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BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE

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Neville G. Callam
General Secretary

To: The Christian Federation of Malaysia and the Malaysian Baptist Convention

In solidarity with all Christian Churches in Malaysia

Dear brothers and sisters

I write to you on behalf of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), a worldwide fellowship of churches representing 42 million Baptists in 121 countries, to let you know that the Baptist family stands in solidarity with you during these days that precede the hearings of your appeal against the court ruling in October of 2013 banning the use of the word "Allah" by non-Muslims.

The BWA has recently contacted the United Nations, as well as other members of the international community, to share our concern and to ask them to urge the Malaysian authorities to withdraw the ban, whose imposition only serves to undermine Malaysia's known reputation as a religiously tolerant and culturally pluralistic country. The ban also contradicts the guarantee of freedom of religion to all that is enshrined in Malaysia's constitution.

Over several centuries, Christians have used the word "Allah" to refer to God, and they continue to do so in countries in all regions of the world, including other Muslim majority South-Asian countries. We believe that it is not the role of the government to limit or shape religious beliefs, practices, or expressions. Besides, as important recent studies have shown, the rising tide of restrictions on religion, well documented in the past few years, has not contributed to the welfare of human societies – not to greater security nor to more harmonious co-existence of peoples. On the contrary, these restrictions have led to more conflicts and have become one of the main obstacles to enhanced security, peace, development, and prosperity.

As we pledge to continue to pray for you all, our desire is that God may grant wisdom to the court hearing the appeal in this case. We look forward to joining you in celebrating the repeal of this troubling law.

Respectfully yours,

Neville Callam
General Secretary
Baptist World Alliance

February 28, 2014