



**Indonesian Human Rights
Committee
for Social Justice (I H C S)**

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**FARMERS CELEBRATE VICTORY IN LANDMARK INTELLECTUAL
PROPERTY CASE**

July 29, 2013

Farmers in East Java and all over Indonesia are celebrating a landmark victory that may revolutionize Indonesian laws related to intellectual property.

“Since the entry of Indonesia into the World Trade Organization in 1995 we farmers have lived in fear,” said Kunjoro from Indonesia Peasant Alliance (API) . “Our traditional practices of breeding seeds, techniques used for generations to protect biodiversity and increase agricultural production were suddenly deemed illegal. The government was willing to lock us in jail or impose heavy penalties at the behest of a few companies who wanted to patent seeds.”

“With this case, we hope that the government will take some concrete measures to protect Indonesia’s biodiversity and to ensure that farmers have better working conditions and wages,” said Joharipin from IPPHTI, a mass organisation whose members use natural farming techniques. “The rise of contract farming and the commercialization of Indonesia’s agriculture has been disastrous. We need new policies and practices that will undo the damage already done. Those policies should ensure that farmers have a steady income and can continue traditional practices of breeding seeds that are appropriate for their own needs.”

“This case marks a turning point,” said Gunawan, the Executive Chairman of IHCS, a legal aid foundation for social justice. “With it, the court has acknowledged that laws protecting the interests of multinational agribusiness are unconstitutional. We are still considering what our next steps should be but we now live in the hope that within a few years, Indonesia can again have a system of laws and regulations designed to promote food security, biodiversity and basic human rights for all, including Indonesia’s millions of farmers.”

Contact:

Gunawan (Chairman of IHCS)
saya@bunggunawan.com

Aditia (FIELD)
aditia@yahoo.co.id

For Campaign-Research Material: Amalia Pulungan, email : sendamalia@gmail.com
Film link for this seed case: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiaBm_wRbQM