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## Public Statement - The Situation in Tanah Papua (Indonesia)

The Council of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) expresses its concern about the situation in Tanah Papua (Indonesia).

Since 1963, the people of West Papua have been under the rule of Indonesia. The transfer of power between the Dutch, the United Nations, and the Indonesian government effectively marginalized the voices of the indigenous community. Today, the indigenous people of West Papua face ongoing discrimination, rights abuses, and a culture of fear and violence. Despite the Indonesian government's emphasis on development for the region, ad hoc programs and solutions have failed to meet the needs of local communities. Moreover, the indigenous people of West Papua feel as though the development process has failed to represent their concerns and in some cases has undermined their livelihoods.

We commend the 2014 Memorandum of Understanding between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea and the Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua and affirm their work based on trust and mutual understanding. We encourage the spirit of their agreement to foster greater cooperation in diakonia, relationship-building particularly with youth, and enhancing formal and informal education. We especially note and support the emphasis between the two churches on continuing a relationship of solidarity, and acceptance of diverse cultures, traditions and spiritual gifts.

We affirm the 2012 Statement of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches which:

- a. Expressed its deep concern for the deteriorating situation regarding human rights violations in Tanah Papua.
- b. Requested Indonesian authorities to take necessary steps to release political prisoners, to lift the ban on peaceful assembly of Papuans and to demilitarize Tanah Papua. In this regard, the LWF expresses appreciation for the Indonesian authorities' recent decision to release five West Papuan political prisoners.
- c. Urged the Indonesian government to initiate necessary steps to enter into dialogue with indigenous Papuan people and to take adequate measures to protect their rights and to provide them with their basic needs and rights as the original inhabitants of Tanah Papua;

d. Urged the Indonesian government to ensure that the Indonesian armed forces stop the killing and the causing of serious bodily or mental harm to the Papuan people and the abrogation of their human rights;

e. Commended the churches and ecumenical partners who are engaged in global advocacy for peace, security and human rights of the Papuans.

**We call on the LWF member churches, and especially those in the region, to:**

- Listen to and learn about Tanah Papua, the situation of the indigenous people, their economic and social struggles, the inequities they face and the injustices they experience, and to stand in solidarity with them and raise them up in prayer.
- Acknowledge the Christian churches of Tanah Papua in their struggle for peace and justice, and the work of Christians throughout Indonesia, including Lutherans, to assist Papuan Christian communities.
- Pray for the people and churches of Tanah Papua as they continue to engage in their prophetic witness for peace, reconciliation and hope.