



PERSEKUTUAN GEREJA-GEREJA DI INDONESIA (PGI)
COMMUNION OF CHURCHES IN INDONESIA (CCI)

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**STATEMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF
THE COMMUNION OF CHURCHES IN INDONESIA (CCI/PGI)
OF THE RULING NORTH JAKARTA DISTRICT COURT
AGAINST IR. BASUKI TJAHAJA PURNAMA (AHOK)**

The judicial process on the charge of religious defamation by Ir Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) has drawn attention from the wider public, not only from the people of Jakarta, but also the people of Indonesia and of the global world. The verdict of North Jakarta District Court Judges, imposing a 2-year prison sentence against Ir Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) has evoked various responses. The Executive Board of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (CCI/PGI), after serious consideration, wish to convey the following:

1. Being an integral part of the people of Indonesia, we affirm that we respect - and must comply with any just decision of the law, which has permanent legal force. In line with this, we appeal to and urge all elements of society to respect and to obey the law. Referring to the decision of the North Jakarta District Court against Ir Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), we are convinced that it has no permanent legal force yet, since Ir Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) is appealing against the ruling. To that end, we urge all elements of society, including the North Jakarta District Court, to respect Ahok's rights until the permanent legal judgment is in effect.
2. Observing and studying the journey of this case from the beginning, we witnessed how loaded this judicial process is with political interests, manifested by the imposition of the will of a group of vested interests through the mobilization of the masses. We hope that the legal proceedings are truly free and impartial. Therefore, we regret that the extraordinary mass pressure of the public around the courthouse, with a variety of gripping rhetoric and oration, do not get adequate legal action, although it can be said that it amounts to contempt of court. Such a situation, in our opinion, is very dangerous in the development of the law in the future.

3. We do respect the judge's freedom, but at the same time the judge must also respect his own freedom and independence by breaking away from various forms of influence and pressure coming from outside. The judge should be accountable to God, by listening clearly to his conscience.
4. According to our records, the decision of North Jakarta District Court against Ir Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) has added many criminal cases related to blasphemy against religion. From the beginning, CCI/PGI Executive Board has expressed the need for the government to review the highly discriminatory legal product, which is loaded with these rubber articles. That is why in 2010, CCI/PGI participated in supporting the Judicial Review of Law Number 1/PNPS/1965, which was then adopted as Article 156a of the Criminal Code, which became the basis for Ahok's punishment. We asses that this religious blaspemy law is vulnerable to be used arbitrarily, in accordance with the interests or orders of certain groups or parties. We hereby call upon the State (government and parliament) to revise this law to be more in line with effective and just law enforcement and human rights efforts.
5. We are also concerned that the North Jakarta District Court Decision will be a precedent to a series of criminalization by community groups and other apparatus by filing various claims and accusations of religious blasphemy. We are also apprehensive that, learning from the case of Ir. Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), the mobilization of the masses to add pressure to the judicial process will on the rise.
6. This expression of our concern should not be seen as related solely to the fate of Ir Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), but more of a concern regarding the destiny and future of our nation and country: is it still our Country of Nationality on the basis of Pancasila, or has it been changed into a Religion State? This concern arises because the judge based his decision on the MUI Fatwa, as the tendency of some public officials lately to formulate public policy on the basis of a religious fatwa.
7. Based on the above concerns, we appeal to the court to:
 - a. Respect the rights of Ir Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) to be able to live freely outside the prison until the permanent legal judgment is in effect;
 - b. Provide certainty of a just and impartial process of law that is free from any kind of pressure and favor, especially in subsequent proceedings at appeal and cassation levels;
 - c. Ensure that in decision-making, judges will be more focused to the substance of the law and not stuck to legal procedures alone, especially with regard to the rubber versions with multi-interpretation;

- d. Provide possibilities for public verification openly on the decision of the North Jakarta District Court. And in conjunction with this, we also urge law enforcement to correct this controversial verdict.
8. We also appeal to the people and the nation of Indonesia to be well within and act in accordance with the legal corridor and not to be provoked by actions that can aggravate the atmosphere. We urge all Indonesians to put forward the constitutional mandate that governs life together, rather than focus on directives and arrangements that apply only to a group or part of society.
9. It is not excessive if we also call for the government's serious attention to the tendency of coercion of will by community groups through the pressure and mobilization of the masses accompanied by hate speeches and, moreover, defamation of the Constitution and the symbols of the State. The neglect of such tendencies will bring our society and nation towards destruction. On the other hand, the possibility of sacrificing someone as a scapegoat for the sake of peace of a group of people, or merely for reasons of public safety, should be avoided.

May the Almighty God give wisdom to all of us to build this nation towards the goals aspired by the whole society, as revealed in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution: a happy, just and prosperous society.

Jakarta, May 10, 2017

Executive Board of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia



Rev. Henriette Hutabarat Lebang
General Chairperson



Rev. Gomar Gultom
General Secretary