

Religious Leaders in Papua questioned the Inquiry Commission on Human Rights of Wamena and Wasior

Jayapura, 17 July 2004. The five religious leaders sent a complaint letter to the Chairperson of the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM), Abdul Hakim Garuda Nusantara, questioning the work of the Inquiry Commission on Human Rights (KPP HAM) of Wamena and Wasior. "We, the religious leaders in Papua, appeal to Komnas HAM to give an official and public explanation to the Papuans people as well as all Indonesian citizens regarding the result of the investigation conducted by KPP HAM," urged the letter signed by **Rev. Herman Saud** (Chair of the Christian Churches' Association in Papua), **Most Rev. Leo Laba Ladjar** (Bishop of Jayapura), **Zubeir D. Hussein** (Moeslem Leader in Papua), **I Nyoman Suda** (Chair of the Hindus community in Papua) and **Pandita Arya Bodhi** (Secretary of the "Budhayana" Buddhist community in Papua).

This statement is a follow up of the former letter dated 27 May 2003 urging Komnas HAM to set up an Inquiry Commission on Human Rights Violations to deal with the Wamena Case of 4 April 2003. This case resulted from a burglary of the arsenal of the district military post in Wamena. This incident met a military operation that caused the deterioration of the human rights situation in Wamena. The Coalition Team, fully backed by the Religious Leaders, have found evidence of gross human rights violations that KPP HAM have followed up with its further investigation led by Anshari Tayib.

KPP HAM Wamena works closely with KPP HAM Wasior that has also been doing its investigation into the Wasior case, in the Regency of Manokwari. Both Commissions have worked since January 2004 but they have not informed the public and the victims' families regarding their work. These religious leaders acknowledged that they learnt from the former Inquiry Commission of Abepura that always told the public what step it had taken so they expected that these current commissions would do the same thing. These leaders believe that informing the public is part of a strategy in combating impunity that has seriously hampered the promotion and protection of human rights in Indonesia.

Theo van Boven, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Question of Torture, has reported this case (E/CN.4/2004/56/Add.1, para.17) during the session of the 60th UN Commission on Human Rights, in Geneva, Switzerland, last March-April. With regard to this case, he appealed to the Indonesian government to take any necessary measures to prevent Yapenas Murib and Kanius Murib from the torture committed by the military personnel. The findings of the Coalition Team point out that Yapenas died on 14 April 2003 while he was held in the district military custody due to the torture he suffered. Meanwhile, Kanius is in the Wamena Prison to serve his fifteen-year sentence.