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NATIONAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL IN JAPAN

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Statement of Protest Against an Act of Terror toward Christian Churches, and of Prayer for Victims and Their Families

We, the National Christian Council in Japan, have been immeasurably shocked and saddened by news of the suicide bomb attacks that were carried out on May 13 against three churches in Surabaya City, Indonesia (Surabaya Center Pentecost Church, Santa Maria Catholic Church, Indonesia Christian Church), by terrorists claiming the name of Islamic State (hereafter "IS"). Two more bomb incidents have occurred since first news was received, killing and injuring further numbers of people. We hereby humbly express our deep mourning for all who have been affected by these terrible acts.

We also feel compelled to express our strong outrage against these inhuman acts, and particularly in view of reports that the culprits took the lives of their own children, as young as 9 years old, in carrying out these attacks. At the same time, we must remind ourselves that social prejudices toward followers of Islam causes breaks in mutual relations, and can lead to extreme acts of terror by IS.

We presume that these acts of terror were planned with evil design to arouse enmity among Christians and Muslims, who have been wisely walking a path of peaceful inclusion, with mutual respect, overcoming the differences of majority and minority.

We pray with all our hearts that world's Christian community, together with the Christian churches of Indonesia, will hold fast to our faith in the Savior to the end of time, our crucified Lord of reconciliation and peace, and that we will continue to walk the path of triumph against the power of evil that seeks to spread hatred and violence in this world.

Furthermore, we pray that the precious lives of church members that were lost in this terrible incident may be transformed by Christ, who was crucified for our sins and was resurrected, into a power that strengthens further the prayers and relations with Muslim brothers and sisters, who seek to live in God's peace of reconciliation and inclusion.

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National Christian Council in Japan