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Indonesian Bishops Choose Papua for 2027 Assembly to Listen to People Facing Violence

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Building a Sustainable Economy and a Common Home"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

Indonesia's Catholic bishops have decided to hold their 2027 assembly in Papua, leaving the capital Jakarta to stand alongside communities in a region marked by poverty, violence, enviromental strain and human rights concerns. The decision was announced at the close of the bishops' second annual assembly of 2026, held in Jakarta from 4 to 10 November, and reported by Fides News Agency on 13 November 2026. It will be the first time the bishops' conference holds its assembly in Papua.

Listening closely is the first step towards peace. Those are the words of Father Alexandro Rangga, a Franciscan friar and director of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation office for West Papua, and they are the reason the bishops are going. Not to issue another statement from a conference room in Jakarta, but to sit with the people of Papua, hear their grievances, and share their prayer.

In a region where tensions and violence continue in some areas, the bishops' presence is, in Father Rangga's words, a great sign of hope.

The Jakarta assembly met under the theme "Building a Sustainable Economy and a Common Home", focusing on economic justice, environmental protection and human dignity. The bishops pledged to turn those priorities into concrete action in their dioceses, and they were blunt about what that means. The Church cannot, they said, limit itself to issuing statements or drawing up programs.

Faith that stays on paper is not faith. It has to travel - and in 2027, it travels to Papua.

Papua is a long way from Jakarta in every sense that matters. It is Indonesia's easternmost region, a land of highland valleys and rainforest, where many communities live with poverty and where violence has flared in some areas for years. The Church's national leadership has spoken about the humanitarian situation there before.

Now it is going there, and the choice of place is the message. A bishops' conference that meets in Papua is a Church that refuses to look at suffering from a distance.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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