

ECUMENICAL FORUM OF PAPUAN CHURCHES

OPEN LETTER

“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account..” Hebrews 4:13

Dear
Re : *Release of all detainees in Police (POLDA) and military police (BRIMOB) custody throughout Papua.* **The President of the Republic of Indonesia**
In –
Jakarta.

Shalom...!

Dear Mr President, through this letter we urge you to immediately release the prisoners who were accused of being provocateurs of the Peaceful demonstration (29 August 2019);

Why do we request this?

1. DISTRACTION FROM THE ISSUE OF RACISIM

There are several reasons:

- a. There is a possibility that these prisoners were involved (we are not denying this); however, there was also heavy presence of police and thousands of military who had been brought into Papua from 19 August 2019. These troops stood by and watched and ignored the Red and White Front and the Nusantara Militia openly carry out anarchist actions. **This is the same Red and White Front and Nusantara Militia who, between the night of 29th August and 2 September killed several Indigenous Papuans;** and
- b. To this day we have not heard if any of the anarchists from the Red and White Front or the Nusantara Militia have been arrested;
- c. Moreover, the members of the security forces that ignored the actions of the Red and White front and Nusantara Militia who were carrying out anarchist actions have not been arrested by the Police. Are the laws that the Police are using blind laws?

Once again it is our request that all detainees in the Papuan and West Papuan Police Stations be released until there can be an **Independent Investigation Team** who can confirm **which people took part in the demonstrations on 29 August** and also identify those from the Red and White Front and the Nusantara Militia who were behaving in an anarchic and provocative manner. If this does not happen

then we will assume that all of this is a State strategy and that the government is trying to hide its dark side of racism from the Papuan public and the rest of the world.

2. RACIST ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDONESIA

It is clear how the State government since 16 August 2019 has tried to hide its racist attitude towards Papua. Below we describe three examples of recent experiences of what we mean by a racist attitude from the State:

- a. Franz Kaisepo was raised up as a hero of Indonesia but many Indonesians doubted his humanity because in their view he was only a monkey. Many Indonesians feel insulted because his picture is on the 10,000 Rupiah note and because there has been no comment or action from the Government the people feel that they are right in their attitudes towards Papuans.
- b. PERSIPURA Jayapura (the Papuan football team) has been experiencing racism for a long time. There has never been a response from the government or the Indonesian people. The response from Persipura to challenge this racism shows the roots of the humanitarian crisis of modern Indonesia:
 - b.1. The following words written by one of the players, Boaz, which spread through social media was deleted. **'Which is more respectful? The monkey who searches for knowledge in the house of a human or the humans who look for food in the house of a monkey?'**
 - b.2. When Boaz celebrated a goal he showed the words 'Stop Racism'
 - b.3. When they played against Borneo FC at Segiri Stadium in Samarinda, East Kalimantan, Persipura and Borneo FC players took a picture together with the words STOP RACISIM. Borneo FC also published a photo of a Persipura player, Titus Bonay, who was holding a sign with 'Say No to Racism' on it.
 - b.4. Finally, on the 16 August 2019 uniformed members of the Army and Police, together with community organization members, called out racial slurs in front of the Media; a bucket of snakes was thrown into the Surabaya Papuan students' hostel. This is only a small example and is a repeat of what students and the Papuan people have experienced for many years at the hands of the State; and which has been allowed to multiply and enable the army and the Indonesian nation to criminalize and discriminate Papuans.

3. THERE ARE MANY ROADS TO ROME AND MANY WAYS TO GET RID OF RACISM.

Today this Forum is confronted by a system of state security that is desperate to hide its real intentions in order to a) safeguard its economic interests; and b) its political and geopolitical interests. However, in Gods eyes as quoted in the verse at the beginning of this letter this is not possible.

Please note (a) the strategy of the State to hide its racist attitude towards Papua has become part of the history of Papua within a racist Indonesia and has systematically built a culture of “throwing stones while hiding the hand”; (b) The members of the state apparatus that were directly involved in racial slurs towards Papuan Students on 16 August have been hidden; and (c) the focus on student protests on racism has been shifted to a political problem and creation of horizontal violence.

What are these strategies?

- 3.1 Sending excessive troops to the land of Papua after the action in Manokwari on the night of 19 August 2019 which has set the stage for the next actions by the state;
- 3.2 The confrontations with thousands of people from Deiyai who were demonstrating in front of the Deiyai Regents office which caused the deaths of 7 people and many were wounded.
- 3.3 The behavior of the Head of Police from Paniai in forcing wounded victims of the shooting in Deiyai (26 August 2019) out of the Paniai hospital to the Police station in Enarotali; the same strategy was used by the Head of Police for Papua at Expo in Waena on 23 September 2019.
- 3.4 The peaceful demonstration on 29th August 2019 to protest against State racism towards Papuans was infiltrated by anarchist groups that were not known by the organisers of the demonstration.
- 3.5 The RRI news broadcast on 30 August 2019 selectively (in our opinion) interviewed groups that were pro Indonesia from the Red and White Front who put forward statements from three Tabi people: (a) Rolo Abisay – Head of the City Parliament; (b) Tuan Mehue – Special Committee on economic and social rights of the Papuan Peoples Assembly (MRP); and (c) The Regent of Jayapura who:
 - a. Claimed that the people of Tabi are a people who love Peace;
 - b. They scapegoated the “highland people” and blamed them for breaking up the Land of Tabi.
 - c. On the 30 August “highland people” became the target of the violence by the Red and White front and Nusantara Militia backed up by the police who were looking for “highland people” by forcibly burning passing vehicles so that they would put down their windows and see who was inside.
- 3.6 From the evening of 29 August the Red and White Front and the Nusantara Militia began to control the roads in some parts of Jayapura especially in the area of Entrop and with support from the Police they searched for people from the highlands.

- 3.7 The State has avoided dealing with the problem of the members of the Army and police that were involved in the racist incidents which were witnessed by members of the public in front of the Surabaya and Malang youth hostels.
- 3.8 The arrest and terrorizing of Indonesian NGOs and activists that have shown solidarity with Papua including:
- a. Surya Anta from Free West Papua
 - b. Order to capture Veronika Koman who has provided legal accompaniment to the Papuan Student Alliance and KNPB.
 - c. Pressure and terror on other NGOs in Java.
- 3.9 The Central Government as well as the Provincial government have framed all news coming from Papua as Fake News but at the same time since 19 August 2019, the Government has itself produced fake news in order to hide the racist attitudes of the State towards Papua. Note the following:
- a. The head of Police, Tito Karnavian, has claimed that social media accounts that produce and spread fake news about the student Hostels are the ones that have caused the riots that took place in Papua. But as the assistant head of KONTRAS, Peri Kusuma stated “the Government is spreading fake news just as it accuses others of doing the same”.
 - b. On 15 September The Ministry for Information (MENKOMINFO) stated that “20 countries were involved in spreading fake news about Papua”.
- 3.10 The State has used various methods and pressures to try to force Papuan Students to return to the city where they are studying without being able to provide them with concrete commitments to protect them.
- a. One example is the pressure on the head of the Papuan Peoples Council (MRP) to withdraw his declaration for students to return home if they were threatened;
 - b. The Timika Police (i) forcibly dispersed the Traditional Stone Feast put on to officially receive the Papuan Students returning home (Tabloid Jubi Edition 18/9/19) by arresting 3 people with the words “ Please leave this place Mama Mama Papua (who were preparing the stones), please leave this place, this location has been surrounded... by the count of 10,9,8,7,6,5,4,4,3,1” ... followed by gunfire ii) Painted the grave of the OPM leader Kelly Kwalik red and white.
 - c. There has been no legal procedure against the United Nusantara Militia, or The Red and White front who were backed up by the Police from the evening of the 19 August to 1 September and who carried out the following:
 - c.1. The murder of Efert Mofu (35) and Marcelino Samon (15)

- c.2. The stabling and torture of 8 people from the Central Highlands including Pastor Daud Auwe on 30 August.
 - c.3. Atius Inup (26), a member of parliament from Yahukimo had his hand broken at the Entrop District Office at 19:00; and many other actions.
- 3.11 Budi Gunawan (National Intelligence Agency) brought 61 people to Jakarta to meet President Jokowi and read 10 statements by Abisai Rollo who is the same person who on 30 August spread his views that the culprits of the riots were “highland people”.
- 3.12 The arrest of Agus Kosay, Head of KNPB on the charge of Provocateur.
- 3.13 Instead of responding to the **Pastoral Letter from the Ecumenical forum on 2 August 2019** which recommended in Point 6 that the Government invite OPM and ULMWP to negotiate for a permanent peace, the Head of Police and The Coordinating Minister for Political Legal and Security affairs directly accused Benny Wenda from ULMWP as being a Provocateur in the riots of 29 August 2019 in Jayapura.

4 THE ROOTS OF THE PAPUAN CONFLICT GO BACK A LONG WAY: LIPI AND THE ECUMENICAL FORUM OF PAPUAN CHURCHES

What are the roots of the problems that have been ravaging Papua year after year since the beginning of the 1960s?

- a. In our opinion, the root of the problem of the conflict in the Land of Papua is the racism and discrimination towards Papuans underlying the development and militarism since the beginning of the 1960s till today.
- b. But what about LIPI? According to the LIPI research team, there are four things that are the roots of the Papuan problem as mentioned by Putri Budia Tri (Kompas.com Saturday 31 August 2019)

The four problems are as follows:

- b.1. Racial discrimination towards Papua (this issue also relates to the following three problems);
- b.2. Human rights abuses that have taken place in Wasior, Wamena, Paniai and those that took place in Papua in the Reformation era which have never been resolved;
- b.3. The government has refused to acknowledge the status and political history of the Land of Papua;
- b.4. The repressive behavior of the government which has caused the failure of the development of the land of Papua.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Faced with the reality of the problems explained above, The Ecumenical Forum of Churches in the Land of Papua recommends:

- a. In order for the Papuan problem to be solved there should be peaceful negotiations as the Indonesian Government did with GAM from Aceh which ended with the Helsinki Agreement. In this spirit we submitted our Pastoral Letter on August 26, 2019 to the National Police Chief and the Army Commander; Point 6 of the Pastoral Letter urges the Government of Indonesia to act fairly towards Papua by negotiating with ULMWP and OPM that would give birth to a new Treaty in whichever location was agreed with ULMWP and the Government of Indonesia (eg. Sydney, New York, Washington or Amsterdam).
- b. Stop all efforts to divert the issue of racism to other matters (point 2 and 3 above) and free the prisoners that are held by the Papuan Police which we see as part of b.1. Direct talks to tackle the roots of the problem should not give rise to new problems such as the decentralization or break up of the Province or the building of a Palace etc. and does not serve those who continue to scapegoat those who they consider “separatists”, accusing Benny Wenda or ULMWP as provocateurs.
- c. We share these recommendations in order to find a solution to build a “Permanent Peace in the Land of Papua” so that the next generation can go to school in peace not like our generation and the generations before us.
- d. With prayer and enthusiasm, we ask that as of now and as we move forward all development policies in the land of Papua tackle the real roots of the problems that we have mentioned.
- e. Churches and Theological Colleges should be active in examining and discussing the four root problems mentioned above in order for us to move towards the realization of Papua as a land of Peace and Prosperity.

6. OUR HOPES FOR THE NEW HEAD OF POLICE

While writing this letter we heard that Mr. Paulus Waterpauw was sworn in as the Head of Police right on time (days, months, years this Church forum has watched one million Papuans being confronted by the racist Government of Indonesia who was protecting 250 million Indonesians). In more than 50 years the government has implemented development policies and frameworks that breed racism. Therefore we receive the new appointment of the Head of Police with hope that he will join with the Papuan Church Forum to respond to the concerns of more than one million Papuans and:

- a. Stop Jakarta from sending troops to Papua and together with the Forum pressure the Central Government to pull troops from all of Papua including Nduga.
- b. Provide opportunities for people and church congregations to start to heal their trauma beginning in Jayapura by:

- i. Releasing the 24 prisoners who were arrested due the protest on 29 August 2019.
- ii. Capture and arrest the actors of violence from the Red and White Front and the Nusantara Militia who have been spreading terror, slashing people, killing Papuans and hunting highland Papuans between 29 August to 2 September 2019.
- iii. Work with the Forum to ensure that there are no more grenades left in Nduga (to prevent an event similar to what happened in Mapenduma during the hostage crisis in 1996 when dozens of children were injured).
- iv. Work together with the Forum to organize pastoral care to take place in Nduga or anywhere else in Papua where it is needed such as Deiyai, Puncak and Puncak Jaya.

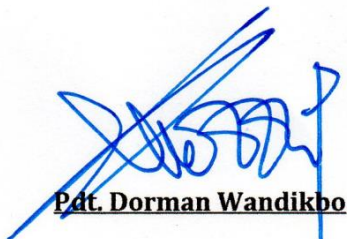
6 CONCLUSION

In this spirit we realize that:

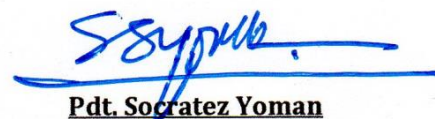
- a. Everything that we have discussed above is “uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account (Hebrews 14:13) especially in the current turbulent situation in Papua.
- b. We are doing this to fight for our dream remembering the leaders and members of the church and communities that have prayed and struggled so that “Papua can be healed and a Permanent Peace can be realized”.
- c. We want to make sure that the children of the future generations of the Land of Papua can get proper education and have enough to eat and drink so that they can compete with other nations, Indonesia, the Pacific and at a global level.

Thank you for your attention,

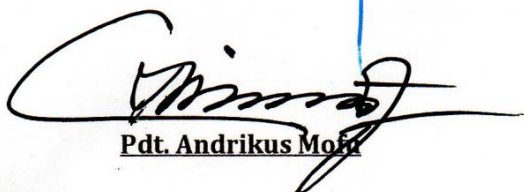
Jayapura, 01 Oktober 2019



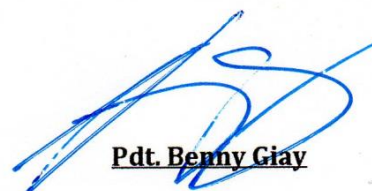
Pdt. Dorman Wandikbo



Pdt. Socrates Yoman



Pdt. Andrikus Mofa



Pdt. Benny Giay