
[Indonesia: opponents to shrimp farming industry under arrest](#)

Industrial shrimp pools are increasingly occupying mangroves areas (see article above and the one related to Ecuador in this issue) and agricultural lands in many Southern countries. Their expansion is being strongly resisted by local peasants who have to suffer repression together with the loss of their land and livelihood. Sometimes peasants are forced to become exploited workers at the service of the companies. One example is coming from Indonesia.

The Oxford Office of the WRM has addressed Indonesian authorities in relation to the arbitrary arrest of a group of small farmers who opposed industrial shrimp farming in their lands:

“The World Rainforest Movement is deeply concerned by the news that Mr Endang Suparmono, arrested on February 8, 1999, and other farmers arrested in late 1998, are still under detention despite ample evidence that the accused farmers were some of the many that were severely exploited by the shrimp-farming company, PT Wachyuni Mandira.

We are aware that PT Wahyuni Mandira's 170,000 hectares shrimp farm in the Ogan komering Ilir district has become the focus of violent conflict after a two year dispute between the company and local farmers over land compensation, contracts and credit agreements. It has come to our knowledge that a team from the National Human Rights Commission, who visited the area in late 1998, confirmed the farmers' claims that the contracts were unfair. Amongst other matters, it was also discovered that the Environmental Impact Assessment for the project was not complete and that the company was therefore operating illegally.

Other reports confirm the farmers' claims that they were treated like slaves under complete control of the company. It has also been reported that the arrest of Mr Endang Suparmono has been carried out without proof of his involvement in violent acts against company's property and was arrested only because he was one of the farmers' leaders who fought for better terms of employment.

Considering the highly unjust nature of the detention of Mr. Endang and the other farmers arrested in conjunction with the company's dispute, we strongly urge you to make sure that the farmers are immediately released and that the company is taken to justice.”