

The situation for fisherpeople 10 years after the fall of Suharto

10 Years after the Fall of Suharto - Views from the People's Organisations

Wednesday 6 August 2008, by [NIKAHI Arbani](#) (Date first published: May 2008).

This is the sixth translation from of a series of 13 interviews with leaders of labour, peasant, fisherpeople, urban and rural poor, environmental, student and social-political organisations in Indonesia around the theme "Ten Years after the Fall of Suharto - Views from the People's Organisations", which appeared in the first edition of Jurnal Bersatu} (Journal of Unity). Earlier interviews in the series can be found under the Focus section at www.asia-pacific-solidarity.net.

Additional interviews will be posted as they are translated - James Balowski.

[For the complete set of translations as reproduced on ESSF website, see: [10 Years after the Fall of Suharto - Views from the People's Organisations](#)]

Introduction

The following discussion was written based on interviews conducted by *Jurnal Bersatu* (Journal of Unity) editorial staff with a number of people's organisations. The spectrum and "political groupings" along with the sectors and class of organisation were several of the considerations in the choice of the groups that were interviewed. Nevertheless there were two organisations - the People's Movement Alliance for Agrarian Reform (AGRA) and the United People's Party (PPR) who on the eve of the publication of this journal were unable to be interviewed.

Fisherpeople's organisations

Arbani Nikahi, Chairperson Saijaan Fishers Union (INSAN)

Reformasi has not brought any significant changes to fisherpeople's lives. They continue to suffer and the government is still controlled by parties that only prioritise themselves and their own group's interests.

The principle issues facing fisherpeople

The urgent issue for fisherpeople is the problem of fuel and the marketing of the fish catch. These issues are not just urgent for INSAN fisherpeople, but for fisherpeople throughout South Kalimantan, even perhaps throughout Indonesia.

The current state of the fisherpeople's movement

Up until now, INSAN fishers are still struggling over the price of fuel which is becoming steadily higher while supplies are becoming scarcer. But INSAN itself already has a cooperative. In Kota Baru itself, there is a communication network between fishers and INSAN has even developed relations with other regions.

Aims of the struggle

The aims of INSAN's struggle is first, to reform the government so that it has a vision that holds the values of openness and siding with the people in the highest esteem, and second, building a society that has a level of awareness about the existing conditions and is able to organise itself.

People's movement unity

Unity is indeed a necessity, but it has to be supported by social autonomy that can only be created with an economic wing that is able to support the people's movement. This need for unity itself is understood by other movement groups but the obstacle is economic problems.

Political parties

Political parties are a strategic necessity and it would be better if the various elements in the movement built a party jointly rather than building individual parties.

The 2009 elections

The 2009 elections are not important because it will not produce anything. So INSAN's position with

regard to the 2009 elections is to golput
(abstaining from voting).

P.S.

* From Journal of Unity - May 2008.

* Arbani Nikahi, Chairperson Saijaan Fishers Union (INSAN).