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**International Centre for Trade Union Rights**

*Centro Internacional para los Derechos Sindicales*  
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ICTUR was founded to  
defend and extend trade union rights and  
to raise awareness of these rights and their violations  
around the world

**July 2017**

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**Attn:**

**Mr. Joko Widodo**  
**President of Republic of Indonesia**  
**Istana Merdeka**  
**Jakarta Pusat 10110, Indonesia**

**CC:**

Minister of Manpower, Hanif Dhakiri  
Secretary General, Ministry of Manpower, Hery Sudarmanto  
Director General for Industrial Relations and Social Security, Ministry  
of Manpower, Haiyani Rumondang  
Head of International Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Manpower,  
Indah Anggoro Putri  
Director of Employment Affairs, Ministry of Manpower, Mahatmi  
Parwitasari Saronto  
Industriall  
Chemical, Energy and Mines Workers Union (CEMWU SPSI PTFI)

Dear President Widodo,

The International Centre for Trade Union Rights is writing to raise serious concerns about the mass dismissals of striking workers in Indonesia.

ICTUR understands that management at the Grasberg copper and gold mine in West Papua has dismissed thousands of workers for participation in strike action. Earlier this year, the mine operator - PT Freeport Indonesia - unilaterally implemented a 'furlough' policy, in violation of the collective agreement, putting some 10 percent of the workforce on 'long-term leave' and evicting them from company

accommodation. It is understood that management announced that these workers would not be allowed to return to work. In protest, the Chemical, Energy and Mines Workers Union (CEMWU SPSI PTFI) began a strike action on 1 May. In retaliation for this still on-going strike, 4220 workers have been dismissed. It is further understood that the industrial dispute has spread to Java, where hundreds of workers have been fired at a joint venture between Freeport and Mitsubishi known as PT Smelting, which processes copper from Grasberg. The global union IndustriALL believes that Freeport is exploiting the dispute as a negotiating tactic with the government, following its demand for a 51 percent stake in the operation; as well as to break the union and to replace the dismissed workers with casual contractors.

The ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association has clearly stated that 'dismissal of workers because of a strike constitutes serious discrimination in employment on grounds of legitimate trade union activities and is contrary to Convention No. 98' (*Digest of decisions and principles of the Freedom of Association Committee of the Governing Body of the ILO*, Fifth Edition, 2006, para. 661). Indonesia has ratified all eight of the ILO Fundamental Conventions.

ICTUR calls on the government to urgently intervene in this dispute and to ensure a peaceful resolution to the situation in West Papua, including the prompt reinstatement of all the dismissed Freeport workers. Recalling that in 2011 armed police shot at striking workers at the Freeport mine, killing one and injuring eight more, ICTUR further calls on the government to abide by its obligations under international law to protect the workers' exercise of their rights to organise and to strike; to take all necessary measures to ensure that the lives and safety of workers and their families are protected; and to ensure the fundamental freedoms of workers to join and form unions and to take action in defence of their interests.

ICTUR will report these incidents in the journal *International Union Rights*, which was established in 1993, and which enjoys a readership in more than 100 countries.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D. Blackburn', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Daniel Blackburn, Director