

TRANSNATIONAL PALM OIL
LABOUR SOLIDARITY

TPOLS

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The Network of Palm Oil Labor Supports Haribo Workers' Struggle for Their Rights

To our fellow workers of Haribo in Wilkau-Hasslau, Germany

And our union colleagues at the Union Nahrung-Genuss-Gaststätten (NGG)

Nothing hurts a worker more than losing a job. This is especially the case when workers have contributed for decades of working. Just one month before last year's Christmas celebration, 150 Haribo factory workers lost their jobs.

We, the network *Transnational Palm Oil Labour Solidarity*, express our deepest solidarity with our fellow workers in Germany. We fully support Haribo workers' struggle for their rights. The closure of the factory in Wilkau-Hasslau for reasons of outdated buildings and machines, and non-profitability of the production site's modernization, is unacceptable, especially before the background, that you – our fellow workers – have been working for more than 30 years to make a major contribution to HARIBO's profits, international success, and its reputation for high quality candies.

Our support is not only based on our sense of solidarity as fellow working-class people. But also, on the fact that Haribo is using palm oil as an [ingredient for its products](#). Haribo itself is [member of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil \(RSPO\)](#). This means that it is very likely that palm oil for Haribo's candies is produced in Indonesia or Malaysia as the two largest palm oil producing countries in the world.

Our network *Transnational Palm Oil Labor Solidarity* (TPOLS) is based in Indonesia with members in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and also Germany. TPOLS is a cross-organizational collaboration network that is highly concerned with the development of a socially and environmentally sustainable palm oil industry. In cooperation with workers, labor unions, migrant worker groups, environmental justice groups, women's organizations, human rights and labor fighters, and academic groups, we fight for the rights of workers who work along the global supply chain of palm oil.

It is our utmost duty to support workers at any point of palm oil's global production network who are treated unfairly.

You, our fellow workers, are facing uncertain futures. The offer of a new workplace, located 500 km away from your families and homes, is an insufficient offer. To present you with a fait accompli just before Christmas, without any explanation, room for discussion and the possibility to develop alternative solutions together as equal partners - as you would have deserved it after giving your time, sweat and

energy, to contribute to Haribo's success – is an unacceptable impertinence. And all of this during a global pandemic marked by extreme uncertainty for people worldwide.

We urge the management of Haribo to:

- 1) Open dialogue with workers and the union to formulate common decisions by taking into account the livelihood of 150 workers and their families.
- 2) Transparently explain to workers and the union the actual conditions experienced by the company and to find solutions in the interest of the workers.
- 3) Ensure that the solutions offered do not diminish the rights of workers in the least, and to ensure job security, especially during these difficult times of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Haribo workers are not alone. The bitterness of the experience of being treated unfairly, for their very dedication, is also experienced by Indonesian workers. If the Haribo factory in Wilkau-Hasslau closes just before Christmas, precisely the same thing also occurs in Indonesia when many factories dismiss workers a moment before Eid Mubarak, the most important religious holiday in Indonesia¹.

Despite the establishment of sustainability seals and institutions such as RSPO, we do not see any serious improvements of social and environmental sustainability in the global production network of palm oil, be it at the beginning of the supply chain in South East Asia or at its end in Europe as the case of Haribo bitterly reminds us. This is why we need to stand together.

In deep solidarity we stand together and condemn the closure of the Haribo site in Wilkau-Hasslau. Together we stand strong in transnational solidarity.

Hidup buruh! Long live the workers' movement!

January 17th, 2021

On behalf of the network



Rizal Assalam

TPOLS Network Coordinator

¹ In 2018, 300 workers of snack-making factory at PT. Arnott's in Bekasi city lost their job because the company claimed to have abundant labor force and the production was not selling well. Elsewhere, 1095 crew of PT. Pertamina was fired on the grounds of a change of labor suppliers. For more details, see, "[Defending the Rights of Workers Deprived in Ramadan Is Our Sacred Task](#)". Available in German using *Google Translate*