



KANAKY PROTESTANT CHURCH NEW CALEDONIA

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PRESS RELEASE FROM THE PROTESTANT CHURCH OF KANAKY– NEW CALEDONIA (EPKNC)

A Call for Fraternal Solidarity, Spiritual Vigilance and Political Responsibility for Kanaky–New Caledonia

For the attention of:

the **Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC)**,
our sister churches in the Pacific, the **Protestant Church of Maohi Nui**, the **Methodist Church of Aotearoa-New Zealand**, the **Uniting Church in Australia**,
our international ecumenical partners, in particular
the **World Council of Churches (WCC)**
the **World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)**,
the **Community of Churches in Mission (CEVAA)**, the **Protestant Mission Service (DFAP)**, the **Protestant Federation of France (FPF)**, the **United Protestant Church of France (EPUDF)**, and the **Reformed Church of France (ERF)**,
the **Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG)**,
as well as to the **French parliamentarians and MPs** called upon to legislate on the future of Kanaky–New Caledonia.

The Protestant Church of Kanaky–New Caledonia (EPKNC), deeply rooted in the Christian faith, in the memory of the Kanak people and in the prophetic calling to serve just peace, wishes to bring to the attention of its ecclesial, ecumenical and institutional partners the gravity of the situation our country is currently facing.

On **2 April 2026**, the French National Assembly rejected at first reading the draft constitutional bill concerning the institutional future of New Caledonia, following the adoption of a motion for preliminary rejection. This rejection interrupts, at this stage, the constitutional implementation of the compromise reached at Bougival. Under current law, provincial elections must be held **no later than 28 June 2026**.

For our Church, this moment is not merely a French parliamentary episode. It reveals, more profoundly, the persistent fragility of the decolonisation process, the absence of a genuinely shared political consensus, and the recurring danger that a future may be decided without the real consent of those most directly affected. The **CNCDH**, in its opinion of 29 January 2026, reiterated that the decolonisation process is not complete and recommended the effective and systematic consultation of the Kanak population to ensure, at every stage, the expression of free and informed consent prior to any decision regarding their political and territorial future. **The United Nations Human Rights Committee** has also recommended that France consult the indigenous peoples of New Caledonia in order to obtain their free, prior and informed



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consent before any measure relating to the process of self-determination, and to respect the principle of constitutional irreversibility established by the Nouméa Accord.

Similarly, the United Nations General Assembly, in its Resolution **80/98** adopted on **5 December 2025**, reaffirmed that it is ultimately for the people of New Caledonia to determine their political future freely and fairly.

The findings of the **Pacific Peoples' Mission**, conducted in **April 2025** at the invitation of the EPKNC, the PCC and the PANG amongst the communities most affected by the events of May 2024, confirm the gravity of the situation. The report considers that the May 2024 uprising stems from a failing and inequitable decolonisation process, fuelled by persistent socio-economic inequalities and repeated breaches of trust in the French State.

The Mission notes in particular that the rebalancing promised by the agreements has not materialised, that more than 10,000 people have left the country, including around 20% of doctors, that 800 businesses and more than 20,000 jobs have been lost, and that young Kanaks account for more than 80% of the prison population. It also highlights the resilience of women, young people, churches and community groups, and calls for renewed regional solidarity, peaceful and neutral mediation in the region, respect for the priorities of Kanak society and the communities most vulnerable due to the situation, and the holding of provincial elections as soon as possible.

Our theological discernment in the light of Dokamo and Christ's Easter

At this Easter season, our message as the Church is not based solely on a legal or institutional interpretation of the situation in Kanaky–New Caledonia. It is also rooted in our theological and philosophical reflection on **Dokamo**, illuminated by the Paschal mystery of Jesus Christ.

In the vision of Dokamo, the human being is not an isolated individual, but a relational being, sustained by the earth, memory, community, the word given, the ancestors and the call of God. A just society is therefore defined not only by its institutions or procedures, but by the quality and truth of the relationships upon which it is founded.

Christ's Easter reveals to us that God is not neutral in the face of history's wounds. The crucifixion of Jesus manifests the violence of the political, religious and imperial powers that prefer to silence the truth rather than allow themselves to be converted. The cross thus unveils what any unjust order produces when it seeks to maintain itself: it humiliates, crushes and silences.

In this light, the current crisis in Kanaky–New Caledonia appears to be more than just a crisis of procedure or status. It is a **crisis of just relationship**. When an indigenous people, scarred by colonial dispossession and still engaged in an unfinished process of decolonisation, are not



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truly listened to in determining their future, this is not merely a political failure, but a profound violation of the truth of human relations.

From the perspective of Dokamo, as in the light of Easter, peace is not merely the absence of conflict. It arises from restored relationships, recognised dignity, honoured memory and a voice restored to those whom others sought to sideline. There can be procedure without alliance, legality without reconciliation and order without justice. But there can be no true peace where consent is not genuine, where memory is denied and where the dignity of a people is not recognised.

The resurrection does not erase the cross: it passes through it and judges it. It proclaims that imperial violence does not have the final say and that another future becomes possible. Thus, respect for free, prior and informed consent is not merely a requirement of international law; it also corresponds, theologically, to respect for the image of God in the other.

At the same time, Christ's Easter forbids us from sanctifying any political camp. Dokamo is not a partisan doctrine, but a call to truth, responsibility, reparation and the transformation of all humanity, whatever culture it may belong to. In the light of the resurrection, everyone is called to move from domination to conversion, so that a just peace based on truth and restored relationships may come to our country.

Our political discernment

The EPKNC solemnly affirms that the current situation demands neither haste, nor the use of force, nor the reduction of the Caledonian question to a mere constitutional technicality. Our country cannot be governed sustainably through procedures disconnected from historical truth, respect for the Kanak word, and the concrete requirements of a just peace.

We consider that any attempt to unilaterally alter the institutional framework, to circumvent the requirement for genuine consultation with the Kanak people, or to further postpone the restoration of democratic legitimacy without a clear basis, without a renewed agreement and without respect for the decolonisation process, would deepen the crisis of confidence and expose the French State to serious moral, political and international challenge. This warning is not a partisan slogan; it stems from a demand for justice, consistency and peace.

We therefore reiterate that the holding of **provincial elections by the end of June 2026**, in accordance with the law in force, is not a minor detail. It concerns the very legitimacy of the institutions and the country's ability to emerge from the indefinite prolongation of weakened structures.



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Our appeal to church and ecumenical partners in the Pacific and around the world

We call upon the **Pacific Conference of Churches**, the **Pacific Network on Globalisation**, our **sister churches in the Pacific**, the **CEVAA**, the **World Council of Churches** and all our international partners:

1. **to stand alongside the people of Kanaky–New Caledonia in prayer, vigilance and fraternal solidarity;**
2. **to draw public attention to the situation in the country**, recalling that true peace cannot be separated from justice, memory and the dignity of peoples;
3. **to encourage ecumenical and regional support for the ongoing process**, based on non-violence, historical truth, respect for the Kanak people and all the country's ethnic groups, and the rejection of any imposed solution;
4. **to provide moral, spiritual and diplomatic support** for any initiative consistent with the right of peoples to self-determination, respect for the decolonisation process and the pursuit of a truly liveable future for all the country's inhabitants;
5. **to call upon the French authorities and the relevant international bodies** to ensure that the commitments made, the recommendations issued and the dignity of the communities concerned are respected.

Our appeal to French parliamentarians and MPs

We also address a solemn appeal to the parliamentarians of the French Republic.

You are legislating in Paris on the future of a people living in Kanaky–New Caledonia. This responsibility demands more of you than partisan calculations, more than a vote of expediency, more than an alignment with short-term interests.

We ask you:

- to recognise that the issue of Kanaky–New Caledonia remains a question of **decolonisation**, and not merely a matter of administrative reorganisation;
- to respect the framework of international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions, the spirit and achievements of the Nouméa Accord, as well as the recommendations of the **CNCDH** and the **Human Rights Committee**;
- not to support any initiative that would have the effect of imposing an institutional future without effective consultation, without the free, prior and informed consent of the people of Kanaky–New Caledonia, and without serious guarantees of democratic legitimacy;
- to allow, under current law, provincial elections to be held within the scheduled timeframe;
- to act not as distant administrators of a colonial problem, but as political leaders called upon to choose between the ease of the balance of power and the demand for lasting justice.



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Our recommendations

In light of the current situation, the EPKNC makes the following recommendations:

1. That the integrity of the decolonisation process of Kanaky–New Caledonia be fully respected, in accordance with international law, United Nations resolutions and the provisions of the Nouméa Accord.
2. That any decision concerning the country's political and institutional future be preceded by **effective and systematic consultation** with the Kanak people and all ethnic groups in the country, with a view to securing **free, prior and informed consent**.
3. That no institutional reform be imposed without renewed political agreement, without respect for fundamental rights and without genuine attention to the historical wounds that remain open.
4. That **provincial elections** be organised within the framework provided for by the law currently in force, in order to restore the democratic legitimacy of the country's institutions.
5. That the Churches, in the Pacific and beyond, accompany this time not with silent neutrality, but with active, lucid, prayerful and fraternal solidarity.
6. That a language of truth, reparation and responsibility be preferred to any rhetoric of fear, domination or the reduction of the Kanak people to just another variable in the French debate.
7. That the French State regain its impartiality in the decolonisation process, the sole guarantor of balance in the consensus to be reached

Conclusion

The EPKNC calls on all Churches, all fraternal partners and all political leaders to heed what this moment demands of us: not tension, not domination, not forgetting, but truth, justice and courage.

We believe that no lasting peace can be built against the memory of a people.

We believe that no true reconciliation will arise from an imposed decision.

We believe that in Kanaky–New Caledonia, the future can only be just if it is underpinned by free speech, genuine consent, and a restored relationship between the peoples of this country.

May God grant our country clarity, strength and just peace.

May God keep Kanaky–New Caledonia in the truth.

May God turn hearts towards justice and brotherhood.



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Protestant Church of Kanaky–New Caledonia (EPKNC)

For distribution to ecclesiastical, ecumenical and institutional partners

**Wednesday 15th April 2026,
The President of the Protestant Church of Kanaky–New Caledonia
Reverend Paul PADOME**

Sources

In addition to the EPKNC's own theological discernment, this press release draws on the following sources:

- National Assembly, 'Rejection of the draft constitutional bill relating to New Caledonia', 2 April 2026.
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- United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 80/98, 'Question of New Caledonia', 5 December 2025.
- Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG), Mission of the Pacific Peoples to Kanaky New Caledonia, November 2025.