PR 3/2025 implies that a Police Certificate may be required for journalism and research, especially in sensitive areas, police officials have clarified that it is not compulsory. In response to concerns from civil society and press groups, National Police chief has said the process is optional and intended primarily for those seeking police support or protection.

Nonetheless, the regulation itself does not explicitly state that the certificate is voluntary. In practice, companies may find that clearance is expected or encouraged in certain situations,

particularly where the activity involves sensitive subject matter or locations. Judging from the previous regime, foreigners intending to travel outside the area of their stay permit's domicile are still required to obtain a travel permit (*Surat Keterangan Jalan/SKJ* or *Surat Tanda Melapor/STM*) from the local police. Although, in theory, there is no explicit legal basis for requiring an SKJ or STM, we have observed that in practice, local police continue to impose this requirement.

2. Are Existing Rules Changed for Foreign Journalists and Researchers?

Generally, foreign citizens intending to enter, stay, and work in Indonesia must obtain a visa (now electronically) through the immigration officials as stipulated in the Immigration Law. In practice, foreign journalists intending to work in Indonesia must also obtain a Journalist Visa through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which includes submitting a reporting plan and collecting a temporary press card upon arrival. Whereas, foreign researchers must first apply for the Ethical Clearance and Research Permit from National Research and Innovation Agency (*Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional*, locally known as BRIN) before obtaining a Research Visa.

PR 3/2025 does not replace these existing procedures but may add an extra layer of administrative oversight

3. Implications for Companies with Foreign Workers

Companies employing foreign nationals must ensure compliance with PR 3/2025, particularly where they act as guarantors or are responsible for housing or hosting arrangements. This includes providing necessary information and assisting with any police requests regarding the foreign national's activities.

If deemed necessary, employers should also assist foreign workers in obtaining a Police Certificate if they are involved in journalism or research in sensitive areas.

Conclusion

PR 3/2025 introduces further paperwork and administrative oversight for certain activities by foreign nationals in Indonesia. Companies with foreign employees should be aware of this regulation, particularly if their staff are involved in journalism, research, or activities in regions deemed high-risk by the authorities. While the regulation and official statements suggest a Police Certificate may be needed only in these cases, the lack of clear sanctions leaves the consequences of non-compliance uncertain.

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