



World Council of Churches

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Rev. Bishop H. Pahala Hutabarat,
Ephorus of the Indonesian Christian
Church (HKI)
Rev. Dr Batara Sihombing, General
Secretary of the HKI
Huria Kristen Indonesia
Jl.Melanthon Siregar no.111
Pematang Siantar – Indonesia

20 October 2015

Dear Bishop Hutabarat,
Dear Dr Sihombing,

I am writing to express solidarity and support for the member churches of the Huria Kristen Batak and other Christians in Aceh Singkil, in light of the recent burning and demolition of church buildings in the region. I am concerned for the safety of thousands of Christians of the area who fled from their towns and villages following these attacks. I am glad to know that the HKI, the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI) and other organisations have assisted the refugees in obtaining safe shelter and other basic necessities. The cooperation among various churches and other faith-based organisations in helping the displaced people demonstrates that people from different religious backgrounds can work together for common good, and offers an example for future peace in the community. I pray that all the displaced people will soon return to their homes in peace and safety.

The recent attacks on churches and Christian communities are deplorable. They illustrate the challenges and struggles of Christians in Indonesia, particularly in Aceh Singkil, as they strive to be faithful witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The World Council of Churches condemns all such violence against people and communities on the basis of their religious identity and calls upon the Government of Indonesia to act swiftly in bringing the perpetrators to justice. I support the statement of the Communion Churches in Indonesia (PGI) which calls upon the district government of Aceh Singkil to ensure freedom of worship for all religious groups in the district and to stop the demolition of church buildings. The WCC, through the United Nation's Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, encourages the President of Indonesia to promote and protect religious freedom for all, especially for the minorities, and to amend all government regulations that prevent the manifestation of this basic right in Indonesia.

Our prayers and hearts are with you in this time of tribulation. We are assured that God is upholding God's children in difficult times, as the psalmist says, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord rescues them from them all. He keeps all their bones; not one of them will be broken" (Psalm 34:19-20).

May God strengthen and comfort all Christians in Aceh Singkil and those who are bereaved or in fear. May the Holy Spirit give wisdom and courage to all religious leaders and government authorities to strive for peace, freedom and justice for all people in Indonesia.

With greetings of solidarity in Christ,

Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit
General Secretary