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INDONESIA | CSW Asks President-Elect Joko Widodo to Address Rising Religious Intolerance

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) today called on Indonesian President-elect Joko Widodo and his new government to make it a priority to address rising religious intolerance in Indonesia, which has become a nationwide concern affecting all communities.

Indonesia's election commission officially announced the results of the presidential election on July 22, declaring Joko Widodo, Governor of Indonesia's capital Jakarta, had won 53.15% of the vote, while his rival, former General Prabowo Subianto, secured 46.85%. Subianto, son-in-law of ex-dictator Suharto, said he refused to accept the result, withdrew from the race and has launched a legal challenge. President-elect Widodo called for national reconciliation in his victory speech, "This is a time to mend broken relationships...Let's return to a united Indonesia."

CSW reported increasing harassment, discrimination and violence against Christians, Ahmadi and Shi'a Muslims, adherents of traditional indigenous beliefs, and others in recent years, and earlier this year released a major new report, *Indonesia: Pluralism in Peril – The rise of religious intolerance across the archipelago*. The report, launched in London and Brussels in February, and in four cities in Indonesia in June, provides detailed analysis of increasing violations of freedom of religion or belief, and proposes 25 recommendations for action by the government of Indonesia.

As Governor of Jakarta and previously Mayor of Solo, a city in Central Java known as a center of radical Islamist groups, Joko Widodo defended freedom of religion and Indonesia's tradition of religious pluralism. In his presidential election campaign, he pledged to protect the Constitution which provides for freedom of religion.

CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "We congratulate President-elect Joko Widodo and urge him to protect and promote freedom of religion in Indonesia during his time in office. We believe it should be a priority for the new government to protect Indonesia's tradition of religious pluralism and take action to curb religious intolerance. We hope his government will look seriously at our report and its recommendations, and in particular implement the President-elect's pledge to uphold constitutional guarantees for freedom of religion by, for example, removing the religion column on identity cards, and reviewing all regulations which currently contradict the Constitution. Furthermore, we hope the new President will act to ensure that places of worship which have been legally licensed and their rights upheld by court rulings, such as GKI Yasmin church in Bogor and HKBP Filadelfia church in Bekasi, are able to open and that measures are taken to stop local authorities or extremist groups undermining the rule of law. We also call on the new government of Indonesia, once it takes office, to provide leadership and

resources to the police, and develop a policy of zero tolerance towards radical Islamist organizations preaching intolerance and carrying out violence. We hope that the election of Joko Widodo ushers in a new era of freedom of religion, peace, stability, and stronger democracy in Indonesia.”