

MEDIA RELEASE

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Baptists call for religious tolerance in Indonesia

Indonesian security forces must do more to curb attacks on religious minorities and bring perpetrators to justice, Australian Baptist Ministries National Director Rev Dr Brian Winslade.

“As Baptists we support religious tolerance and the peaceful resolution of conflict. People should be free to hold their religious beliefs, and to act in accordance with those beliefs within the law. Resort to violence is never an appropriate way to resolve religious differences,” Dr Winslade said.

His comments followed news that three followers of the Islamic sect Ahmadiyah were murdered in West Java last weekend.

In an unrelated incident on Tuesday, a 1500-strong mob burned and ransacked two churches in Temanggung, Central Java.

“We condemn the recent violence against Christians and Muslims during Indonesia’s Interfaith Harmony Week, and applaud the decision by Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to order a police investigation into the three murders. The attacks on Christians and churches also warrant investigation,” Dr Winslade said.

There were 75 reported attacks on churches in Indonesia in 2010.

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