

## Message from R/P Indonesia (IRC / Inter Religious Council)

We are grateful to have the opportunity to share our story, about the collaboration of R/P in Indonesia with various religions, getting through these difficult times facing COVID-19.

R/P Indonesia (IRC / Inter Religious Council) always coordinates with leaders of the six official religions of Indonesia, namely Islam, Protestant Christianity, Catholic Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, to discuss and cooperate in dealing with every existing situation, in order to maintain and improve harmony between us to achieve better results.

For Indonesia, Covid-19 is an extraordinary disaster. As a developing country, every knowledge we have related to help deal with this disaster is lacking. Starting from basic procedure such as sharing clear and transparent information, to maintaining the composure of the community so as to not to panic. These setbacks have great potential to create chaos.

Even though Indonesia has not yet carried out any lock-down, but with more and more positive cases infected by the virus, more people are just now starting to realize the importance of not leaving home. Public places, offices, malls, recreational centers and educational facilities have become quieter. Traffic congestion in big cities are also gone. But above all that, there is a threat that economic conditions may continue to rapidly decline again, as how the exchange rate of Indonesia Rupiah to the US dollar slumped to the lowest level during the great crisis in 1998. This was soon followed by an incline in unemployment. The cumulative effect of all this will lead to negative impacts to all aspects of life.

The government began to take medical steps to prevent the outbreak of the virus, but also issue bans for all activities involving many people, including religious activities. Activities at mosques, churches, temples were reduced, many temporary closed their own facilities, and large activities involving thousands of people were dispersed by authorities.

Communication between religions and religious communities, has been redirected to platforms such as social media, to avoid direct physical contacts.

We urge religious people to be more mindful with hygiene, practice social distancing, not leave the house, and more importantly to remain calm, by following every government instruction to be able to get maximum results in preventing the spread of this epidemic.

Having intent communication is also important to ward off various kinds of hoaxes and misinformation, which could be pitted against each other and has the potential to form a conflict. In addition, it is important to maintain good relations with religious communities and monitor problems that arise within the grassroots layer.

We always invite religious people, including interfaith, to pray together for this disaster to pass, and for the peace of religion and social life to return to normal soon.

Best Regards from Surabaya - Indonesia and wish all of us in good health condition.