

Murder and persecution of teachers and health workers in West Papua

UEM church on the ground working for peace and justice

(Wuppertal/Jayapura, April 2, 2025) On Friday, March 21, 2025, teachers and health workers were murdered and persecuted in the Anggruk district in the mountainous region of West Papua (Indonesia). Six teachers and one medical professional were abused. One teacher died, the others were injured and are currently being treated in hospital. The West Papua National Liberation Army of the separatist movement Free Papua Organization is being held responsible for the attack. This is the armed wing of the separatist organization in West Papua, which is said to have already destroyed and set fire to public institutions such as schools and teachers' houses.

In a press conference on March 21, 2025, in Jayapura, the Synodal Committee of the local church GKI-TP (Christian Church in the Land of Papua) condemned the incident and expressed its deep regret over the attack on the teaching and nursing staff in the Anggruk district. Pastor Andrikus Mofu, chairman of the working committee of the GKI-TP synod, reported that this incident had caused many residents to flee into the forests out of fear and a deep sense of insecurity. This situation is worsening the well-being of the people, especially women and children, and disrupting economic activities and public life in the region.

The Anggruk church district belongs to the service area of the GKI-TP, which is a member of the United Evangelical Mission (UEM). In the GKI Yalimo Anggruk church district, the church serves 65 congregations in eight regions. One of the educational institutions affected is the Yayasan Pendidikan Kristen Protestant primary school in Anggruk.

At the press conference, the Synodal Committee of the GKI-TP also expressed its hope that similar incidents would not be repeated in the future. The committee called on all parties to work together to ensure security and peace in the land of Papua. In addition, the church assured that it would continue to fulfill its humanitarian mission and service to the community in accordance with the Great Commission of Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:19-20.

Irma Simanjuntak, UEM advocacy officer for the Asia region, emphasized: "This act of violence must be investigated immediately and thoroughly so that justice can be done to the families and victims affected. The state is called upon to ensure adequate protection for teaching and health care personnel, especially in conflict areas. The cycle of armed violence must be broken through the building of trust between all parties involved."

About „UEM“

The United Evangelical Mission (UEM) with offices in Wuppertal, Indonesia and Tanzania is an international, equal community of 39 members, including 32 Protestant churches in Africa and Asia as well as six Protestant churches and the v. Bodelschwingh Foundation Bethel in Germany. The UEM consistently pursues a holistic understanding of mission. This includes improving the living conditions of suffering and disadvantaged people while respecting their personal dignity and taking their cultural context into account.