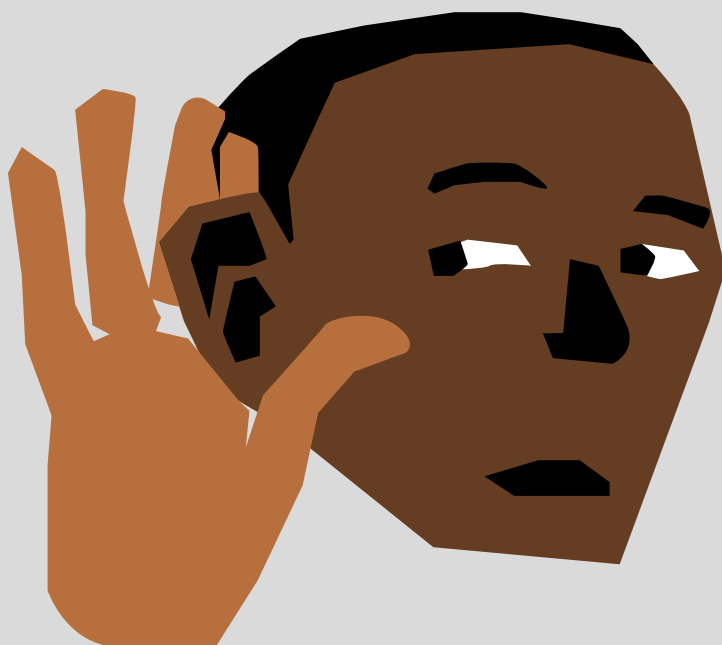




HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN 2023

Deliver me
from the hand
of mine enemies,
and from them
that persecute me!

Psalm 31,15





Poster for the UEM Human Rights Campaign 2023 for the regions of Asia

All information, further material and constructive ideas for work in communities is available on the website of the human rights campaign: www.vemission.org/humanrights2023



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

- 4 **United on behalf of human rights! –
To liberate people from the violence of their persecutors and enemies**
Jochen Motte

PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

- 6 **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**
The challenge to tell the truth
Kambale Jean-Bosco Kahongya Bwiruka
Background: Journalism, arbitrary use of state power and a strong civil society
Theodor Rathgeber
Project: Raising awareness of human rights
- 9 **GERMANY**
How hate speech seeks to silence people – and sometimes succeeds
Sarah Vecera
Background: How German society deals with its racism
Theodor Rathgeber
Project: Disseminator programme and anti-racism work
- 12 **INDONESIA**
Keepers of the forest in action
Irma Riana Simanjuntak
Background: The indigenous heritage, the state and palm oil
Theodor Rathgeber
Project: The church and indigenous peoples, moving forward together
- 15 **WEST PAPUA**
Even children are victims of persecution
Irma Riana Simanjuntak
Background: Self-confidence, arbitrary use of state power and international law
Theodor Rathgeber
Project: Legal Assistance for victims of persecution

WORSHIP AND DEVOTION

- 18 **Deliver me from my enemies and persecutors!**
Kambale Jean-Bosco Kahongya Bwiruka
- 21 **#humanrightsdefenders: UEM's working commitment to human rights. What can I do?**
- 22 **About us**
- 23 **Imprint**

INTRODUCTION

UNITED ON BEHALF OF HUMAN RIGHTS! – TO LIBERATE PEOPLE FROM THE VIOLENCE OF THEIR PERSECUTORS AND ENEMIES

JOCHEN MOTTE

In 2023, human rights will be 75 years old. They were adopted by the United Nations on 10th December 1948 against a background of unimaginable crimes: the extermination of more than 6 million Jews and the killing of millions of people during the Second World War.

Since 1995, the UEM has marked the annual Human Rights Day by publishing a brochure and poster to remind people that all human beings have inalienable rights. However, up to the present day, the rights of so many people continue to be denied or violated.

And since 1996, a Bible verse has been at the heart of all UEM human rights campaigns and posters. These words of scripture articulate the conviction that our Christian faith obliges us to stand up for human rights.

The God of Israel liberates his people from injustice and slavery and gives Moses the commandments of how to live our lives. Laws intended to safeguard the dignity and protection of the weak and vulnerable. For Christians, rights and justice are inseparable.

Jesus Christ, through his compassion towards the marginalised and the weak – the tax collectors, children, the sick and strangers – proclaims God's un-

conditional commitment to rights and justice. Jesus uses the parable of the Good Samaritan to explain why we, as Christians, should stand up for rights and justice. The Samaritan, who comes to the aid of the man at the side of the road, who has been robbed and injured, does so because he is moved by the fate of this victim of violence and injustice. He acts out of love.

»Deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors«: untold numbers of people throughout the world are victims of injustice and violence, waiting in hope for deliverance and justice. They can all identify with the Psalmist's cry for help in Psalm 31:15.

In September 2022, more than 3,500 representatives from more than 350 churches throughout the world met in Karlsruhe for the Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Here, too, the question of why we, as Christians, should consider it our duty to stand up for human rights was discussed.

Victims of human rights violations repeatedly took the opportunity to raise their voices. Maria Morales, wife of Bishop Carlos Morales from the Old Catholic Church in the Philippines, recounted how her husband was arrested on charges of terrorism and has



*»Deliver me
from the hands
of my enemies
and persecutors.«*

now been in prison for 10 months on trumped-up charges of unlawfully possessing weapons and explosives.

This brochure contains reports on further victims, sometimes anonymously to ensure no one is put at risk, or allows the voices of others to be heard: people from Asia, Indonesia, including young people, who, accused of murdering Indonesian military personnel, have been given long prison sentences; people from Germany, who are victims of hate speech on social media; or people from Africa, Tanzania, whose land has been appropriated by private companies and who have little opportunity to take legal action.

Like the psalmist of ancient Israel, they cry out for help, »Deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.« And just as the Samaritan showed compassion and helped the man, who had been robbed and left in distress at the side of the road, victims of injustice today are also waiting for someone to stand up for them.

As a church community, we, in the UEM, consider it our duty to help those who have been victims of injustice and violence. That is why we support human rights projects and ask you, in turn, for your support.

Several examples of these projects are presented in this brochure.

We would be delighted if you could share these stories of injustice and violence in your church communities and display the poster in your community centres, churches, or on bulletin boards and glass doors.

We ask you within your churches and communities to keep awareness alive as to why it is now more urgent than ever for us, as Christians, to follow Jesus' lead in standing up for rights and justice, for human rights throughout the world and in our own country.

Please contact us if you wish to order any additional campaign material.



Jochen Motte,
UEM Executive Secretary
for Justice, Peace and Integrity
of Creation, Member of the
UEM Management Team.

PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



The challenge of telling the truth

Kambale Jean-Bosco Kahongya Bwiruka

Pero Luwara, a columnist and journalist from Kinshasa, is a committed human rights activist. He uses the media to speak up for victims of injustice, especially when the perpetrators have close ties with the government. He has been repeatedly stopped by security officials, with no justification, and detained like a criminal

The situation reached a climax with the broadcast of his most recent programme »Special FATSHI Decryption: Chronicle of an arsonist at the fire department«. Pero Luwara castigated and condemned the »tourism« at the highest levels of government, including misappropriation of public funds and the »inflated libido« of the President of the Republic, which brings the state into disrepute.

When Pero Luwara talks about »tourism« at the highest levels of government, he is referring to the numerous trips made by President Felix Tshisekedi since he took office in January 2019. Up to 2022, he had made more than 248 overseas trips, often accompanied by a large delegation comprising hundreds of people. This, at a huge cost to the Congolese state and without achieving any diplomatic or economic gain. In a similar vein, many Presidential Office staff, ministers and high-ranking officials embezzle public funds for their own purposes.



▲ The reports of investigative journalist Pero Luwara are plain-speaking, also when covering government affairs.
Photo: private

By mentioning President Tshisekedi's »libido«, Luwara is alluding to a scandal involving the Office of the President in collaboration with the Immigration Service. On 21st September 2021, Giselle Mpela (nickname: Vice-First Lady) was expelled from Congo to Belgium. The young woman, who has two children with Felix Tshisekedi, was probably entangled in a marital conflict involving the First Lady. Pero Luwara and many others called for justice for Giselle and her children.

After Luwara's »Special FATSHI Decryption« programme was broadcast, the National Intelligence Service (ANR) issued a warrant for his arrest and for his transferral to the Court of Appeal in Kinshasa/Matete. The reason given for his arrest was for »insulting« the head of state. In response, the journalist fled overseas, from where he now broadcasts his critical analyses on the Internet channel, CPL-Television. He has no assurances whatsoever about the safety of the wife and children he was forced to leave behind.

Kambale Jean-Bosco
Kahongya Bwiruka,
Advocacy Advisor in UEM Africa.
Photo: private



In 2021, throughout the world

488

media workers were imprisoned,

46

killed and

65

kidnapped.

Source: Reporters Without Borders: 2021 Round-up

Journalism, arbitrary use of state power and a strong civil society

Theodor Rathgeber

A At the Berlin Conference in 1885, the historic kingdoms of Luba, Congo and Lunda were ceded to Belgium and, thereafter, plundered and exploited by Brussels. In 1960, Congolese nationalism achieved independence for the Republic of Congo. In subsequent years, the state was destabilised by the Cold War and colonial conflicts over raw materials. Felix Tshisekedi is the current President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), but there are serious doubts about his democratic legitimacy.

Pero Luwara is a human rights defender and, therefore, someone, who can be relatively uncomfortable for the government, which criminalises his work and human rights commitment and threatens both him and his family.

One option for people like Pero Luwara is to consent to making their case public. This could mean, within the framework of the United Nations, contributing to reports on the human rights situation in the DRC. Numerous UN reports do, indeed, provide a precise overview, for example, of state repression.

Such committed individuals as Pero Luwara also have the opportunity to present their situation in person to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders has comparatively wide-ranging powers to negotiate directly with governments to find a solution in individual cases or to refer the matter to the press. The UN Secretary General also makes an annual re-

port detailing the reprisals, to which human rights defenders are subjected, simply for passing on information to the UN.

There may be no direct link between public attention, UN reports and government action. However, there have been a number of changes in the approach of the DRC government, which, without the critical investigations of the UN special bodies, would have no other plausible explanation. Since October 2021, for example, impunity from prosecution has at least been partially addressed, inasmuch as 140 individuals have been sentenced for violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

Despite this, further help is required for Pero Luwara and the security of his family. In the DRC, lawyers such as Justin Bahirwe are not only working on behalf of their clients, but are also actively involved in defending human rights. Similarly, NGOs such as JUSTICIA or the La Voix du Peuple (The Voice of the People) movement are calling on the government to act transparently and restore security. The churches and other civil society groups in the DRC can also actively support these demands.

» The UN Secretary General also makes an annual report detailing the reprisals, to which human rights defenders are subjected, simply for passing on information to the UN.«

>

Project

Raising awareness of human rights

Given the political situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the question arises as to what we can do to improve the long-term situation of victims of human rights violations. The Baptist Church in Central Africa (CBCA), a UEM member church, is also dealing with this challenge.

» The first priority is the release of each person, who has been unjustly imprisoned, and the protection of his or her family. The church is simultaneously raising awareness of human rights in civil society, the military and police, also through public demonstrations.«

As a Christian church, the CBCA has retained its credibility as an institution that can play a vital role by standing up for the weak and providing impetus for positive change. Pastors and other church staff are in daily contact with the local people. They are not part of government and often work wherever people come together, such as at church services and in choirs, youth groups or Bible study groups. Our member church takes advantage of this unique position in society to help transform social circumstances.

» In an initial step, the aim is for 30 persons detained for political reasons to be released by March 2023.««

The first priority is the release of each person, who has been unjustly imprisoned, and the protection of his or her family. The church is simultaneously raising awareness of human rights in civil society, the military and police, also through public demonstrations. A network of »alert whistlers« has led to improved security and is empowering young people as a means of preventing manipulation by politicians. The target groups of the human rights work include media workers, police officers, soldiers, people working in the judiciary as well as military and prison chaplains. They will be given the opportunity in workshops, seminars and lectures to share their experiences and support one another. In an initial step, the aim is for 30 persons detained for political reasons to be released by March 2023.

**YOUR
DONATION
HELPS!**

In Africa, for example, the UEM is involved in The Baptist Church in Central Africa (CBCA) in the DR Congo:

- Running an information campaign on human rights and, thus, raising civil society awareness
- Providing legal assistance for human rights defenders, who have been wrongly imprisoned
- Setting up a network to quickly identify emergencies (»alert whistlers«)

Please support this project with your donation!

GERMANY

How hate speech seeks to silence people – and sometimes succeeds

Sarah Vecera



B Because of my public visibility in connection with the issue of church and racism, I am a regular target of hate speech. Hate speech is the group-focused hatred of individuals or groups that finds expression – especially online – in violent language. Online, this hate speech has become more rudimentary and direct and increasingly vicious. I primarily experience hate speech on social media and in the comment pages of large publishing houses. When I was there I had to learn to deal with people I did not know threatening to »pay me a visit« or hoping that the church would throw me out. In numerous chat shows and contributions in the media, we witness how tempers overheat and spill over into disputes over issues that are related to the broader issue of racism.

Digital media give us the sense of greatest »intimacy«, where we think we know people well, because they appear willing to reveal so much about themselves. At the same time, they create the greatest sense of detachment, when it comes to expressing your opinions as freely and uninhibitedly as possible, without having to show your face. The targets of hate speech are often people, who, from a marginalised position, raise their voices publicly against racism. Young women of colour are affected most. And, all too often, they are successfully silenced.

Since spring 2021, the author Jasmina Kuhnke has not made any public appearances announced in advance. This is because, in March 2021, a four-minute video was posted online revealing her address, along with a call for her and her family to be killed. Within 24 hours, Jasmina Kuhnke and her four children had to change their place of residence. This is just one of many similar examples of people of colour being portrayed as supposed perpetrators simply for raising their voices publicly against racism, for disturbing social harmony and questioning things, which, as everyone knows, »have always been the way they are and have never bothered anyone«.

At the UEM, we are aware of the importance of incorporating differing perspectives and not presenting one's own perspective as the norm. Our dominant society in Germany does not yet have the benefit of the UEM's experience of 26 years of internationalisation. It struggles to come to terms with change and has to be compelled, at least initially, to leave its comfort zone. This is an important part of bringing about change. At the same time, though, these significant marginalised voices must be protected if they are to continue raising those voices.

As the UEM, we can use our experience to contribute to the much-needed peaceful change in society and the Church. We do this by building networks for education and empowerment.



▲ Sarah Vecera is the UEM co-ordinator for Global Learning and an activist against racism within the church.

Photo: Johannes Schermuly, VEM

How German society deals with its racism

Theodor Rathgeber

Racism and hate propaganda: although they have always existed »under the radar« in German society, they are also becoming increasingly blatant. Even if excluding people on the basis of external characteristics does not fit with how German society sees itself. Nevertheless, for many people, experiences of racist discrimination are part of everyday life – as illustrated by Jasmina Kuhnke's story. Exclusion ranges from discrimination in day-to-day life to physical assaults and attacks but also includes structural discrimination, for example through practices in the school system or in the police force.

The gestures and language used in talk shows, news, newspapers, social media, children's books, when looking for somewhere to live or an apprenticeship, in the schoolyard or in racial profiling demonstrate the growth in antagonistic attitudes and verbal hostilities towards people labelled as »different«. It also includes participation in religious festivals and rites or visiting specific cultural and religious sites.

In Germany, members of the Jewish community, Romani people, people of colour and black people, Muslims, people with a migration background and

»» *One pervasive problem in Germany is the structural racism in state institutions and authorities.«*

refugees as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or people who identify as queer (LGBTQ) are especially affected by exclusion.

One pervasive problem in Germany is the structural racism in state institutions and authorities. The failures and shortcomings during investigations into the NSU crimes (the far-right National Socialist Underground which is responsible for ten murders) are a clear indication of systematic deficits. Similarly, since 2015, Federal Police have been criticised for carrying out identity checks on trains on the basis of external characteristics (racial profiling).

In 2009, the United Nations sent a special rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism to Germany. At the time, several media outlets and politicians expressed outrage at the UN for coming up with the idea of sending a special rapporteur to Germany. Since then, some things have undoubtedly changed, especially with respect to politicians' awareness of problems and perceptions within the media. However, this would not have happened without the active interventions of civil society.

More than **20%**
of people in Germany
indicate that they are
affected by racism.

Around **50%** of people
in Germany are prepared to
take an active stand
against racism (both those
affected and those not).

Project

The anti-racism work of the Disseminator Programme

The UEM education team offers different target groups a wide range of opportunities to address racism. Within the scope of the Disseminator Programme, young adults organise anti-racist educational work with children, young people and staff involved in child and youth work.

Within the context of anti-racism education, working with young target groups is particularly important, since it raises future generations' awareness of racism and shows them how to address discrimination in their own environment. Many young adults in the UEM have already developed an awareness of racism and know how to raise their voice in opposition to racism. The young adults' skills are formally developed within the programme to enable them, in a structured manner, to pass on their expertise and perspectives as activists to younger people.

Confirmation groups, religious instruction courses and other youth groups explore historically relevant facts and, above all, become aware of other perspectives and, thus, help them develop their own anti-racist awareness.

Hannah Schwab, one of the young disseminators, describes what, for her, is the most impressive aspect of this work with children and young people: »Discussing social oppression mechanisms with the young people, who, although they have already internalised them, are often able, for the first time in the workshops, to actually recognise and name them«.

Experience up to now shows that young people are able to deal constructively and sensitively with



▶ Myo (left) and Hannah (right), two of our disseminators, actively contribute to combating racism in our society.

Photo: Sarah Vecera, UEM (left); Miriam Albrecht (right)

what can sometimes be a challenging process. But they show willingness to change.

Through their work, the disseminators help create anti-racist spaces of encounter and give subsequent generation the tools that can facilitate communication based on understanding.

For the United Evangelical Mission, the Disseminator Programme is a vital component of its education work. We invite you to participate in our workshops and seminars. The education team is always open to requests for assignments in appropriate groups. If you wish to make such a request, please contact: antirassismus@vemission.org

**YOUR
DONATION
HELPS!**

The UEM is involved in anti-racism work in Germany, for example, through

- Public education and awareness-raising, invitation to dialogue and discussion
- Establishing an education team within the UEM: global learning
- Establishing a network of disseminators in its anti-racism work

Please support this programme with your donation!

INDONESIA

Guardians of the forest in action

Irma Riana Simanjuntak

Efendi Buhing, 52 years old, is the traditional head of the Dayak in the village of Kinipan. His community has always lived with, and from, the forest on Kalimantan, Indonesia. On 26th August 2020, he was arrested like a criminal by several heavily armed police officers. They accused him of stealing chainsaws from a local palm-oil company and took him to a police station, where he was arrested. How could this happen?

The story actually begins in 2012, when plans were first being drawn up to clear the forest and set up oil plantations. It is well known that oil palms normally have a relatively short fruit-bearing life and that they leave the soil severely impoverished and infertile. The traditional Dayak community in Kinipan village opposed the plans from the start and refused to allow their forest to be exploited in this manner. As leader of the community, Efendi Buhing was, thus, also the leader of the protest. To protect their rights, they mapped out their territory and applied for official state recognition of their land rights in 2017. However, the state authorities denied their request and chose, instead, to grant the palm-oil company, PT SML, access to the land. Since 2018, PT SML has been using heavy machinery to clear the settlements and fields in the Kinipan indigenous territory. They are transforming the area from a natural forest, carefully maintained by the Dayak for future generations and rich in biodiversity and fertility, into an industrial oil palm plantation that will only exist for a few, short years.

In response, the Dayak posted guards to prevent the company from encroaching on their traditional territory and asked workers to stop the logging. However, they were accused instead of stealing chainsaws, even though the saws were still clearly on site. Efendi Buhing was arrested in connection with these allegations. He was released, however, the next day, following a



📍 Efendi Buhing is head of the Dayak Tomun traditional community in Kinipan, Kalimantan.
Photo: GKE Synod Documentation

public outcry from Indonesian civil society, including UEM member churches. Despite this, PT SML continues to work in the area, destroying the livelihood of the Dayak living in Kinipan and threatening to re-arrest Efendi Buhing. The struggle must, therefore, continue, on behalf of Efendi Buhing, on behalf of the Dayak and on behalf of all, who care passionately about peace, justice and the integrity of creation.



Irma Riana Simanjuntak,
Advocacy Advisor in UEM Asia.
Photo: Lara Diederich Fotodesign



The indigenous heritage, the state and palm oil

Theodor Rathgeber

For many centuries, the 17,000 islands that make up the Indonesian archipelago were self-administered as sultanates and kingdoms, sometimes with regional associations. They only came together to form one state through the national independence movement that opposed Dutch exploitation at the beginning of the 20th century. Since 1945, the democratically constituted Republic of Indonesia has claimed all-inclusive representation of all Indonesians. However, this is not recognised by all Indonesians, especially some indigenous communities. They refuse to relinquish their sovereign right – never ceded to any other state – to land and self-government.

The establishment of palm oil plantations is often accompanied by conflict over land and land grabbing. It is the rule, and not the exception, that consultations and negotiations with local populations concerning the foreign use of their lands and territories do not comply with national legislation or international standards.

The repressive, legally questionable interventions of the authorities in this case are linked to the enormous importance of palm oil for the country and society. Indonesia covers two-thirds of the world's palm oil

consumption, bringing in up to three billion US dollars per month. Oil palms are easily maintained, require little fertiliser and produce a relatively high yield. The problem, however, is that palm oil monocultures leave behind deserts, both biologically and culturally.

Indonesia ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Anti-Racism Convention (1965), the Civil and Social Covenant (both 1966) and the Women's Rights Convention (1979). Indonesia has, thereby, pledged to transfer the protective rights of indigenous people contained in these conventions into national legislation.

Christian churches are a minority in Indonesia, which means that an overly demonstrative stance could expose them to considerable risk. But there are other options: following the International Year for Indigenous Peoples (1993) and the first UN Decade on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (1994–2004), a wide variety of independent organisations and networks by, and for, indigenous peoples emerged. One of these is the Forest Peoples Programme (FPP), which publishes guidelines for action on human rights and palm oil. Many of these organisations initiated continuous co-operation, for example with UN special committees and special rapporteurs.

**YOUR
DONATION
HELPS!**

Project The Church and indigenous peoples, moving forward together

Land conflicts between indigenous communities and investors are commonplace in various regions of Asia. The areas providing the resources for day-to-day living are being expropriated for mining, real estate and large plantations.

In Indonesia, the **Consortium for Agrarian Reform** identified nearly 200 agrarian conflicts in 2021:

Plantations and forestry	91
Infrastructure	52
Mining	30
Real estate projects	20

Indigenous people are an entirely normal part of church life in Asia, especially in Indonesia. In Central Kalimantan, most churches are located in rural areas, home to indigenous communities. They have strict rules on how to deal with water, land and forestry in areas that were home to their ancestors. For indigenous people, the land is the basis of their identity and life. The GKE* has strong ties with the indigenous people in Kalimantan.

When the agrarian conflict broke out in Kalimantan, the GKE sought to help the indigenous population find a solution to the problem. In 2021, the UEM funded a project to help the GKE develop its strategy: **The Church and indigenous peoples moving forward together towards Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.**

The UEM is involved in Asia, for example, in the Kalimantan Evangelical Church:

- Political strategy development in co-operation with the indigenous Dayak community
- Data collection as a basis for further research and educational work
- Joint workshops and meetings of church and indigenous communities to enhance mutual integration

Please support this project with your donation!

For a long time, the church and the indigenous people were portrayed as opposites of light and darkness, strong development and fragile poverty. But now, Marko Mahin, one of the project leaders, maintains that indigenous peoples have an abundance of resources to protect the planet: »We have to acknowledge their generosity and competence. For example, indigenous peoples have had experience, over many generations, as conservationists.«

This project seeks to raise the churches' awareness of the importance of working together with indigenous communities. The project also collected data on the Tumon Dayak community, to enable it to work to protect the rights of indigenous peoples. Through the project, the GKE also gave Efendi Buhing and his community the opportunity to share their perspective as indigenous peoples in Kalimantan. »We would like to thank the church for initiating this programme. Through it, we now know that the church is with us in our struggle,« said Efendi Buhing, head of the indigenous community of Laman Kinipan.

- 👤 United in the fight against land grabbing – Efendi Buhing (2nd row, 3rd from right), Marko Mahin (centre, white shirt) and the GKE Synod. Photo: GKE Synod Documentation



*GKE = Kalimantan Evangelical Church

WEST PAPUA



Project

Even children are victims of persecution

Irma Riana Simanjuntak

On 3rd December 2021, the Sorong District Court sentenced the 14-year-old boy, LK, to eight years in prison. His friend, MS, who also goes to school in Sorong, was sentenced to 18 years imprisonment by the Makassar District Court. The court found the two boys guilty of committing the premeditated murder of three members of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI). To this day, the two boys still do not understand why they were arrested and convicted.

The three service personnel were killed on 2nd September 2021 in the village of Kisor in a conflict between the TNI and the National Liberation Army of West Papua (TPNPB). At the time, LK and MS were nowhere near the scene of the crime, but at school in the village of Sumsuk. More than 3,000 people in the Kisor area were made refugees as a result of the raid conducted by the TNI and the police following the incident. Several people were tortured and, desperate to put an end to the torture, gave the police names at random. The police then put these names on a wanted list. Although the names of LK and MS were not included, they happened to be in the company of people who were on the list. They were arrested and tortured by the police and given long prison sentences. During the trial, MS was forcibly deported, with no official notice, to Makassar, Sulawesi, more than 1,000 kilometres from Sorong.



• The Kisor community organises its response following the attacks, discussing the consequences and potential courses of action.

Photo: Dora Balubun

The parents of MS found a few words to express their outrage: »We are shocked because our son, a pupil in junior high school, is part of the youth of the nation and the hope of our family. The law in this country has put an end to our dream, turning our son into a prisoner in Makassar. It has destroyed our child's future. We call on the National Human Rights Commission and the churches to look into this ruling. How could our child, under 17 years of age, be made a political prisoner? He doesn't understand any of it and wasn't even present at the time of the incident«.

The UEM and the local Papuan church, the GKI TP, visited the refugees in Kisor to assess their condition and to provide emergency assistance. They are continuing to fight for the rights of the two boys. Lawyers from

the »Kaki Abu« (Grey Feet) legal aid group are on hand to assist them. But, to this day, no one knows if they will be able to win the case.



Irma Riana Simanjuntak,
Advocacy Advisor in UEM Asia.
Photo: Lara Diederich Fotodesign

Self-confidence, arbitrary use of state power and international law

Theodor Rathgeber

Following Dutch colonial rule, West Papua was controversially annexed by Indonesia in 1962. Since then, many Papuans have been fighting for independence from Indonesia: some politically, some through civil society, some militarily. The indigenous Papuans' experience of the Indonesian state mainly consists of extensive human rights violations, marginalisation and racism. The repressive policies have been accompanied since 1970 by widespread forced internal immigration (transmigration), which seeks to alter population distribution. Today, the original (indigenous) population of Papua only makes up around 40 percent of the approximately 4.3 million inhabitants. In July 2020, the Regional Council of Churches in Papua publicly declared that, in spite of the many normative provisions and political declarations of intent, there has been a marked increase in racism and inequality in West Papua.

In 2001, the Indonesian government enacted Law 21/2001 on the Special Autonomy of West Papua (OTSUS) including self-government rights, albeit subject at all times to decisions by the Indonesian central government. Fundamentally, however, the Indonesian state has no interest whatsoever in an autonomous or, even, a sovereign West Papua. The region is rich in mineral resources: gold, copper, other mineral ores, gas deposits, tropical timber, extensive forestry

» *The World Council of Churches (WCC) has been fighting for many years for the fate of individuals.«*

and agricultural land. The Indonesian government is certainly interested in economic exploitation since most of the income ends up in Jakarta.

The regular meetings of the Pacific Islands Forum have become a prominent international platform of resistance. At the UN General Assembly in September 2016, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea spoke openly about the human rights situation in West Papua and their demands for sovereignty. Such statements are no guarantee of success. The report on the 51st meeting of the heads of state of the Pacific Islands Forum in July 2022 avoided any official mention of West Papua.

However, they do have one strong advocate: the World Council of Churches (WCC) has been campaigning for the plight of individuals for many years and has repeatedly highlighted the deteriorating human rights situation in West Papua, most recently at its general assembly in Karlsruhe in September 2022. For many years, now, the UEM has also been encouraging those, who are directly affected, to organise themselves.



📍 Kisor residents at the meeting following the police and army attacks.
Photo: Dora Balubun

Project Legal aid for victims of persecution

Following the incident in Kisor on 2nd September 2021, in which four military personnel were killed, the Regional Police in West Papua posted a wanted list identifying 11 suspects. Six of them were arrested: AK, YW, AY, RY, MY and MS. They were forced to make false confessions after being subjected to intimidation and violence in police custody. On 20th December 2021, the six detainees were secretly taken to Makassar in South Sulawesi without their lawyers and family members being notified. They were transported on a commercial flight and the trial was held in the court in Makassar. In legal terms, their trial should have been held in the Sorong District Court since the case was dealing with an incident in the Sorong area.

A legal aid association in Sorong – the LBH Kaki Abu (Grey Feet) – has been counselling the prisoners since their arrest. They, themselves, are representing the defendants in Makassar, even though they actually work in Sorong, West Papua. The lawyers are Fernando Ginuni, Leonardo Ijje, Steven Peyon and Moch Roem Soamale.

Despite being criminalised themselves, they have provided legal assistance to the six prisoners and are receiving support from the GKI TP*, a UEM member church. On 31st May 2022, the court sentenced MY, AK and RY to 20 years and MS, AW and AY to 18 years imprisonment. The court found the six guilty, as charged, of planning and carrying out the killings in Kisor.



Lawyers from legal aid group Kaki Abu (Grey Feet) in Papua.
Photo: Pastor Magdalena Kafiar

The lawyers have submitted an appeal to the Higher Regional Court and the Supreme Court. They are looking for more evidence and witnesses to request a judicial review. After sentencing, the lawyers made a request for the detainees to be transferred to Sorong, so that their families could visit them.

Through the GKI TP, the UEM provided support by helping to finance the lawyers' journey from Sorong to Makassar and their accommodation during the trial. Rev. Magdalena Kafiar, responsible for JPIC in the GKI TP, emphasises how helpful the UEM support is in the effort to achieve justice in Papua. She says: »This is a long journey and if the fight for justice in Papua is to be won, a lot of perseverance and resources will be needed.«

**YOUR
DONATION
HELPS!**

The UEM in Asia, for example, is involved in the Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua:

- Legal aid for detainees who are minors; inspection of detention conditions
- Membership in the West Papua Network, a civil society umbrella organisation supporting West Papua
- Creating public awareness of illegal activities by the state and companies in Papua

Please support this project with your donation!

*GKI TP: Gereja Kristen Indonesia, Tanah Papua
(Evangelical Christian Church in the Land of Papua)

WORSHIP AND DEVOTION

» Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me!«

Kambale Jean-Bosco Kahongya Bwiruka

It is quite remarkable how very real and up-to-date this ancient verse remains today, in a world we thought was »civilised« and after believing we had put an end to barbarism. After the horrors of World War II, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from 1948 was intended to guarantee equality for all, ensure well-being and a life of peace for all people without distinction.

Unfortunately, our world today is experiencing ever-increasing levels of violence. And as »the hands of the enemy« grow in number and severity of oppression, the worldwide victims of that oppression run into the thousands. But what is even worse is that, when the defenders of these oppressed people raise their voices and invoke the principles of freedom and equality, they, too, are targeted by the same oppressors. The victims' cries of pain are joined by the hopeless cries of their defenders. In this existential struggle for survival, this prayer sounds like a final desperate cry of hope: Deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors!

When we reflect on the specific context of King David, which in Jewish tradition is closely associated with the Psalms, we see that he faced the raging anger of his own King, Saul. Even though he had rescued Saul from the political and military threat of the Philistines (1 Sam 17, 32–37; 48f). By playing music on his harp, he managed, spiritually and psychologically, to partially alleviate his fears (1 Sam 18:10). However, Saul, believing that young David's social, military and public success was a threat to his power, decided to get rid of him (1 Sam 18:6–9; 11f). It was a fierce contest,

lasting several years, and repeatedly marked by phases of deep despair, in which David could no longer trust any of his friends.

But David did not only have enemies in the House of Saul. He subsequently had enemies in his own palace. We remember his own sons killing one another, either because of internal conflict (2 Sam 13:23–33) or in the struggle for succession (1 Kings 2:12–24). In such a permanent state of crisis, David was betrayed by close friends and relations and experienced the importance of trusting the only one, reliable refuge: the Lord God. It is the Lord, alone, who can save us from all enemies – seen and unseen, near or far, known or unknown. To begin with, David recognises that God rules the entire world, in all its vastness, but also that his own life is in God's hands. But more than this: he knows, that regardless of how much turbulence he experiences, he is safe in God's protection. On the basis of this trust and faith, David composes his prayer: that God will protect him and deliver him from the hand of his enemies.

In the broader perspective of Israel as a people in covenant with God, we read so much about all the tragic human rights violations inflicted on the poor in times of prosperity. The prophet Amos denounces the cynical attitude of a rich and powerful elite that oppresses the poor and tramples on the needy, while pretending to worship God (Amos 4:1–5). In the face of this negation of human solidarity, the poor cry out from the depths of their misery to the Lord, who, now and forever, remains the defender of the oppressed.

Our member churches in Africa, Asia and Europe regularly report on the diverse forms of oppression



▲ Hermann-Otto Meyer, also called Meissner
 Untitled, 1984–86, acrylic, Edding on nettle
 Triptych, 190 × 100 cm, image copyright: Lydda / Bethel

This powerful image by the artist, Meissner, in connection with Psalm 31, depicts victims in their distress. Reverend Dr Johanna Will-Armstrong – board member of the von Bodelschwingh Foundation Bethel – wrote a sermon based on this triptych. Both the sermon and images reflect the intense suffering and pain, but also the deep yearning for salvation and justice. In times of war and great uncertainty, the goal of their search for salvation becomes apparent. (The full sermon is available on the UEM website at www.vemission.org/humanrights2023)

experienced by their members in a wide variety of contexts. Some are affected, either directly or indirectly, by land grabbing. Others live in hiding, hunted by powerful individuals, who will do anything to silence them. Some have disappeared, silently murdered or kidnapped and helpless, traded like commodities. And for others, the source of the pain is the Christian family itself: some women theologians are denied ordination by their brethren in Christ, simply because they are women. The irony is that some of these women theologians helped train them.

For all these victims of injustice, the arbitrary use of power and violence, who, like David, lift up their eyes to the mountains and ask where their help will come from, the answer then, as now, is: »My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will

not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in, from this time on and evermore.« (Psalm 121).



Kambale Jean-Bosco
 Kahongya Bwiruka,
 Advocacy Advisor in UEM Africa.
 Photo: private

Prayer

God, you are the liberator of the oppressed.

Together with them, we call out to you:

Deliver us from the hand
of our enemies and persecutors!

Establish justice on this, our, earth
and teach us how to end our oppression
of one another.

Hold your protective hand over Pero Luwara,
Jasmina Kuhnke and Efendi Buhing

and all, who are suffering with them.

Raise your hand against the hand of their
enemies and do not let

the hope, which you, through them,
have brought into this world, be crushed.

God we are your hands.
Reveal to us your ways of peace.

Amen.

Song suggestions:

When Israel was in Egypt's land
(Colors of Grace, 135)

Take the shackles off my feet
(Spiritual)



#humanrightsdefenders

The UEM's working commitment to human rights

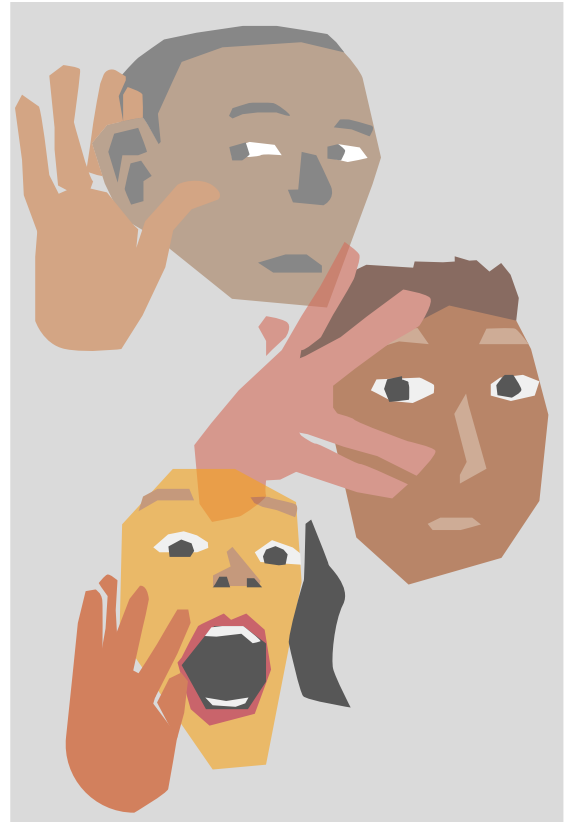
As the United Evangelical Mission, we work as part of the nationwide German network »Forum Human Rights« (Human Rights Forum) in co-operation with more than 50 organisations for the implementation of human rights throughout the world, in specific regions of the world and in Germany.

Our common goals are the protection of human rights defenders, more operational freedom (»open space«) for civil society, freedom of religion and strengthening the rights of indigenous peoples.

We are a communion of churches and, consequently, when our members are in need and are victims of human rights violations, we visit them together as we did, for example, in 2019 and 2022 in West Papua, Indonesia and 2019 in the Philippines. By doing so, we demonstrate our solidarity and fellowship and raise public awareness for the concerns of partners and members afflicted by violence and repression.

We work in co-operation with other church and civil society organisations as part of country-based networks, such as the West Papua Network, Sri Lanka Advocacy, the Action Network Human Rights Philippines and the Ecumenical Network for Central Africa. Together with our partner organisations, we stand up for the rights of victims of human rights violations in political and public spheres.

Through human rights projects and programmes, our regional offices in Africa, Asia and Germany work to combat discrimination and exclusion. The focus is on land rights, the rights of people with disabilities, and freedom of expression.



What can I do?

- Find out more on our website www.vemission.org/humanrights2023
- Visit us on our social media channels on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter!
- Show solidarity with people who require protection against violence and persecution
- Comment on our posts and other contributions and stimulate discussion!
- Support our human rights campaign with your donation!

Many churches, one community

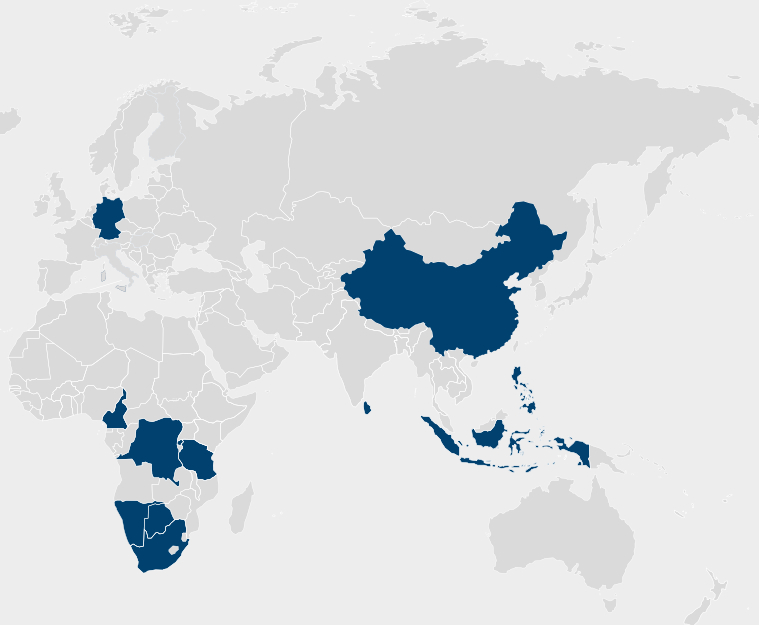
The United Evangelical Mission is an international, equality-based community of 38 churches in Africa, Asia and Germany and the v. Bodelschwingh Foundation Bethel.

Our mission statement




We live in a world torn apart. Some live in abundance, others have fewer rights and not enough to live on. People become isolated, relationships and community are lost, and the social and natural foundations of our lives are increasingly destroyed.

Knowing that we are all members of the body of Christ, we follow his example and invite people into a learning, serving and praying communion across continents and cultures. In following him, we work for a more just, peaceful world, the integrity of creation, and the sharing of the Gospel so that all people may enjoy life in abundance



 **3**
continents

 **39**
members

 **18**
million people

#unitedinmission

The human rights campaign of the UEM



**Your contact for
the UEM human rights
campaign**

Jochen Motte
Member of the
Management Team

Department for Justice, Peace
and the Integrity of Creation
Department
Rudolfstrasse 137
42285 Wuppertal

☎ +49 (0)202 890 04-168
☎ +49 (0)202 890 04-179
✉ jpic@vemission.org
www.vemission.org



The materials for the UEM Human Rights Action 2023
are available on the UEM website
www.vemission.org/humanrights2023

- Brochure with campaign programmes and projects
- Devotional material
- Poster
- Postcard

With your donation, you will help the victims of human rights violations and support our projects. Thank you very much!

Keyword Human rights

Donation account
IBAN: DE 45 3506 0190 0009 0909 08
SWIFT/BIC: GENO DE D1 DKD

Donate online:







Imprint

Published by

United Evangelical Mission (UEM)
Rudolfstrasse 137
42285 Wuppertal
Germany

www.vemission.org

 @VEMission
 @unitedinmission
 United Evangelical Mission
 united in mission

Contributors

Kambale Jean-Bosco Kahongya Bwiruka, Jochen Motte,
Irma Riana Simanjuntak, Sarah Vecera, Theodor Rathgeber

Editor

Malte Möring

Translation

John McLaughlin

Cover illustration: MediaCompany – Agentur für Kommunikation GmbH,
Juan González

Photos: © Dora Balubun, Lara Diederich Fotodesign,
GKE Synod Documentation, Rev. Magdalena Kafiari, Pero Luwara,
Pixabay/MabelAmber, Johannes Schermuly,
Graphic: StockAdobe/moypapaboris

Back cover

Design and illustration:
MediaCompany – Agentur für Kommunikation GmbH

Printed by

Bonifatius GmbH, Paderborn

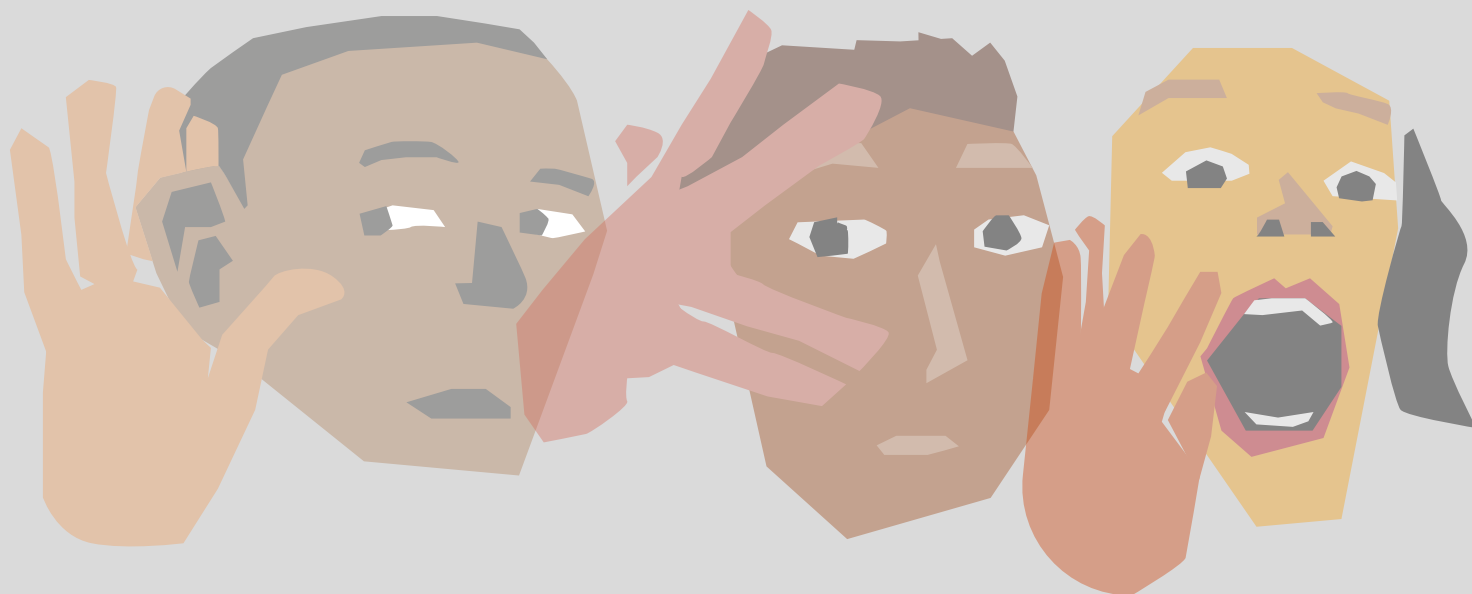
As of December 2022

© Vereinte Evangelische Mission 2022

The United Evangelical Mission is committed to resource-conservation
and the sustainable production of printed material.



Dieses Druckerzeugnis ist mit dem
Blauen Engel ausgezeichnet



United Evangelical Mission
Communion of Churches in Three Continents



Member of

www.vemission.org

actalliance



📍 UEM Germany

Rudolfstraße 137
42285 Wuppertal
☎ +49 202 89004-0
✉ info@vemission.org

🏦 Donation account Germany:

KD-Bank eG
IBAN DE45 3506 0190 0009 0909 08
SWIFT/BIC: GENODED1DKD

📍 Afrika

Luther House, Fifth floor
Sokoine Drive, PO Box 75240
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
☎ +255-222-125980
✉ africaregional@vemission.org

🏦 Donation account Tanzania:

CRDB BANK PLC - branch: 3319
account# 195 02 99 69 23 00
Swift code: CORUTZTZ

📍 Asia

Jl. Pdt. J. Wismar Saragih, Bane,
Kec. Siantar Utara
Kota Pematangsiantar (101),
North Sumatera 21142, Indonesia
☎ +62-(0)-62-27357681
✉ asiaregional@vemission.org

🏦 Donation account Indonesia:

Bank BNI
account# 01 28 00 24 47
Swift code: BNINIDJAMDN