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| His Excellency Mr T M Hamzah Thayeb  Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary  Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia  38 Grosvenor Square  London W1K 2HW | our ref ituc/ot/wp  date: 4 November 2015  contact: Owen Tudor  direct line: +44 (20) 7467 1325  email: otudor@tuc.org.uk |

Dear Ambassador

Minimum wage protests in Jakarta: 30 October 2015

The Trades Union Congress, representing nearly 6 million workers in Great Britain, wishes you to convey to your Government our concerns about the excessive use of police violence in the demonstration on the minimum wage regulation which took place in Jakarta on 30 October. At least 35,000 workers turned up to support the call of eight national unions including KSPI, KSPSI-AGN, KSBSI, FSBI, KPKPBI, FBLP, SBSI 92, SPSI. Twenty-five union members and activists were arrested. The protestors opposed the Government Regulation (PP) No. 78/2015 - which seeks to peg the statutory minimum wage levels in the country to inflation and GDP growth rates only - and demanded a 22% increase to the 2016 minimum wage.

We are shocked to learn that the peaceful demonstration was dispersed by the police using water cannon and tear gas. Many protestors were beaten up. Their cars and motor vehicles were smashed by the police. Twenty-five demonstrators were arrested for detention including eight members from KSPI, the ITUC’s affiliate, and unions affiliated to IndustriALL, as well as two public lawyers. They were released on bail on 31 October. The government’s use of excessive force and arrest of the peaceful demonstrators is a setback to freedom of association in Indonesia. It is also a violation of the ILO principles.

The trade unions in Indonesia have justified concerns regarding the new regulation which will change the current minimum wage fixing mechanism that is based on consultation with the trade unions and a basket of basic living expenditures. The replacement of it by a unilateral bureaucratic procedure is going to destroy the well-established tradition of trade union participation in violation of the ILO convention No 131 on Minimum Wage Fixing Mechanism. The new minimum wage formula also cannot guarantee that the living expenses of the vast working population in Indonesia are met.

We call upon the Indonesian government to legislate and develop a mechanism to fix the statutory minimum wage. This should be a mechanism with trade union participation in the process of setting the minimum wage, and it should ensure that the minimum wage is sufficient to ensure a decent living for workers and their dependents.

We therefore urge the Indonesian government to:

1) withdraw the new regulation on wages and re-negotiate a consensus with the trade unions;

2) drop the charges against the protesters who were arrested; and

3) refrain from police violence and prosecution against peaceful protestors in handling future labour-related demonstrations.

I would be grateful if you could convey these comments to your Government and let me know its response.

Yours sincerely

**FRANCES O’GRADY**

General Secretary