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Indonesia

Solidarity with the Freeport workers

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Dear friends,

Six thousand of our comrades at PT Freeport Indonesia (PTFI) have been on strike since September 15. They are demanding a wage increase to US\$7.5 per hour. The strike is a legitimate action under Indonesian labour laws (Law Number 13/2003 Articles 137-145). The Freeport management however claims that the strike is illegal and is refusing to pay the workers. [See [Joint statement in solidarity with Freeport Indonesia workers](#) - IVP]

There are four basic reasons why workers' wages at Freeport must be increased:

1. PT Freeport Indonesia's contribution to Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold (FCX) is well above the average of other companies affiliated with FCX. This can be seen from a comparison between Freeport production levels in Indonesia and those in America and Africa. It is clear that the main source of FCX's profits is from the operational revenue in Indonesia. In other words, the income generated by PT Freeport Indonesia exceeds that of other companies in the FCX group.
2. Increases in the price of primary commodities in 2011 have resulted in a massive increase in PT Freeport Indonesia's profits.
3. The competency of PT Freeport Indonesia workers is equivalent to those of other FCX workers. This has been verified through the System Competency Test, Tools, ATA, International and National Competency, Nosa and ISO-14001.
4. Working conditions and risk levels at PT Freeport Indonesia are extreme, with employees working at an altitude 4,200 metres above sea level, weather that alternates between heavy rainfall and extremely cold air. This region covers Grasberg, Erstberg, underground work, Mile 74, DOM, Big Grossan and others.

PT Freeport's annual income stands at 41.04 trillion rupiah or US\$45.60 billion. Total wages for its 22,000 workers meanwhile are just 1.4 trillion rupiah a year. The wages of the entire PT Freeport Indonesia workforce amount to only 0.34 percent of Freeport's annual revenue (data from PT Freeport Indonesia All Indonesia Workers Union, SPSI). Workers at PT Freeport, particularly those assigned to production work an average of 12-14 hours a day. Clearly their wages should be higher than workers working for only 8 hours a day.

The PT Freeport workers have now been on strike for two months without wages. This situation has had a huge impact on the economic, social and psychological lives of the workers and their families. It is easy to say, "It's your own fault for going on strike, making things difficult". Such comments would not be made if we look at the grounds for the workers' wage demands. Such comments are premature when we look at the fact that the workers work an average of 12-14 hours a day. Such comments are offensive when the police and the military officers providing security receive more money than that paid to workers (according to National Police Chief Timur Pradopo the company paid US\$14 million in "pocket money" to the police and military). Such comments are totally invalid when we look at the damages resulting from mining activities – the loss of whole mountains, the pollution of rivers, the eviction and impoverishment of seven tribes with communal land rights in Timika. Such comments are absolutely meaningless when we realise that everyone wants to live a prosperous and safe life.

Solidarity with the Freeport workers

The more than two month strike by PT Freeport workers is an important milestone in the history of labour strikes in Indonesia, where the use of contract labour and outsourcing is rampant. Since the strike began, the PT Freeport management has been recruiting hundreds of people to do the jobs abandoned by the striking workers. Yet in accordance with Indonesian regulations and law that are in force, while a strike is in process or an industrial dispute is not yet resolved, companies are prohibited from recruiting new workers, under any status whatsoever, to replace those on strike.

The staying power of the striking PT Freeport workers has been absolutely extraordinary. Pressure from the company as well as personal and family pressures is not an easy thing to withstand. The financial contributions from different parts of the world for our striking comrades (from around 20 countries) have been one the key factors in supporting this struggle.

The Indonesian government has remained silent, while PT Freeport has insisted that it will not raise workers' wages. Now is the time for the ordinary people of this country to support our 6,000 sisters and brothers in their struggle to improve their welfare.

Now is the time for us to participate concretely in their struggle.

How can we do this. By giving them coins of support. The coins that we given the workers will not just have meaning in terms of how much money, but much more than this it will symbolise that the struggle of the PT Freeport workers is the struggle of workers throughout Indonesia and the world. Solidarity in the fight against injustice needs the broadest possible support. Low wages and cheap labour are a form of injustice for all humanity.

Let us give our full support and solidarity to the Freeport workers to continue their struggle, to obtain their rights, justice and welfare. Congratulate and salute the Freeport workers who have had shown extraordinary courage in their struggle for a just wage. This strike shows the world that regardless of the pressure and intimidation the workers will not stop their struggle for a better life.

Friends,

You can support this campaign by depositing coins in the Solidarity Coin Boxes that have been prepared or by making a donation direction into the Freeport SPSI bank account:

Bank: Mandiri

Address: Kuala Kencana, Timika, Provinsi Papua, Indonesia

Account: Dana Perjuangan SPSI PT. Freeport Indonesia

A/N: 154-00-1025925-1 Swift code: BMRIIDJA

In solidarity,

Alves Fonataba (+62 811486896)

Team Coordinator,

Solidarity Coins for the Freeport Workers Struggle

Koordinator Tim Koin

Solidaritas untuk Perjuangan Buruh Freeport

Organisations supporting this campaign:

Solidarity with the Freeport workers

The Alliance of Archipelagic Indigenous People (AMAN), the Working People's Association (PRP), the People's Liberation Party (PPR), the Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (Kontras), the Papua Student Alliance (AMP), Free Women (Perempuan Mahardika), the Papuan Traditional Social Community Against Corruption (KAMPAK Papua), the Indonesian Legal Aid and Human Rights Association Jakarta (PBHI Jakarta), the Indonesian Trade Union Congress Alliance (KASBI), the National Solidarity Committee (KSN), the Papua NGO Cooperative Forum (Foker LSM Papua), PT Freeport Indonesia All Indonesia Workers Union (SPSI PTFI), the National Students Front (FMN), the Association of Independent Trade Unions (GSBI), the Indonesian Independent Union (SMI), the Greater Jakarta Workers Federation of Struggle (FPBJ), the United Indonesian Labour Movement (PPBI), Student Struggle Center for National Liberation (PEMBEBASAN), the Indonesian Transportation Trade Union of Struggle (SBTPI), the Working People's Association-Organisational Saviours Committee (KPO-PRP), the Green Indonesia Union (SHI), the State Electricity Company Trade Union (SP-PLN), the United Student Action (KAM-Laksi), the Indonesian Workers Association (ATKI), the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Walhi), National Solidarity for Papua (SNUP), the Indonesian Student League for Democracy (LMND), Praxis, the Indonesian People's Opposition Front (FORI), the Indonesian Association of the Families of Missing Persons (IKOHI), the Jakarta Legal Aid Foundation (LBH Jakarta), the Human Rights Working Group (HRWG), the Indonesian Human Rights Committee for Social Justice (IHCS), the Unity in Diversity National Alliance (ANBTI), the Volunteers of Democracy in Struggle (REPDEM), the Greater Jakarta Railway Workers Trade Union (SPKAJ), SPTPB, the Indonesian Trade Union Movement (GESBURI), the Petition of 28 (Petisi 28), the Indonesian Islamic Students Movement (PMII), the Indonesian Workers Party (PPI) and national level federated and confederated organisations.