

Friday, 12 July 2019

Statement: Working people condemn arrest in Indonesia

The peak body for working people in Australia has condemned the arrest and detention of Reni Desmiria, secretary of the SPBMI union for workers at global seafood processor Bumi Menara Internusa (BMI) in Indonesia

Ms Desmiria was arrested on May 17 at her home by Indonesian police armed with automatic weapons.

The company called for Reni Desmiria's arrest after she successfully organised a large number of BMI workers to enroll in a mandatory government health insurance scheme. BMI reported her to police, alleging she had submitted a fake high school certificate when she was hired as a casual worker in 2011.

The company is now pushing for her to be imprisoned for six years – the maximum penalty for the offense.

Prior to her arrest, Ms Desmiria had returned to work from maternity leave. Now in prison she is forced to be away from her two young children,

Unions from across Indonesia have demonstrated outside the BMI factory gates in Lampung.

Statement from ACTU President Michele O'Neil

“The ACTU utterly condemns the detention of the representatives of working people in Indonesia.

“Every worker should have the right to organise and be a union member without persecution. Reni Desmiria has an important role as secretary of the SPBMI union representing workers in the seafood processing industry.

“The arrest of Ms Desmiria for something she is alleged to have done eight years ago is an attempt to delegitimise her work as a leader in the Indonesian union movement.

“When working people and their representatives have their freedoms attacked anywhere in our region it damages all of us.

“The Australian Government has a responsibility to speak up against attacks on freedom of association, press freedoms and working people's representatives across our region.”

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