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### **Terrorist charges ill-conceived**

Christian World Service was shocked to hear of the early morning raids by police on homes around the country under search warrants issued using anti-terrorism legislation.

Christian World Service made submissions on the original Terrorism Bill and the most recent amendment bill that is still before the House from the position that such legislation would unnecessarily cause harm to both individuals and communities.

“The way that the police have used the Act to obtain search warrants was not the reason given as to why New Zealand needed this new legislation,” says Jonathan Fletcher, National Director.

“We were told that this was to keep New Zealand in line with other countries in order to improve global security,” he adds. “How can a small community like the good people of Ruatoki be a terrorist threat?”

“New Zealand police have stepped way over the mark - they are creating fear in our communities and fanning the flames of racism against Maori and mistrust of legitimate activists,” he continues.

“If we as New Zealanders don’t speak out now, the country is likely to introduce even more anti terrorist measures that limit the rights of us all to hold different points of views and to make them known,” he concludes

In making its submission to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, long time New Zealand aid and development agency, Christian World Service raised the particular circumstances facing people seeking refugee status or raising funds to assist their compatriots overseas. One of the prime concerns was the ability of governments and security forces to make false claims about people without their knowledge and without any means of redress. Another concern was that any terrorist offence was covered under existing legislation.

Christian World Service is writing to the government calling for an immediate halt to the intimidation of activists and asking for an apology to the people of Ruatoki.

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Christian World Service is the Development, Justice and Aid Agency  
of the Conference of Churches in Aotearoa/New Zealand