

Worker anger after furnace explosion at Indonesia Tsingshan

Friday 29 December 2023, by [BALOWSKI James](#), [CNN Indonesia](#), [Media Sulteng](#) (Date first published: 27 December 2023).

Protesting workers demand company be held liable for fatal nickel smelter blast

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Bahodopi — The Association of Organisations (Poros) of Mourning Workers held a peaceful demonstration in front of the PT Indonesia Morowali Industrial Park (IMIP) offices in Fatufia Village in Central Sulawesi on Wednesday December 27.

The demonstration was held as a form of solidarity with the dozens of workers killed and injured as a consequence of an Indonesia Tsingshan Stainless Steel (ITSS) nickel smelter furnace explosion in the IMIP Park three days earlier.

The participants of the action, which were estimated at around 5,000 people, will later gather at the Fatufia Village Alkhairat Mosque parking area and in front of the Labota Village apartments.

The demonstrators came from five labour organisations in the IMIP Park, namely the Mining and Energy Federation (FPE), the Indonesian Prosperity Trade Union (SPIS), the Chemical, Energy and Mining Industrial Federation (FIKEP), the Indonesian National Trade Union Federation (FSPNI) and the Sulawesi Mining, Investment and Factory Trade Union (SP SMIP).

In a written release on Tuesday December 26, action coordinator Dodi Amir said that the aim of the action was to demand that the PT ITSS and PT IMIP management, as the owners of the industrial area, “Immediately act to form an investigation team together with trade union representatives that are part of the Morowali Regency labour axis alliance”.

The peaceful actions, which are scheduled to take place over three days starting from Wednesday December 17 to Friday December 19, will be joined by around 5,000 demonstrators.

Amir said that they are taking up 23 demands including a request to carry out periodic rebuilds, stop the use of sub-standard equipment and urging the investigation and prosecution of the parties related to the tragedy.

In a statement Amir said he hopes that the demands from the trade unions would be fulfilled immediately by the related parties. “Hopefully the peaceful action that will be held tomorrow will proceed smoothly and peacefully”, he concluded.

The following are the points in the demands by the protesting workers:

1. Periodic rebuilds.

2. Improved company health facilities and additional ambulances in the IMIP area.
3. The safe repatriation of foreign workers (TKA) (Ministry of Labour Regulation 349/2019 on certain positions that are prohibited from being occupied by foreign workers).
4. Mandatory use of the Indonesian language in computer programs, work equipment and or operations.
5. Foreign workers are required to speak Indonesian.
6. Mandatory professional health and safety (K3) officers (leadership level) with specific qualifications.
7. Workers are not allowed to be loaned between divisions.
8. The abolition of the Ferroalloy division.
9. Stop using work equipment that does not meet standards.
10. Establish an Emergency Response Team (ERT) according to its role.
11. Mandatory emergency exits in every work area (storage).
12. The addition of bus facilities (pickup and drop off).
13. The company must provide compensation to victims of fatal work accidents of a greater value than Social Security Management Agency (BPJS) employment compensation.
14. The company must provide compensation to victims of work injuries of a greater value than BPJS employment compensation.
15. The families of victims of fatal accidents are given guarantees of work according to their competency level.
16. Occupational Safety and Health Committee (P2K3) at the company are required to involve trade union officials.
17. Prosecute the PT ITSS management and all parties involved in the negligence that caused the accident at the Ferro-silicon section of PT ITSS.
18. A mandatory 3 x 24 hour mourning period without production activities for every fatal accident.
19. Investigations into work accidents must involves union elements (in the investigation team)
20. December 24 shall be a day of mourning in the PT IMIP area and is designated as a company holiday that will be commemorated every year.
21. The company is required to provide full protective clothing (APD) to workers in all facilities.
22. Foreign investments in the PT IMIP must provide decent wages to workers.
23. The company or management in the PT IMIP area is not allowed to dismiss workers who disseminate videos on social media when a work accident occurs.

According to one of the employees named Benny, points 4 and 5 in the demands are non-negotiable.

“On points 4 and 5 of the demands I think they are non-negotiable, considering that almost all operational administration in the IMIP area uses Mandarin, and this can be seen because every

Indonesian administrator must be proficient in Mandarin and employee information systems use Mandarin script” he said.

Widespread criticism after 16 killed, dozens injured in nickel smelter blast

CNN Indonesia - December 26, 2023

Jakarta — The PT Indonesia Morowali Industrial Park (IMIP) has been flooded with criticism after a nickel smelter furnace belonging to Indonesia Tsingshan Stainless Steel (ITSS) exploded killing 16 workers and injuring dozens more.

One of the criticisms came from Morowali IMIP Labour Solidarity. “[We] condemn the company and the state which has been negligent in providing and ensuring safety infrastructure and facilities and occupational safety for works at the company”, read a press release by the labour group on Tuesday December 26.

Morowali IMIP Labour Solidarity is an alliance of national level trade union representatives and non-government organisations that focus on labour issues.

They also said that PT IMIP applies labour practices that tend to violate legislation.

This includes using labour brokers because they transfer workers who apply to other companies under PT IMIP, the transfer workers without prior agreement and the use of contract labour.

“This illustrates that structurally smelter companies such as PT ITSS and PT IMIP as the regional management have allowed labour practices that are below safety standards, neglecting workers’ rights to occupational health and safety (K3)”, said the group.

They also explained that the PT IMIP industrial park neglects to provide occupation health and safety facilities and infrastructure.

This situation was reflected after several of the victims that were killed were trapped in the vortex of fire because there was no evacuation route.

Several workers were also forced to jump from the third floor resulting in serious injuries and broken bones with some vomiting blood.

In addition to this, the lack of adequate medical transportation vehicles also worsened the situation because workers suffering minor and serious injuries had to be transported using a sand truck.

Criticism about occupation health and safety also came from the Indonesian Association of Trade Unions (ASPEK).

ASPEK Indonesia President Mirah Sumirat said that the accident at PT ITSS was a “humanitarian tragedy” which requires serious attention from the government.

Sumirat said that “it is strongly suspected that there were K3 violations at PT ITSS resulting in the smelter furnace explosion”.

He is calling on the PT ITSS management to be legally investigated and that the company be temporarily closed so that a thorough investigation can be carried out.

Sumirat also touched on the issue of weak monitoring of occupational health and safety in Indonesia.

“[This] is [one of] the impacts of facilitating investment that is made all too easy by the Omnibus Law on Job Creation”, he said.

Weak monitoring and the lack of labor supervisors, continued Sumirat, is a classic problem that has never been resolved by the government.

ASPEK Indonesia is calling on the Ministry of Labour to take labour supervision seriously, including the issue of implementing occupational health and safety standards in all companies in Indonesia.

Similar criticisms were also made by Labour Party President Said Iqbal.

“Because K3 issues often occur, we are also asking that the company be prosecuted. Such case often occur, this shows that it is not just because of negligence, but allegedly due to omission”, said Iqbal said in an official release on Sunday December 24.

Furthermore, Iqbal emphasised that the implementation of occupational health and safety must be fully ensured. He also suggested that parties or companies that violate these standards must be subject to severe sanctions. (isa/pua)

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Translated by James Balowski

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