



Open Letter to Governor Sutiyoso, Jakarta, Indonesia

Cairo-Geneva, 29 December 2003

Dear Governor Sutiyoso:

The Coordination Office of the Habitat International Coalition's Housing and Land Rights Network (HIC-HLRN) and the International Secretariat of the World Organisation against Torture (OMCT) would like to express their deep concern about the multiple eviction operations that your local government has been carrying out, and plans still to pursue, under pretexts of "urban overcapacity," "security," "development" and "beautification." This reasoning already has resulted in depriving 15,000 Jakarta inhabitants of their well-being and rendered them homeless. Your government has used undue violence against these impoverished inhabitants and proposed no alternative plan. Almost none of the evicted people has received any compensation.

While the evictions slowed during Ramadhan, after numerous operations in the previous four months, Jakarta authorities violently resumed them since the 16—26 November. On 18 December 2003, the mayor of Jakarta instructed 300 municipal security officers to demolish 15 houses in the riverbank of West Sunter, West Kelapa Gading (North Jakarta). Currently, an important number of communities are facing serious threats of eviction, including the inhabitants living under the highway in North Jakarta, who live in the surrounding area of Ria Rio Dam, in Pulo Mas; the residents along the riverbanks on which the Jakarta Canal Project is taking place; and the tens of thousands living in the settlements under the high-way.

In this respect, HIC-HLRN and OMCT are particularly concerned about the statement that you made at Koran Tempo, 20 December 2003, asserting that Jakarta's population now is "overcapacity" and, thus, "enforcing law and order" is needed. However, without any adequate alternative plan and compensation-and-rehabilitation scheme, any "law enforcement" in the form already demonstrated simply denies Jakarta's inhabitants their basic human rights, violates Indonesian obligations under international law and deepens the impoverishment of those affected.

OMCT and HIC-HLRN strongly urge your government to compensate and rehabilitate the victims and to consider responsible alternate plans to ensure the well-being of those under your renewed threat. Namely, proposed alternative measures like bus services to alleviate traffic jams, proper garbage disposal and other services should be seriously taken into account, if "order" is indeed an objective. In any of the numerous options potentially available, consultation with the affected population is essential to the legitimacy of government efforts.

Moreover, HIC-HLRN and OMCT are very concerned by the 2004 annual budget that you proposed to local parliament two weeks ago. The programs for "maintaining order and security" are undertaken in all five municipalities of Jakarta province, and funded with more than 8 billion rupiahs, whereas the construction program of new housing is only implemented in four municipalities, with a budget that is 3,38 billion rupiahs. This suggests a tragic misplacement of public priorities and seriously puts in question the official rationale to

conduct eviction, destruction and property confiscation. When the Jakarta authorities will spend one rupiah for building, they will have more than two for destruction.

In view of these considerations, OMCT and HIC-HLRN hope that your government will take immediate measures to ensure that the human right to adequate housing of Jakarta's impoverished inhabitants is protected and upheld, along with their right to be protected from any cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. These obligations arise from Indonesia's ratification of international treaties, including the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Article 16), which it ratified on 27 November 1998, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 27.3), which it ratified already on 5 October 1990.

OMCT and HIC-HLRN also hope that, in applying the relevant treaty obligations, your government's remedial measures will be accompanied by the provision of adequate compensation, reparations and rehabilitation to all the victims.

We thank you in advance for your careful consideration of this serious matter. We also look forward to receiving information [regarding the measures taken by your government to address this situation in accordance with international human rights law.](#)

Yours Sincerely,

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