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Indonesian transport workers unite

Tuesday 12 February 2008, by [KING Sam](#) (Date first published: 7 February 2008).

Puncack,

Transport workers from six different sectoral unions met from January 23-25 in West Java to form the National Transport Workers Union (FBTN).

This is a breakthrough for transport workers who have not possessed a national federation since the destruction of the Indonesian trade union movement by the military in 1965.

FBTN leaders believe a national structure is necessary to fight for a legal framework that is beneficial to workers.

FBTN national organiser Ilham Syah told Green Left Weekly that “a key struggle is forcing the government and bosses to legally recognise transport workers as just that — workers”. Because current Indonesian law treats transport workers as small businesses, they “don’t receive the normal minimum pay and working conditions”.

Corruption also undermines workers’ income. Public transport drivers, for example, have to compete for passengers with unregistered vehicles that don’t pay tax or station fees. These vehicles are allowed to continue operating by corrupt police. Maritime workers have to pay various bribes on top of the official port toll in order to move containers to and from ships.

The conference received greetings from Chris Cain, who wrote “On behalf of the West Australian Branch of the Maritime Union of Australia I extend the hand of International Solidarity. Dare to struggle, dare to win..

P.S.

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