

URGENT ACTION

DEMAND PROTECTION FOR CHURCH CONGREGATION

The congregation of an Indonesian church were threatened during recent protests against them. Police were present, but did not do enough to protect them. Without police protection the congregation will be in danger.

On the morning of 22 April, around 100 members of the Filadelfia Batak Christian Protestant Church (*Huria Kristen Batak Protestan*, HKBP) were prevented from going to their church to conduct the Sunday service. They were blocked by officers from the Bekasi municipal administrative police (Satpol PP), North Tambun sub-district police and other local government officials, who tried to persuade them to move to a place around nine kilometres away. Unable to access the church, the congregation began to conduct their service by the road. Around 500 protestors who had gathered earlier near the church surrounded them, began threatening them and demanded that they leave. Some apparently tried to attack the worshippers, but were blocked by the police. The protestors only dispersed after more police officers arrived, and a municipal administrative police officer fired a shot in the air. The previous Sunday, protestors had also blocked congregation members from getting to the church, forcing them to worship by the road. Instead of dispersing or detaining the protestors who were threatening the congregation, the police tried to pressure the worshippers to leave the area. After the service, one of protestors threatened the church leader, saying, "You're finished if you try coming back!". Members of the congregation fear that without adequate police protection, they will be intimidated and attacked at future Sunday services.

In December 2009 the Bekasi District Head issued an order to halt construction and worship at the church. Since then the congregation has been forced to worship on the pavement, leading to protests against them by members of the Islamic Community Forum (FUI). Despite a subsequent court ruling in favour of the congregation, the local government has refused to issue a building permit.

Please write immediately in English, Indonesian or your own language, calling on the Indonesian authorities to:

- Deploy police officers to guarantee the safety of the Filadelfia Batak Christian Protestant Church congregation during their weekly Sunday services, in accordance with their rights to freedom of conscience and religion;
- Order prompt, independent and impartial investigations into all reports of intimidation, harassment and attacks against members of this church, and bring those responsible to justice in accordance with international fair trial standards;
- Immediately comply with the Indonesian Supreme Court ruling to issue a building permit to the Filadelfia Batak Christian Protestant Church.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 JUNE 2012 TO:

Metrojaya Jakarta Chief of Police
Inspector General Untung Radjab
Jl. Jend. Sudirman No. 45,
Jakarta
Indonesia
Fax: +62 21 522 5646
Salutation: Dear Inspector General

Bekasi District Head
Sa'duddin
Komplek Perkantoran Pemerintah
Kabupaten Bekasi, Ds. Sukamahi.
Kecamatan Cikarang Pusat
Indonesia
Email: diskominfo@bekasikab.go.id
Salutation: Dear Sa'duddin

And copies to:
Minister of Home Affairs
Gamawan Fauzi
Ministry of Home Affairs
Jl. Medan Merdeka Utara No.7
Jakarta Pusat 10110
Indonesia
Fax: +62 21 3483 0261

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In April 2008 the Filadelfia Batak Christian Protestant Church congregation applied for a permit to build a church in Bekasi, Greater Jakarta area. Although their application met all requirements, the permit was not issued. While waiting for the permit, the congregation decided to build a makeshift church in which they could conduct their weekly Sunday services. On 31 December 2009, the Bekasi District Head issued a letter prohibiting construction of a church building on the site and banning the congregation from worshipping on their land. Since then the congregation have been forced to hold services on the pavement outside the sealed-off building.

Leaders of the congregation submitted the case to the Bandung Administrative Court in March 2010. The Court ruled in their favour in September 2010, ordering the Bekasi District Head to withdraw the letter and grant the church a building permit. In response, the Bekasi district government filed an appeal with the Jakarta Administrative Court, but the appeal was rejected in March 2011. The local authorities appealed to the Indonesian Supreme Court in June 2011. The Court rejected the appeal, ruling that preventing the congregation from worshipping on the church property was in violation of the law. However, the Bekasi authorities continue to defy the Supreme Court ruling and have refused to issue the church building permit.

The Filadelfia Batak Christian Protestant Church congregation have faced numerous protests, intimidation and threats since they began worship outside the church in December 2009. According to local sources, on 8 August 2010, around 20 members of the congregation were injured after hundreds of protestors threw stones, kicked and beat them in an attempt to prevent them from gathering outside the closed church to worship.

The right to freedom of religion is guaranteed in the Indonesian Constitution and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Indonesia is state party. However, Amnesty International receives regular reports of attacks and intimidation against religious minorities in Indonesia, including Christians. In 2011 at least 18 churches were attacked or forced to close down. Some churches were burned down or otherwise damaged by violent groups. Church members have also been attacked.

Name: Filadelfia Batak Christian Protestant Church (*Huria Kristen Batak Protestan*, HKBP)

Gender m/f: m and f

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