

WEST PAPUAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Regarding: The question of whether the OPM has ever bombed malls or churches and mosques and train stations in Jakarta, Surabaya, London, New York, Paris, Malaysia or Sydney in collaboration with ISIS, Jemah Islamiah, and HTI in Indonesia

OPEN LETTER

To: The Respected Commander of The Indonesian National Armed Forces (PANGlima TNI)

In Jakarta,

Shalom,

1. First of all, we, the West Papuan Council of Churches, would like to express our deepest condolences for the sinking of 'Kapa I Selam Nanggala 402 and the Soldiers who died. Together with all the people of Indonesia, we offer our special condolences to the families who have been left behind. The same condolences go to the families and all Indonesian people for the death of The Regional Head of Intelligence (KABINDA) and all the soldiers who died during military operations in Beoga, Papua over the last few years.

We also express our sorrow and empathy for the hundreds of members of our congregations in Nduga, Intan Jaya and Tembagapura who are suffering from illness, hunger and trauma and desperately in need of attention from the government, as well as civilians who have died while displaced due to military operations.

2. In the spirit of 'Papuan Lives Matter', based on the reality of Papua which has been coloured by conflict, for the past 60 years, our opinion regarding the causes of the problems are as follows:
 - a. The Indonesian development project on our Land does not focus on the core of the problem. In our opinion the focus should be on dialogue between Papuan and Jakarta, respect for humans and their image, and democracy by adhering to 'Unity in Diversity', the second, third and the fifth principles of the Pancasila. However, we, the West Papuan Council of Churches see that the understanding and mindset of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and some Indonesian people towards Papua is imbued with the 'colonial gaze' which was popular in the 1960s; which in essence means that the government elite see Papuans as monkeys, people living in trees, people who wear gourds, corruptors and stone age people who have the potential to be separatists and traitors. This can be seen in the views expressed by the former head of Intelligence, Hendroprijono (interview with Detik.Com on 6 January 2021). This is totally against the substance of the Papuan problem which we have mentioned above.

- b. The biased framework shaped by the 'colonial gaze' which was evidenced as early as the first program of the Indonesian elite in the Land of Papua on 2nd and 3rd of May, 1963 (the day after UNTEA handed over the administration of the Government). On 2 May, according to Acub Zainal¹ the former Governor of Irian Jaya and Roger Thompson² a historian: i) the Government of the Republic of Indonesia collected all books and magazines containing historic information and ethnographic reports of Papua, documents and journals about law and Papuan politics that had been collected at that time; (ii) they then piled them up on the grounds of the Papuan Parliament Office and; (iii) burned them while singing Indonesian National songs: from Sabang to Merauke, and One Country, One Nation. Since the beginning of May 1963, we, the Papuan people, became 'a nation without history, culture and identity'; and thus the elite of the Government of Indonesia in the Land of Papua started their program to 'Indonesianise Papua'. This act is the same as what the fascist Hitler did: burning all the books, journals and magazines that smelled of Judaism in April 1938 in the centre of Berlin, Germany, before killing 6 million Jews in the Second World War.
- c. The government also does not focus on the core of the problem which can be seen during the first 20 years of Special Autonomy with a focus on defeating and eradicating separatism (remember Hendroprijono's directive, above). Therefore the Government has prioritized a Military Operations Approach in order to eradicate separatism which has resulted in the changing of the OPM's status to a 'terrorist organisation' in April 2021. It can also be seen from the Central Government's avoidance of the 4 roots of the conflict put forward by LIPI. As a result of this, during the first 20 years of Special Autonomy, in the Land of Papua we have been witness to the following gross human rights violations: Bloody Wasior, Bloody Wamena (2000), Bloody Abepura, Bloody Wamena (2003); Bloody Paniai (December 2014), and others.
3. The designation of the OPM who have been reduced and criminalized as Terrorists, and the military operations that have taken place and is currently underway: (a) will kill thousands of Papuans; (b) has caused thousands of residents to flee from various areas such as: Nduga (since 2018), Intan Jaya (October 2019), Tembagapura (January 2020), and currently with refugees from Puncak Regency (since April 2021); (c) This designation has also killed the creativity and critical attitude of the Papuan people in providing thoughts and ideas for the advancement of the Papuan people who are part of the Indonesian Nation; (d) many indigenous Papuans will die in vain because Papua has been designated a terrorist area. Departing from these conditions that currently exist in the Land of Papua, we, the West Papuan Council of Churches are still waiting for a reply to 'our Pastoral letter' reminding President Jokowi's about his promise on September 30, 2019 'to meet with groups in the Land of Papua that are

¹ Acub Zainal (1998), I Love The Army, Sinar Hara pan. hal.76

² Roger C.Thompson (2001) Pacific Basin Since 1945. Longmans Pearson Education. Ltd

pro-referendum including the ULMWP. We are still optimistic that The President as the Supreme Commander will fulfil his promise.

4. We have observed that at the end of April 2021 the President designated OPM as a 'terrorist organisation.' We the Church reject the decision of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia which designated OPM as a terrorist organisation because this is a sign that the Indonesian Government, which is a member of the UN Human Rights Council' is still using the 'colonial gaze'. The government is still lacking in ideas and humanitarian approaches in Papua, even though it continues to defend the rights of the Palestinian people and the Rohingya in Myanmar in front of UN and other international forums. Another reason why we reject this label? Because as a church that often follows the incidences of terrorist attacks in Indonesia and in light of the media coverage of these terrorist acts we ask the following questions:
 - a. Has the OPM ever bombed churches or mosques in Makassar, Java or Sumatra?
 - b. Has the OPM bombed malls or train stations in Jakarta, Medan, or in Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Sydney, London, New York or Amsterdam and Paris?
 - c. Is there any evidence that the OPM has collaborated with: Alqaedah, Jemaah Islamiyah, ISIS, HTI in Indonesia, or that these groups have supplied weapons for use by the OPM? We read in the media in Papua that rogue elements from the army and police in several areas have been proven to sell weapons and ammunition to the OPM. Is this the OPM that is assisted by the army and police or is it the real OPM?
 - d. Regarding the possibility that the OPM has been involved in bombings in Asia, Europe, and America, we also ask the international community: did the OPM cooperate with Jemah Islamiyah or ISIS bombing New York, Madrid and other cities? Has the President consulted the Indonesian Parliament or any other countries before declaring OPM a terrorist organisation? Or is this just a game so that in the future Indonesian Security forces can: (d1) kill immigrants or burn mosques in Tanah Papua and then blame Papuan terrorists as the perpetrators; (d2) prepare the 'puppet' OPM that they have assisted to become the implementer of the program in (d1) above; and then accuse the Papuan OPM terrorists as the perpetrators; (d3) Is this a trick to prevent action from the UN Human Rights Council Members who are being pressured by several countries to go to Papua?

Therefore we ask that third parties and the President answer the questions (a) to (d) above openly, and carry out a thorough and objective investigation including the murder of the Head of Intelligence (BIN) of Papua Province which provided the legitimacy for the determination of OPM as "terrorists". We are afraid that this issue will be used as a last resort to criminalize the OPM to erase the history of human rights violations in the land of Papua.

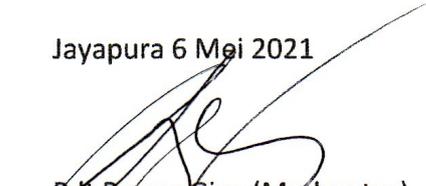
5. In the same vein, we have observed the trick of the Government when they played with public opinion by promoting the blasphemy charge against Pastor Paul Zang a

few months ago because Pastor Paul Zang had given regular opportunities to the Moderator of the West Papua Council of Churches in the spirit of 'Papuan Lives Matter' to explain the history of Papua from our point of view of what we consider the substance behind the 60 year old Jakarta Papua Conflict. We suspect the case of Pastor Paul Zhang has been exaggerated to divert attention from the preparation and designation of the OPM as a Terrorist organisation.

Thus we wrote this letter in order to carry out our 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 M. M.


Pdt. Dorman Wandikribo


Pdt. Socrates Yoman