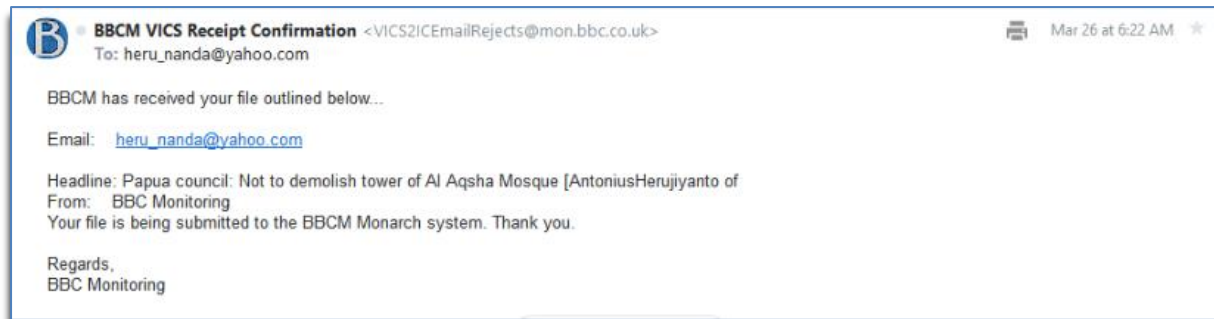


Papua Council: Not To Demolish Tower of Al Aqsha Mosque



[AntoniusHerujiyanto of USD_Yk_AH25_220318]

The chairman of MUI or the Indonesian Ulema Council Chapter Papua, cleric Saiful Islam Payage, has strongly stated that Muslims in Papua refuse to demolish the tower of Al Aqsha Mosque in Jayapura which is still under construction. He said Tuesday (on 20 March) that the mosque with its tower would not be demolished and that the on-going construction of the mosque would not be stopped.

According to the cleric, MUI Papua has held a meeting with Jayapura Regent, PGGJ or the Communion of Churches in Jayapura regency, the Religious Affairs Ministry, and FKUB or the Religious Community Harmony Forum. Its result is that Jayapura Regent Mathius Awoitauw would set up a team to find the best solution to the polemics (on establishing Al Aqsha Mosque in Jayapura) and to let the mosque appropriately take care of the situation.

Cleric Saiful said that MUI would commit to create tolerance among the interfaith in Papua and that it would remain a peaceful province with its best efforts to prevent interfaith conflicts from taking place.

It was reported earlier that PGGJ had sent a list of requirements to MUI Papua, demanding, among others, that the height of Al Aqsha Mosque with its towers not to exceed the height of the existing church in the Jayapura; that adzan or the Islamic call for prayers that voiced through the loud speaker should be directed into the mosque; that no obligation for students at public schools to wear uniforms or clothing with certain religious nuances; that there should be no obligation on having special space such as mushala (prayer room) on public facilities such as schools, hospitals, markets, terminals, and government offices; and that it is a must to have recommendation from PGGJ, local government, and the local people, before starting to construct mosques in Jayapura regency.

In the meantime Religious Affairs Minister Lukman Hakim Saifuddin has proposed four steps to deal with the problems.

To support the idea of holding a dialogue meeting with the spirit of reaching unanimous decision based on the law, the local and traditional values.

To communicate with all Papua interfaith leaders, the General Chairwoman of PGI or the Indonesian Communion of Churches (Protestant), the chairman of the Religious Community Harmony Forum Papua, inviting them to participate in finding the best solution to the problems.

To call on all parties to respect to each other.

To instruct his ministerial officers in Papua to actively participate in finding peaceful solutions and provide him with its progress the reports.

Source: Anadolu/IDN, suara-islam/read/kabar/nasional/25440/MUI-Papua-Menara-Masjid-Tetap-Tak-akan-Dibongkar. "MUI Papua: Menara Masjid Tetap Tak akan Dibongkar (MUI Papua: not to demolish tower of Al Aqsha Mosque in Jayapura)", in Indonesian, 21 March 18.

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