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Press Release

City of Dortmund's Tobacco Trade Fair in Indonesia: Mayor Sierau Refuses to Accept Petition

Nearly 12,000 people signed the petition addressed to the mayor of Dortmund (Ullrich Sierau), which Max Vollmer and Yosef Rabindanata Nugraha wanted to hand over in the Dortmund city hall on February 3rd. The petition aims at stopping the tobacco trade fair Inter-tabac ASIA 2014, which the city-owned Westfalenhallen Dortmund GmbH aims to carry through in Bali. The mayor however was not willing to welcome the bearers of the petition.

The attempt to hand over the petition to the mayor in person was prevented under threat of calling the police. Yosef Rabandinata Nugraha, one of the persons who started the petition and who came to Germany specifically to hand over the petition: "I am stunned. In Indonesia the government is willing to meet with its citizens in such a case. The mayor does not show respect for his own citizens and the thousands of Indonesians protesting against this trade fair." The governor of Bali meanwhile reacted to the protests and spoke out publicly against the organization of the trade fair in Bali.

Max Vollmer of Deutscher Jugendschutz-Verband (German Youth Protection Association) had started the petition from his hometown, the German city of Dortmund and points out: "The Westfalenhallen are acting by the sole order of the city. Mr. Sierau, show responsibility and instruct the trade fair company to stop the Inter-tabac ASIA."

Johannes Spatz, spokesman of Forum Rauchfrei, points out that the governor of Bali has repeatedly emphasized in interviews that the trade fair violates the laws of the Badung district, where the trade fair is to be held. "Should the Westfalenhallen carry through the trade fair there, this would constitute a calculated breach of the law in force in Indonesia."

By organizing the Inter-tabac ASIA 2014 in Indonesia, the Westfalenhallen Dortmund GmbH promotes the use of tobacco in a country in which smoking children are a part of everyday life.

The office manager of Dortmund's vice-mayor Manfred Sauer finally consented to accept the petition.

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Dortmund Kills is a campaign by Forum Rauchfrei („Forum Smokefree“), Deutscher Jugendschutzverband („German Youth Protection Association“), Indonesia Bebas Rokok („Smokefree Indonesia“), Unfairtobacco.org and Stiftung rauchfrei leben („Foundation smokefree living). The campaign supports Max Vollmer and Yosef Rabindanata Nugraha for their petition on change.org: www.dortmundkills.de/en/petition.