



World Council of Churches

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Geneva, 26 October 2026

WCC Pastoral Letter to the Churches and People of Indonesia Affected by Forest Fires

To the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI), its member churches, and all the people of Indonesia affected by the forest fires

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I write on behalf of the worldwide fellowship of the World Council of Churches (WCC), its 356 member churches in more than 120 countries representing over 600 million Christians, to express our deep concern, our solidarity and our prayers as vast regions of Indonesia have endured months of forest and land fires.

Across Sumatra, Indonesian Borneo (Kalimantan), Papua and parts of Sulawesi, the fires and the thick haze they have produced have taken a heavy toll on the life of your communities. The polluted air endangers health, especially of children, women and the most vulnerable, and has disrupted schooling, health services and livelihoods. We are aware that the haze has crossed national borders, affecting communities in neighbouring countries of Southeast Asia, and we share the concern of all who suffer its consequences across the region.

We have been deeply moved by the pastoral appeal issued on 12 October 2026 by the Executive Board of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI), "Save Lives, Address Forest and Land Fires!", signed by General Chairperson Rev. Jacklevyn F. Manuputty and General Secretary Rev. Darwin Darmawan. The appeal describes the fires as an ecological disaster that damages ecosystems, causes widespread suffering and threatens human life and the natural world. We join you wholeheartedly in expressing deep concern and solidarity with all those affected, both at home and abroad.

We have learned with particular concern of the churches in Kalimantan and Sumatra that have been directly affected. In moments such as this, the church is called to be present, not only through words, but through prayer, compassion, service and solidarity. We give thanks for the pastoral witness of churches across Indonesia, and we affirm the appeal of the PGI to its member churches to express solidarity through prayer and practical assistance to everyone in need, without distinction of religion, ethnicity or social status.

"If one member suffers, all suffer together with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26). As one body in Christ, we hold in prayer the families and communities who breathe the smoke each day, and all whose health, schooling and livelihoods have been disrupted. We pray for the safety and strength of the firefighters, volunteers, health workers and local communities who labour tirelessly to contain the fires and to care for the affected. We pray that God will grant wisdom and courage to national and regional leaders, so that they may act swiftly and justly to protect life, and that cooperation among the nations of the region may be strengthened for the protection of all communities.

These fires are also a summons to renew our vocation as stewards of God's creation. The Scriptures remind us that we are called "to till it and keep it" (Genesis 2:15), to care for the earth and all its creatures as our common home. We echo the prayer with which the PGI's pastoral appeal concludes: "May we be empowered to care for the Earth as our common home, where humanity and all creation can live in God's peace."

Please convey to all the affected communities the assurance of our continued prayers, our solidarity and our pastoral support. May the God of all comfort sustain you, may the Spirit renew your strength, and may the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1)

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Pillay', with a stylized, flowing script.

Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay
General Secretary
World Council of Churches