

KEDUTAAN BESAR REPUBLIK INDONESIA
EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA
WASHINGTON, D.C., 20036



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THE AMBASSADOR

Washington D.C., February 20, 2013

Ms. Marcia Eugenio
Director
Office of Child Labor
Forced Labor and Human Trafficking
Bureau of International Labour Affairs
Washington, DC, 20210

Dear Mrs. Eugenio,

Although rather belated, I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your letter addressed to me dated December 14, 2012 wherein you submitted a list of questions to be answered by my government. I have duly transmitted your letter and questions to Jakarta.

Having done that, and perhaps this is due to my diplomatic inexperience, I must say that I find your letter and the questions contained in it to be somewhat unusual in terms of diplomatic practice in bilateral relations. It is the firm policy of the Indonesian Government to work actively with and provide any information requested by the International Labor Organization – as an expression of that openness and commitment, we have also ratified 18 ILO Conventions related to labour, including Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. Given the considerable challenges that we all face, Indonesia also keen to work with other nations to reach our common goals. However, while the Indonesian Government has always valued cooperation with the United States, the questions attached in your letter conveyed the false impression as if on the subject matter of such international significance Indonesia is bilaterally accountable – and subservient - to the United States. In my knowledge, no other

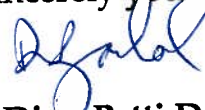
country in the world does this to Indonesia; Indonesia does not do it to any other country; and I am rather sure that no other country does this to the United States. The fact that this is required by law in the United States may make it seem right for your office, but not necessarily right for us at the receiving end in Indonesia, who feel – rightly or erroneously - as if we are asked to file a report to the United States. In my view, and to address diplomatic sensitivity, the list of questions that was sent to us to be fulfilled by my government can be easily done by a US Embassy staff in Jakarta.

I am pleased to inform you that, since 2010, Indonesia and the United States have reached the peak of our bilateral relations under the Comprehensive Partnership. For Indonesia, a key part of that evolving relationship is the principle of “equal partnership” which means that irrespective of our sizes and strengths, we treat one another with mutual respect and as equals. Reading the long list of questions posed to my government, I honestly did not feel that sense of “equal partnership” that is at the heart of our relations.

In your letter you mentioned your intention to work with and assist Indonesia. We have always appreciated US leadership on labor-related issues, and across a wide spectrum of global issues. However, for that leadership to be accepted and effective, *how* it is exercised is often as important as *what* is being done.

I thank you for your attention. I assure you that I write this letter with good intentions and in the interest of preserving what is best about our bilateral relations: being frank, open and constructive to our partner.

Sincerely yours, *Salah,*



Dr. Dino Patti Djalal

Email: dino.djalal@embassyofindonesia.org

Copies:

1. Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, US Department of State, Washington DC
2. Ambassador of the United States to Indonesia, Jakarta