



November 13, 2009

Mr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono
President of the Republic of Indonesia
Istana Merdeka,
Jakarta 10110
Indonesia

General Bambang Hendarso Danuri
Chief of Indonesian National Police
Jl. Trunojoyo No.3
Jakarta Selatan
Indonesia

3rd Commission Secretariat
Law Division of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia
Fax. (+6221) 571-5566

Dear President Yudhoyono,

We, the below-signed 678 individuals, join Human Rights First in writing to express our concern about the criminal defamation investigation of Ms. Illian Deta Arta Sari and Mr. Emerson Yuntho of Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW).

We were gratified to note that you made strengthening the rule of law a high priority in your campaign earlier this year. Yet charging human rights activists, journalists, and other civil society actors with criminal defamation has, alarmingly, become an increasing trend in Indonesia. Such charges are out of place in a society seeking a strong and stable rule of law.

Under your leadership, Indonesia has made significant progress toward becoming a stable democracy. But yet more progress must be made before the job is done. Your recent re-election allows you the opportunity to ensure that the rule of law is fully implemented in Indonesia. We urge you not to delay in taking all necessary steps to end the investigations of Ms. Deta Arta Sari and Mr. Yuntho, but also to ensure that those officials responsible for the investigation are themselves investigated for possible misuse of their authority.

Ensuring that Indonesian society is free of corruption is a critical piece of building a stable, free, and fair democratic society. The work of Ms. Deta Arta

HEADQUARTERS
333 Seventh Avenue
13th Floor
New York, NY 10001
Tel: 212.845.5200
Fax: 212.845.5299

WASHINGTON D.C. OFFICE
100 Maryland Avenue, N.E.
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002
Tel: 202.547.5692
Fax: 202.543.5999

www.humanrightsfirst.org

Sari and Mr. Yuntho, their colleagues at ICW, and the other human rights defenders with whom they work should be protected, not repressed.

In addition to taking action on the specific case of Ms. Deta Arta Sari and Mr. Yuntho, we hope you will ensure that Indonesian police and prosecutors consistently and correctly distinguish between defamation and legitimate criticism or other forms of free speech. Furthermore, we urge you to recognize that criminal defamation laws have no place in a government that welcomes political opposition. Freedom of expression, which such laws violate, is a critical element to any stable democracy. We therefore hope you will work to ensure that Indonesia's criminal defamation laws are repealed—and soon, in light of their increased use against human rights defenders.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We will continue to monitor this case closely.

Yours truly,

(The names of the 678 signatories have been removed for privacy reasons.)