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Haji Utoyo Uaman  
Minister of Justice  
JL-HR Rasuna  
Said Kav 6-7 Kuningan  
Jakarta Selatan  
Indonesia

Dear Minister Uaman:

On behalf of the American Bar Association (ABA), with over 391,000 members of the legal community, I write to express our support for fundamental human rights and the rule of law worldwide. These principles are embodied in the most recent "Rule of Law Resolution" adopted by the ABA House of Delegates in August 1997.

Pursuant to this "Rule of Law Resolution," we are very concerned about the disappearance of Indonesian lawyer, Desmond J. Mahesa and human rights advocate, Pius Lustrilanang, Secretary-General of the Indonesian Solidarity for Amien Rais and Megawati. According to sources, Mr. Mahesa has not been seen since February 3, 1998 when he was last visited by military intelligence agents. Mr. Lustrilanang was last seen February 4, 1998 while visiting a friend at a Central Jakarta hospital.

Human rights organizations concerned with the case believe that both men's disappearance is related to their active roles in pro-democracy networks and demonstrations. Moreover, despite appeals from human rights groups to the foreign embassies and to the Commander of the Armed Forces, General Wiranto inexplicably refuses to comment on the matter.

Several organizations, in the defense of the rule of law, have publicly criticized the Indonesian government's reported attempt to silence the political opposition.

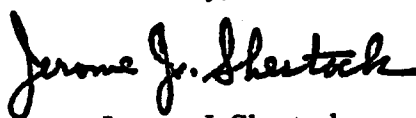
It would be a matter of deep concern to the ABA if there was a pattern of harassment of lawyers and human rights advocates due to their human rights work. Such harassment clearly would violate international human rights norms, specifically the fundamental rights of freedom of opinion and expression. As a representative of the legal profession, the ABA is compelled to call attention to such injustices wherever they occur. Our concern is for the maintenance of the rule of law in the international community and the elements necessary to sustain it.

We agree that preservation of the security of the state and public order are responsibilities of any government. Nevertheless, these concerns cannot justify the disappearance of Mr. Mahesa and Mr. Lustrilanang who have not been charged with a criminal offense.

We, therefore, respectfully urge that your government promptly investigate the aforementioned matter and, if verified, bring to justice those responsible. Moreover, we also respectfully urge that the Indonesian government take all measures to ensure the safety of these men.

Your government's response is important to us, particularly since many of our members deal currently with monetary and commercial matters of concern to your government. Accordingly, we respectfully ask you to reply to our letter so that we can promptly address our hundreds of thousands of members in this country and worldwide of your government's response to our serious concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerome J. Shestack". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jerome J. Shestack

cc: The Honorable Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State United States Department of State  
The Honorable John Shattuck, Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor,  
United States Department of State