

“You are the light!”

Jayapura, 4 September 2004. As a response to the inauguration of members the house of representatives in Papua, the religious leaders in Papua released a public statement to the newly established members of the period 2004-2009. In this statement, these leaders expressed the people’s hope to them stating that they have to bring about, “A better improvement; a major systemic reformation that promises a common good and justice for every single citizen. Therefore, in the Papuan people’s view, you are the light for this country”. This is what they mean with “the light” as the main theme of the 5 July statement signed by **Msgr. Leo Laba Ladjar OFM** (Bishop of Jayapura), **Rev. Herman Saud** (Chair of the Council of Churches in Papua), **H. Zubeir D. Hussein** (Chair of the MUI in Papua), **I. Nyoman Suda** (Chair of Parisada Hindu Dharma of the Province of Papua), **Pandita Arya Bodhi** (Secretary of the Majelis Buddhayana Indonesia of the Province of Papua).

The religious leaders publicised this statement based on their deep reflection on the social reality in Papua. “The conflict in Papua has made the people living in anxiety and uncertainty, particularly towards the peaceful future. This fact should make us worry so that we should go hand in hand to struggle for a major improvement that embodies truth, justice and common good”. Therefore, they emphasised the moral responsibility of the new established legislators since to date the Papuan people still long for the legislators who are truthful, diligent, fearful of God, and prepared to put their lives for the people’s benefit.

This statement has been widely distributed to all members of the house of representatives in regency and provincial levels and even in few places this was delivered during the inauguration ceremony of the legislators. As it happened in many places across Indonesia, the inauguration of the members of the House Representatives of the Jayapura Municipality was overshadowed by a students’ protest. In Jayapura, for instance, the Association of the Indonesian Muslim Students (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia/ KAMMI) organised a protest outside the Jayapura Parliament House when the members were inaugurated on 2 September 2004 in Kotaraja.