

URGENT ACTION

FISHERMEN PROTESTING LAND ENCROACHMENT FREE

Ilham Mahmudi and Taufik, two fishermen from North Sumatra Province, are convicted of property damage following a trial over a criminal charge that advocates believe to be a form of criminalization linked to their activities as environmental activists. They were sentenced to two months suspended prison sentence with four months' probation. They are now free while serving their probation period until 5 January 2025.

NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED. MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SENT APPEALS.

Ilham Mahmudi and Taufik were arrested separately in April and May 2024, respectively, amid their efforts with the local community to save a protected mangrove forest in the area from an encroachment for palm oil operations. They feared that the encroachment would destroy the mangrove ecosystem in the area, which in turn could affect the livelihood of fishermen, lead to coastal erosion and cause the village to sink.

Reported to the police by a man linked to the encroachment activities, Ilham and Taufik were brought to trial for allegedly participating in group violence and property damage during a protest on 21 March 2024, which involved the damaging of a makeshift hut in the forest. On 5 September 2024, the men were sentenced to two months suspended prison sentence with four months' probation, meaning they will not be imprisoned unless they commit criminal offense within their probation period. Ilham was released from the prosecutor's detention on the same day, while Taufik has been freed since his release from pre-trial detention on 4 July 2024. The prosecutors did not appeal the decision.

Local NGOs and advocates believe the criminal proceedings to be a form of criminalization aimed to stifle the local community's work in conserving the mangrove forests and defending their right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

Ilham and Taufik have returned to their community since then and remained committed to continuing their conservation efforts. On their release, Mimi Surbakti, the director of Srikandi Lestari Foundation, a local advocacy group, said that the struggle of environmental activists was "far from over" and they had to remain vigilant to any threat of criminalization amid their work to protect the environment.

On behalf of the environmental activists, Srikandi Lestari Foundation expressed their gratitude to all national and international CSOs for having supported the fishermen and local residents of Kwala Langkat in their efforts to protect the environment.

Amnesty International will continue to monitor the situation of Ilham Mahmudi and Taufik as well as to document the circumstance surrounding other environmental activists in Indonesia.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Ilham Mahmudi, Taufik (he/him/them)

THIS IS THE SECOND UA AND FINAL OUTPUT FOR UA 68/24

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa21/8344/2024/en/>

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**

