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Dear Attorney General,

I am writing to you to express my concerns about Syamsul Bahri and Samsir, members of Nipah Farmer community in North Sumatra, who are facing criminal prosecution amid their work to conserve the environment and to defend their access to land. They are being brought to trial under what many feared to be spurious charges that appear to be used to restrain the farmers' work in rehabilitating a mangrove forest in the area and in defending their rights to a healthy and sustainable environment.

Syamsul Bahri and Samsir are accused of committing violence under the accusation of a man who witnesses say had fabricated the incident. While it is a relief that the father and son have been granted bail, I find the allegations against them troubling, with regards to the context of their work as environmental human rights defenders, who are increasingly subjected to criminalization, threats, and intimidation while doing their work to promote and protect human rights.

As you will be aware, Article 66 of Law No. 32/2009 on the Environmental Protection and Management stipulates that "every person who defends the right to a good and healthy environment shall not be prosecuted by criminal or civil offence." Therefore, the criminalization of Syamsul Bahri and Samsir does not only violate their rights as protected by the law, but also put the rights and work of all human rights defenders, including those who peacefully claim their access to land, at further risks in the country.

I, therefore, urge you to ensure that Syamsul Bahri and Samsir's fair trial rights are guaranteed in accordance with international standard. Prosecutions should only be brought when they serve the interest of justice, and is based on impartiality as well as sufficient, credible, and admissible evidence.

Otherwise, I call on you to terminate the proceedings if there is insufficient evidence. I also appeal the authorities to ensure that all human rights defenders and their families can carry out their peaceful activities without fear of persecutions in line with Article 66 of Law No. 32/2009.

Yours sincerely,