

Brussels, 22 May 2006  
D/06/792  
A/06/1520

Dear Dr Lucas,

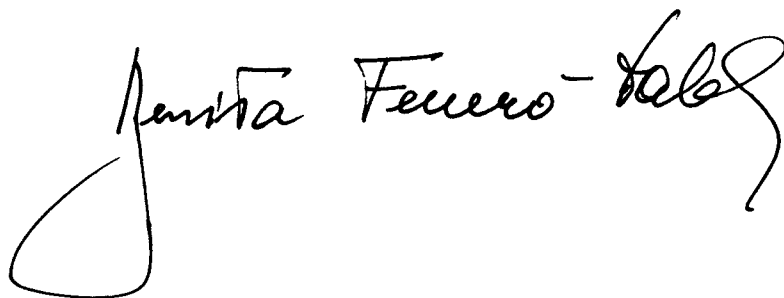
Thank you for your letter of 20 April 2006 regarding religious freedom in Indonesia. As explained in my earlier letter to you on the same subject the Commission is concerned about the situation and is following developments closely.

The instances of religiously motivated violence and intolerance which you describe reflect the fact that religious identity plays an increasingly important role in Indonesia, even if such identity appears sometimes more as a cultural rather than a religious phenomenon. There is no easy solution.

In this context however, I welcome the declared resolve of the Indonesian government and religious leaders to uphold minority religious rights in the face of intimidation. This is as important as the current legal provisions which exist to provide protection of religious rights.

Given the government's commitment to defend religious freedom in Indonesia, the Commission chooses to raise its concerns regularly through a constructive dialogue with the Indonesian authorities rather than through public pressure. Most recently, on the occasion of the EU-Indonesia Ministerial meeting in Vienna in March, we again discussed the issues involved. The ongoing negotiations for an EU-Indonesia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement are another important opportunity for us to raise these issues.

Yours sincerely,



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