

“Make Papua a Land of Peace”

Jayapura, 18 February 2005. During a press conference, five offices for Justice and Peace (SKP) in Papua appealed to all people to make Papua as a Land of Peace by addressing the worrying human rights situation in Papua due to the heat of political situation, the unsolved cases of human rights abuses and also the ongoing problems of economic, social and cultural rights. Out of their deep concern, these SKPs expressed 7 recommendations urging the government to inform the public regarding its policy towards Papua, to address the cases of human rights abuses and to fulfil the agenda of the Special Autonomy.

SKPs found the facts that direct election of heads of district and province is expected to be a source of conflict as Papuan politicians have used racial and religious sentiments for their own interests. “We observe this fact in Sorong City, South Sorong, Raja Ampat, Mimika, Asmat, Tolikara, Mappi, Boven Digul and Merauke” said the press release signed by Jus Mewengkang MSC (Director SKP Merauke), J. Budi Hernawan OFM (Director SKP Jayapura), Loury da Costa (SKP Sorong), Rudy Rumlus OSC (Director SKP Agats-Asmat) and Saul Wanimbo (SKP Timika). The similar conflict situation also continues to exist in West Irian Jaya following the Decision of the Constitutional Court 11 November 2004 that perpetuates the conflict in Papua.

“The problem in Mulia remains unresolved because the violation of civil liberties continues while there is no sign that Komnas HAM will set up an investigation team”, explained SKPs that held an annual meeting in Sentani, Jayapura. In the area of economic, social and cultural rights, SKPs point out the fact that the government’s campaign of the Special Autonomy is not yet implemented at the grassroots level.

“Special Autonomy that focuses on the fulfilment of the rights to health and education is still far from the people’s hope. The health condition of the people continues to deteriorate due to the lack of health facilities, medicine and health officers to meet with the peoples’ need. We found such facts in Raja Ampat, Teluk Bintuni, Mimika, Mappi, Merauke, Boven Digul, Asmat, Nabire, Paniai, Puncak Jaya, Pegunungan Bintang and Jayawijaya”. So it is not a surprise that Papua is ranked the second on the Human Development Index (HDI) while it generates the third highest income in Indonesia.

SKP is an integral part of the ministry of the Catholic Church in the area of human rights and peace-building. This office is available in five dioceses in Papua, including the Archdiocese of Merauke, Diocese of Jayapura, Diocese Manokwari-Sorong, Diocese Agats-Asmat and the youngest, Diocese Timika. SKPs work very closely with any parties that put major efforts to build peace based on justice in Papua, such as government officials, NGOs, women’s groups, tribal leaders, students, political activists and other parties (*).