

## **Regressive Mega Law in Indonesia puts food and environmental rights of millions of people at stake**

In solidarity with the people's movements in Indonesia, we, the undersigned organisations, express our deep concern about the recent ratification of the Omnibus Law (also called Law on Job Creation). The Omnibus Law will threaten the right to food and nutrition of millions of Indonesian labourers, small-scale food producers, indigenous peoples, migrant workers, and other marginalised groups. The House of Representatives passed the bill into law on October 5th, 2020, in an undemocratic and hasty manner despite the strong opposition and protests of Indonesian social movements, workers, communities, and civil society organizations.

The 900-page Omnibus Law overrules more than 70 existing laws and regulations and contains problematic articles that threaten the right to food and nutrition, such as the relaxation of import restrictions on food (Law No. 18 of 2012 on Food) and the conversion of agricultural land and food for national strategic projects (Law No. 41 of 2009). The controversial Food Estate Mega Project in Central Borneo is one of the 2020-2024 national strategic project agendas to be implemented, with alleged disastrous impacts on loss of biodiversity and local farming practice, since it will cut down peat forest, which is crucial in maintaining the water source in soil, and dictate local farmers to adjust with agricultural industrialization system.

The Omnibus Law also protects "landgrabbers" by making them legally unimpeachable (Law No. 22 of 2019 on Sustainable Agricultural Cultivation System) and promotes environmental destruction, by bypassing the requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment (Law Number 32 of 2009 on Environmental Protection and Management). If the Omnibus Law is implemented, it will jeopardize Indonesians' ability to feed themselves and threaten their physical and economic access to food by creating acute dependence on imported food, building corporate monopoly on the food supply chains, and causing environmental damage by further pushing deforestation and agricultural industrialisation. This law sets aside the fact that Indonesia continues to fight hunger, malnutrition, obesity, and poverty across the regions, especially in time of Covid-19 pandemic. The people of Indonesia were neither consulted nor informed about the drafting process. Instead, the government discussed with industry representatives and the drafting was done by a task force, predominantly composed of business people.

Indonesia is a signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights as well as other international human rights instruments, in which the right to food is enshrined. Indonesia, thus, is obliged under international law to respect, protect and fulfill the right to food and nutrition of its people. The Omnibus Law is at odds with Article 5 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP), which calls the states to formulate with peasants and other people working in rural areas public policies at the local and national levels to advance and protect the right to food and food sovereignty. We therefore urge the Government of Indonesia to:

1. Upholding justice and implementing democratic principles in exercising the sovereignty of the people.
2. Prioritizing the demands of the Indonesian people in fulfilling the right of food and nutrition that is guaranteed by protecting land and natural resources which are at the core of existence of small-scale producers and workers, protecting the sustainability of environment.

We remain in solidarity with the people of Indonesia in their fight for the enjoyment of the right to food and nutrition.

Signed by:

FIAN Indonesia

FIAN International