

Press Release

The World Bank is deporting farmers from their farmland

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(Jakarta, 18 September 2006) Two Via Campesina activists were detained by the Singapore authorities last night at Changi international airport and were deported this morning to Jakarta. They were interrogated for 14 hours continuously. They were not doing anything criminal and they had come to Singapore without any intention of disturbing the people of Singapore. But the officers kept saying that they were just obeying orders.

Irma Yanni and Achmad Ya'kub, both working for the Federation of Indonesian Peasant Unions (FSPI)/Via Campesina, entered Singapore to prepare a Via Campesina Press Conference. Other representatives were supposed to follow them to address the media, so the world could hear the peasant's voice. Peasants are among the first victims of the World Bank and IMF policies. But they were silenced.

This incident clearly reveals the criminal character of the World Bank and the IMF. The twin institutions have deported millions of peasants from their farmland through their program of Market Assisted Land Reform (MALR) and other large projects. And instead of being listened to, farmers have been deported: the World Bank and the IMF are not able to create the conditions to listen to dissenting views.

Farmers Rally in Front of World Bank Office in Jakarta

On their return to Jakarta, both deported activists joined an action against the World Bank and the IMF that started at 10 AM. About 1000 people, led by peasant members of FSPI, labors group, youth organizations, environmental groups and other social movements, marched to the office of the Finance minister. The IMF meeting in Singapore had just nominated the Indonesian Finance minister, Sri Mulyani, "the best finance minister". This clearly indicates that the Indonesian government is "the good boy of the IMF". Yet recent statistics show that poverty is increasing in Indonesia. It is ironical that a minister whose policies have created poverty is granted this award.

The rally continued to the presidential palace, demanding Indonesia to stop its collaboration with the World Bank and the IMF and ended up in front of the World Bank's office that is the largest office in South-East Asia. Protestors shouted: "Reject the IMF, Oust the World Bank!". Several international farmers leaders members of La Via Campesina joined the

rally, expressing their solidarity with the Indonesian people: they were coming from MST - Brazil, Paragos - Philipine, UNORKA - Philipine, KRRS - India, and Monlar - Sri Lanka.

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La Via Campesina is the international movement of peasants, small and medium sized producers, landless, rural women, indigenous people, rural youth and agricultural workers active in 56 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas.