

The Statement of the Indonesian Bishops' Conference on Papua:

STOP VIOLENCE! LET US HOLD A DIALOGUE!

Violence in Papua continues to occur despite the fact that many parties have repeatedly called for resorting to peaceful means to solve Papua issues. People's welfare can only be achieved if there is a peaceful atmosphere that allows all elements of a society work together peacefully. Violent ways are unlikely to solve so many social problems. Violence contra violence only gives birth to new violence and thus increases problems. It can be worse whenever public views and political statements expressed by the Papuans in a peaceful and transparent manner are again met with gunfire, arbitrary arrest, torture and killings. Herewith, we, the Indonesian bishops' conference, express our deepest concerns and condemn violence acts that ostensibly do not promote human dignity and derogate the right to life, a God's gift to every human being.

Violence and human rights abuses against the Papuans constitute a long story and history. The Papuan laments stemming from the history of mistreatment cannot be appeased or silenced merely with government statements and *ad hoc* government policies. The central government has to show the courage to change its attitude and to take a new approach and a new solution that specifically deals with the interests and the welfare of the Papuans. While reiterating its concerns and solidarity with all victims, the KWI conveys our appeals to the central government:

- We encourage the central government to hold dialogue with the Papuans. President Yudhoyono's commitment to solve Papua's problems publicly expressed earlier during his presidential term needs to be realised. The method should be a way of dialogue. Impressive statements such as "to develop Papua with heart" should begin with a dialogue by heart. With an open heart, without any stigma, the government should listen to the Papuans' laments and their history of suffering they have experienced since the integration with Indonesia.
- To implement a constructive dialogue with the Papuans, we encourage the government to facilitate meetings among various elements of the Papuan society including the local government, the local parliament and the Papuan People Council (MRP) in order to accommodate their aspirations in regard to the means and substance of a dialogue.
- Groups that have fought for Papua independence, either the OPM or any other names, either reside inside Indonesia or overseas, have to have a privilege in the

dialogue. To ensure that dialogue will be carried out in a dignified, fair, truthful and respectful, a trusted third party should be established to act as a mediator.

- In regard to all forms of human rights abuses from which the Papuans suffer, the government has to uphold justice, offers an apology, recompenses and restores the rights of the Papuans.
- The Special Autonomy Law is meant to provide protection and affirmative actions for the Papuans in developing their welfare. Yet many aspects have not been implemented. Due to the high cash flow in Papua, the spontaneous transmigrants continue to overwhelm Papua. In many aspects of the daily life, the Papuans have been marginalised by these transmigrants. We encourage the government to revisit the demography policy and to focus on developing local human resources to fill the existing employment.
- The figures and types of the security forces deployed in Papua are far too many. They do not have programs to positively kill time and to benefit the locals. Their attitude and behaviour more frequently cause them an enemy of the local community rather than a provider for safety and security for them. We encourage the government to reduce the number of the Indonesian military and only deploy those who are mature enough and able to become part of the local community so that they genuinely become protection and safety for the people.

These are our appeals. Whilst we hope that the government will pay attention to our concerns, we express our strongest support to the inter-faith leaders and all parties who work for Papua Land of Peace.

Jakarta, 17 November 2011

The Indonesian Bishops' Conference,

Msgr. Martinus D. Situmorang, OFM Cap
Chairman

Msgr. Johannes Pujasumarta
Secretary General

This is an unofficial translation. For media contact: **Father Benny Susetyo, mobile: +62-812-3542 153**