

UPDATE NO. 4

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SINGAPORE HUMAN RIGHTS ALERT

Archbishop Turns the Key. Detainees' Families Harrassed.

## ARCHBISHOP ACCEPTS GOVT "EVIDENCE"

Giving in to constant pressure from the government Archbishop Gregory Yong yesterday joined Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew in a press conference from which the foreign press was excluded. The Archbishop said he was shown the government's files on Vincent Cheng and was satisfied with the evidence because "...the man himself admitted that he was using the church...". However, the Archbishop has not yet talked to Vincent Cheng himself.

The government-controlled STRAITS TIMES today headlines its front page with the words "Archbishop Accepts Evidence" and says Vincent Cheng has admitted using various Church groups and publications to further the Marxist cause. However, no evidence is given for this statement or for the Archbishop's conclusion. It is clear that, as Executive Secretary of the Justice and Peace Commission, Vincent Cheng would have "used" the Church for work on justice and peace. That was his job. It seems that the Government sees this as Marxism and has somehow convinced the Archbishop.

Neither is there any evidence presented of a confession despite constant allusions to it. It would seem possible that Vincent Cheng has merely told interrogators about his job and that they have been using this as though it were a confession.

## PM REFUSES TRIAL

The Archbishop said he had asked the government to give proof that the 9 detained church workers - apart from Vincent Cheng who, he said, has made an admission - were involved in a clandestine communist network. Here PM Lee interrupted to point out that he had never said he was going to prove anything in a court of law. "It is not a practice, nor will I allow subversives to get away by insisting that I got to prove everything against them in a court of law or evidence that will stand up to the strict rules of evidence of a court of law," he said.

## ARCHBISHOP LOCKS UP OWN FLOCK

Yesterday PM Lee gave the Archbishop the key to lock up his own flock. Wittingly or unwittingly, the Archbishop has turned the key. His main point during the press conference was that he wished to ensure that there was no conflict between the church and the state. He further said if the government presented similar evidence in respect of the other detainees he would accept it. Thus did he unconsciously invite the government to intensify its interrogation of the other detainees.

#### ARCHBISHOP MET WITH DETAINEES' FAMILIES

The same day the Archbishop met with the detainees' families and friends. They asked him whether he was concerned that confessions might have been obtained under duress. He replied that he had his suspicions but it was irrelevant. The families further asked him why he did not press strongly for an open trial in court. He replied that the government would not have accepted such a suggestion so what was the use of pursuing it. He further said that if Vincent Cheng had signed confessions then the church had no way to disprove it.

Earlier the Archbishop had said that he did not enjoy meeting with the families. On one occasion when the brother of Ms Tang Lay Lee and a lawyer went to see him about the bruising on Lay Lee's face, the Archbishop left the room shouting at them. It is also known that Internal Security officers were constantly in touch with him especially before or after visits from families or lawyers. It is clear that he was under considerable pressure from the government and has given in despite the general feeling among his priests that the detainees are innocent.

#### FAMILIES HARRASSED BY ISD

Families are being harrassed constantly by Internal Security officers in order to force them to sell out their detained loved ones. Vincent Cheng's elderly father was visited by the ISD and asked to sign a statement that the arrest was done in a proper manner and the officers were not rude. Subsequently he has been asked to sign a statement that he was never told by Vincent what he was doing. Clearly this is to enable a headline such as "I never knew what my son was doing." So far he has refused to sign any such statement but now the ISD have called him to an interview on Friday next at 2 p.m.

#### OVER MY DEAD BODY

The father of Ms LIM Li-Kok has consistently inquired after his daughter's welfare by calling the ISD. He was eventually called in to the ISD himself and asked to sign a statement saying- that he does not approve of her actions. His reply was, "Over my dead body."

#### ASK FOR CLARIFICATION

It is necessary for the Archbishop of Singapore to be asked to clarify his position in the light of the above events.

#### EMERGENCY COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN SINGAPORE

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