



Challenging Times for West Papuan and North Indian Partners

For Immediate Release

24.11.11

In light of recent events in West Papua and Kashmir, UnitingWorld has called for a movement of prayer and advocacy by members of the Uniting Church.

The issue of independence has long plagued West Papua, and there are fears that confrontation will spark on the anniversary next Thursday.

Rev. John Barr Associate Director (Church Solidarity – Asia) explains that “December 1st marks the 50th anniversary since Papuan independence was first declared and West Papua moved from Dutch colonial rule to a United Nations mandate. That mandate was handed to Indonesia two years later and history now demonstrates West Papua was, somewhat controversially, incorporated into the Republic of Indonesia in 1969 after a sham ‘act of free choice’.”

He adds, “Papuan will gather across West Papua on Thursday December 1st to vent their frustrations and to raise their aspirations for self-determination and independence. Indonesian security forces are ready to brutally suppress such actions.”

In other news, a minister from our partner church the Church of North India was arrested in Kashmir over the weekend on charges of causing communal disharmony. Rev. Chandra Mani Khanna, the presbyter in charge of All Saints’ Church in Srinagar, has been accused of forcing local people to convert Christianity and is now in custody.

Bishop P. K. Samantaroy, from the Amritsar Diocese, has stated in a release that “the whole Christian community is hurt because the Christian Mission work in the state of Kashmir has been carried out with utmost commitment for the benefit of the majority Muslim population.....it is unfortunate that the long sacrificial ministry of the Church has not been considered while arresting Rev Khanna for allegedly causing communal disharmony.”

We have prepared resources for churches to use over the weekend. The resources outline the situation in both regions and highlight what churches can be praying for and doing in response. We encourage all to join us in prayer and advocacy for our partners.

To download these resources, click [here](#).

For updates on the situation, and more information on specific action to take to support our partners in West Papua and North India, go to www.UnitingWorld.org.au.

ENDS

Rev. John Barr of UnitingWorld is available for further comment. Please contact Rob Lutton, Communications and Fundraising Manager on 02 8267 4223 .