

Indonesia: MUI, PGI condemn racist abuse of Papuans, appeal for peace

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The Papua office of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI Papua) and the Indonesian Communion of Churches (PGI) have condemned the recent racist abuse of Papuan students in Surabaya, East Java, and have called on people to stop all racist behavior in the country.

“End all racist behavior, attitudes, utterances and actions in Indonesia, as our country is a big country with various ethnicities, cultures and customs,” head of MUI Papua, Saiful Islam Al-Payege said in a release made available for The Jakarta Post on Monday.

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“MUI Papua encourages every DPRP [People Representatives Council] Papua member to visit and observe the condition of the students in Surabaya as DPRP Papua is the representative of the Papua people,” he said.

Meanwhile, the general secretary of the PGI, Rev. Gomar Gultom, also delivered a similar appeal, urging parties to make peaceful efforts to settle problems in Papua.

“I appeal for every related party to prioritize dialog in resolving all problems. Violent vigilantism will never solve these problems. I only feel deeper concern at the defamation of the students’ ethnicity,” Gomar said in a statement to the Post.

He also quoted Law no 40/2008 on the eradication of racial and ethnical discrimination, and how the problem added to the Papua-related problems today.

“This incident only makes worse the complicated problems in Papua. Actually, Papua’s problems need a cultural approach, not only by the government but also by the people, especially people outside Papua. Only then will the Papuans feel that they are an integral part of the Indonesian people,” he said.

“Any kind of stigma, discrimination and violence against Papuans will only produce a circle of violence and hate that will mar humanity,” he said.

Earlier, Papua Governor Lukas Enembe also appealed to all people, especially of non-Papuan backgrounds, as well as fellow governors and regents, to protect all Papuan people in their areas.

“We hope that all non-Papuan people in all parts in Indonesia will maintain harmony by not taking any unconstitutional actions such as persecution, vigilante violence, selfishness, racism, discrimination and intolerance, as well as any other actions that can hurt Papuan people’s feelings or undermine harmony,” he said.

“As the governor of Papua, I appeal to all governors, regents and mayors in all parts of Indonesia to protect all Papuan students in each area, as we are also responsible for protecting students and people from outside Papua. This is our common effort to prevent similar incidents in the future as

well as to uphold nationalism and unity as fellow Indonesians,” he said. (gis/jun)

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