

WEST PAPUAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

PASTORAL LETTER

Regarding: Concrete Steps for Permanent Peace in the Land of Papua

To: The Governor of Papua Province,

In Jayapura,

Shalom,

In the spirit of 'Papuan Lives Matter', we, the West Papua Council of Churches have sent an 'Open Letter' to President Jokowi (Letter attached) dated Jayapura, 6 May 2021. In this letter, we request the attention of the President regarding the problem of Papua, which, in our opinion, has been made worse by the 'understanding and mindset of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and some Indonesian people which is shaped by a 'colonial gaze' with the result that it does not focus on what we the Church consider the substance of the problem. The 'colonial gaze' has to do with the views of the Government's elite who see Papuans as monkeys, a nation that lives on tree tops, wear gourds, are corruptors, and potentially separatists and treasonous.

We, the West Papuan Council of Churches agree with Pastor Driyarkara when we say that all human beings are born with two innate tendencies: The positive side which is social, helps others, has compassion, artistic spirit, is constructive but can also be destructive, hurt and kill each other, and behave like wolves towards each other. The 60 years of the development program of the Indonesian Government in the Land of Papua with this colonial gaze has caused us the Papuan people to lose our humanity.

Governor of Papua Province, who we greatly respect, in an Open Letter to President Jokowi, we have asked for an explanation regarding the steps that the Governor has taken as a leader elected by the people regarding the following issues in recent years:

- a. Activists and humanitarian fighters who have protested against racism since August 16, 2019 have been arrested and charged with treason and are subject to charges of treason.
- b. We suspect that the sending of troops and the construction of a military installation, as well as the designation of OPM as a terrorist organisation has not yet passed a parliamentary decision.
- c. In connection with the peaceful demonstrations against Special Autonomy as a form of freedom of expression for the Papuan people in accordance with Article 77 of the Special Autonomy Law, we ask the question: Is there any explanation from the State Security Agency as to why they opened fire and arrested demonstrators? Has the Head of Police been summoned for these actions against the freedom of expression for civilians?

- d. We also would like to ask you whether you have asked for an explanation from the Security Forces of the Republic of Indonesia who prevented members from the Papuan Peoples Council (MRP) from holding public consultation meetings in Wamena (Jayawijaya Regency), Paniai, Deiyai, Dogiyai and Merauke Regency? In fact, in Merauke Regency they were treated as criminals and detained by the Police.
- e. The central government has unilaterally taken the path to implement Special Autonomy Plus: Is this Special Autonomy Plus based on the aspirations of the people or is it in the interests of the academic elites at the University of Cenderawasih and the Hasanuddin University who give it academic legitimacy?

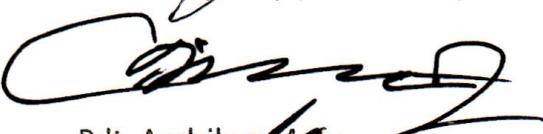
Thus we have written this letter in order to carry out the pastoral and prophetic duties as the leaders of the Church.

May God bless us all. Amen.

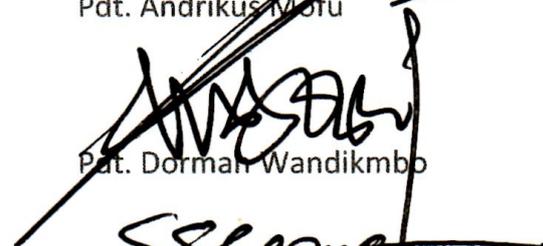
Jayapura 6 Mei 2021



Pdt Benny Giay (Moderator)



Pdt. Andrikus Mofu



Pdt. Dormah Wandikmbo



Pdt. Socrates Yoman

CC:

- Head of the Papuan Regional Parliament (DPRP)
- Head of the Papuan Peoples Council (MRP)