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To: Health professionals
From: Medical Office / Southeast Asia sub-regional team
Date: 19 January 1998

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

**Asep SURYAMAN
INDONESIA**

Keywords

Theme: long term imprisonment / sick prisoner

Summary

Please find attached information on Asep Suryaman, a 72-year-old prisoner, who has now been imprisoned in Indonesia for 26 years under sentence of death. Amnesty International has received reports that his health has deteriorated seriously in recent weeks and that he is in pain and is suffering from serious diarrhoea. The authorities at Cipinang Prison, Jakarta, have so far refused to transfer him to hospital. Amnesty International is particularly concerned that he should be transferred urgently to a hospital where he can receive the medical care he requires.

Recommended Actions

Letters are requested to the addresses below:

- o expressing concern at reports of the ill-health of Asep Suryaman;
- o urging that Asep Suryaman be immediately transferred to hospital where he would receive the care he requires;
- o asking to be kept informed of the outcome of Asep Suryaman's treatment;
- o urging that his death penalty be commuted; you could make note of the extremely long period of detention he has served.

Addresses

Head of Cipinang Prison
LP Cipinang
Jan Bekasi Raya Tiumur
Jatinegara
Jakarta Timur
Indonesia

President Suharto
President of the Republic of Indonesia
Istana Negara, Jalan Veteran
Jakarta Pusat , Indonesia
Fax: +6221.345.7782
Salutation: Dear President Suharto

Copies (see over)

Copies

Secretary General
National Commission on Human Rights
Prof. Dr. Baharuddin Lopa, Sekretaris Jenderal
Komnisi Nasional Hak Azasi Manusia (Komnas HAM)
Jl. Lатуharhary 4B
Menteng, Jakarta Pusat, Indonesia

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MEDICAL CONCERN

**Asep SURYAMAN
INDONESIA**

Asep Suryaman, aged 72, has now been in prison for 26 years. He was arrested in 1971 and accused of being a member of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) "Special Bureau", responsible for building PKI contacts within the military prior to the 1965 attempted coup which was blamed on the PKI. Following an unfair trial at Central Jakarta District Court, he was convicted and sentenced to death in 1975. In March 1990, the Indonesian press reported that Asep Suryaman's plea for clemency had been rejected by President Suharto. Once this has occurred a prisoner can be executed at any time. However, in May 1990, Asep Suryaman told the press that while he and other PKI prisoners had been told by the head of Cipinang prison to sign statements requesting presidential clemency, they had refused to do so.

Asep Suryaman continues to be detained in Cipinang prison, Jakarta. Recent reports say that he is suffering from pain all over his body and has severe diarrhoea. He is still in Cipinang prison although he has been ill for over a week and his fellow prisoners have appealed for him to be transferred to hospital.

Background

Asep Suryaman is one of 13 people who remain in prison in connection with a coup attempt in Indonesia in October 1965. The attempted coup was attributed to the PKI by the government. Although a handful of PKI leaders may have been aware of the planned coup, the record shows that the vast majority of PKI leaders, members and supporters had no knowledge of it and played no role in it. However, the authorities used the attempt as a pretext to arrest, detain or kill hundreds of thousands of people with suspected links to the PKI or its affiliated organizations. In less than one year, an estimated 500,000 to one million real or suspected PKI supporters were killed. Some 500,000 more were arrested in the following years, and about 1,000 were tried in courts which failed to meet the most basic standards of fairness. The accused were sentenced to long prison terms or condemned to death.

The 13 men who are still in prison in connection with the coup are all elderly; some are paralysed, others are weak and ill. Of the 13, three remain under sentence of death. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty unconditionally, as the ultimate form of cruel and inhuman treatment. It believes in this case that the inherent cruelty of the death penalty has been greatly increased by the long and uncertain years the prisoners have endured in detention.

Amnesty International has previously made appeals to the Indonesian authorities on behalf of those prisoners serving extremely long sentences on political charges. (See *Indonesia - the 1965 prisoners: how many more will die in jail?* ASA 21/43/96, 1996).