

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index No: ASA 21/018/2008
25 September 2008

Indonesia: Investigate ill-treatment of Papuan prisoner

The Indonesian authorities must take immediate action to investigate the torture of Papuan prisoner Ferdinand Pakage, who is detained at Abepura Prison, Papua.

Prison officers beat Ferdinand Pakage on 22 September causing serious injuries to his hands and legs. According to media reports, his left eye was also bleeding profusely when he was removed from solitary confinement and taken to the hospital for medical attention. The beatings were witnessed by other prisoners.

Amnesty International welcomes the visits by staff from the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) to Ferdinand Pakage in hospital and to Abepura Prison where the incident took place.

The organization calls for those responsible for the torture to be held accountable for their actions.

This incident clearly illustrates the failure to reform the Criminal Code, which does not provide sufficient legal deterrent to prevent state agents from committing acts of torture, which has directly contributed to the widespread use of torture during arrest, interrogation and detention.

As a signatory to the United Nations Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Indonesian authorities must take effective measures to prevent acts of torture and ensure prompt and impartial investigations, where there are reasonable grounds that an act of torture has been committed.

Background

Ferdinand Pakage was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment after an unfair trial for his alleged involvement in the violence in Abepura on 15 and 16 of March 2006. He and others were subject to torture and other ill-treatment during interrogation in order to force them to confess before the court that they were guilty of the crimes of which they were accused.

Papua, Indonesia's eastern-most province, has witnessed a deteriorating human rights situation over the past few years. The indigenous population, ethnically distinct from other parts of Indonesia, has increasingly questioned the Indonesian government's policies regarding Papua's natural resources and the migration of non-Papuans into the area. The Indonesian government maintains a heavy police and military presence, whose members are accused of repeatedly intimidating and threatening members of the local indigenous community who support greater autonomy or independence from Indonesia through peaceful means.

END/

Public Document

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566 or email: press@amnesty.org

International Secretariat, Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW, UK

www.amnesty.org