

PUBLIC

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Possible "disappearance" / fear for safety

23 February 2004

INDONESIA

Masrizal (m)

Iwan Irama Putra (m), aged 27, human rights defender

Harlina (f), aged 22, student, human rights defender

Nova Rahayu (f), aged 23, student, human rights defender

Nursida (f), aged 22, student, human rights defender

Syafruddin (m), human rights defender

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The six people named above are at grave risk of torture and ill-treatment after they were detained by police in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam Province (NAD). At least five of them are human rights defenders, who are believed to have been arrested solely for their peaceful expression of their political beliefs, and their work in defence of human rights.

On 19 February Police Mobile Brigade (*Brigade Mobil*, Brimob) officers arrested Masrizal at his home in the NAD provincial capital, Banda Aceh, reportedly on suspicion of being a member of the armed opposition group Free Aceh Movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*, GAM). He is believed to be held in Banda Aceh Regional Police Station (Mapolda Banda Aceh).

On 22 February at around 12.30 pm Iwan Irama Putra was arrested by Brimob at a friend's home in Banda Aceh, and has not been seen since. He is a member of the Network of Linge Students (IMPEL), based in Central Aceh District, whose work has included providing assistance to internally displaced people. He was an acquaintance of Masrizal, and the two arrests are believed to be linked.

Early on 23 February, police made a series of raids on the homes of members of the Acehnesse Democratic Women's Organization (ORPAD), which carries out activities for women's education and empowerment throughout NAD in Banda Aceh.

They detained Harlina, a member of IMPEL and ORPAD, at around 4am at her home. They reportedly beat her and then took her away in a Kijang minivan. She was last seen approximately two hours later, when police took her with them to the house of another activist. He was not at home at the time.

Nursida was arrested at her home, together with Nova Rahayu, at around 6am. Both are members of ORPAD. They were taken away in two trucks. ORPAD members who have asked police and military about the three women's whereabouts have been told that they have no information about their detention.

At around 5am the same day police arrived at the student dormitory looking for Syafruddin, an activist with the educational and human rights organization Student Solidarity for the People (SMUR). They did not find him, but reportedly questioned and beat other residents of the dormitory. Syafruddin returned to the dormitory a few hours later and was reportedly beaten before being taken away by the police.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

There have been thousands of civilian casualties in the 26-year conflict between GAM and the Indonesian government in NAD. The Indonesian security forces have carried out grave human rights violations, including unlawful killings, "disappearances", torture and unlawful detention, during operations against GAM. GAM has also been responsible for human rights abuses.

A military emergency was declared at midnight on 19 May 2003 in NAD, following the breakdown of a ceasefire agreement. Grave human rights violations, including extrajudicial executions of both adults and

children, have since been reported during operations by the Indonesian military against GAM. Around 1,300 people are reported to have been killed since the military emergency was declared.

The military has announced its intention to arrest and detain people it claims support or are connected to GAM. The Military Emergency Authority claims that some 2,000 members of GAM have been arrested or have surrendered since mid-May 2003. There is concern that some of those arrested may not be actual members of GAM, but merely sympathetic to its aims, or opposed to the military operations. The military has itself acknowledged that it has difficulty distinguishing between GAM and civilians.

Among those arrested are members of political organizations which campaign for independence for NAD, and members of human rights organizations. The local military commander has warned members of ORPAD, and other organizations critical of the military operations in NAD, that they will be targeted for arrest. According to media reports, 994 people have already been tried since May 2003. Local human rights organizations have expressed concern that the trials have fallen short of international standards for fair trial. Anyone detained by the police and military in NAD is at risk of torture, ill-treatment and other human rights violations.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Bahasa Indonesia or your own language:**

- expressing concern for the safety of those named above, and urging the authorities to immediately say where they are;
- expressing concern about reports that Harlina and Syafruddin have been beaten, and calling upon the authorities to provide guarantees that none of those detained will be tortured or ill-treated;
- urging the authorities to release all seven immediately and unconditionally, unless they are to be charged with a recognisably criminal offence;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that all members of the police and military are made aware of the legitimate role of human rights defenders, and their responsibility to protect human rights defenders under the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of individuals and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

**APPEALS TO:**

Chief of Police, Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD)

Brigadier General Bahrumsyah Kasman  
Kapolda Aceh  
Jalan Cut Meutia No. 3  
Banda Aceh, Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam  
Indonesia

**Fax: + 62 651 22488**

**Salutation: Dear Brigadier General**

Military Emergency Operational Command Chief (PDMD)

Brigadier General George Toisutta  
Markas Komando Daerah Militer Iskandar Muda  
Jl. Ahmad Yani, Simpang Lima  
Banda Aceh, Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam  
Indonesia

**Telegram: PDMD Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, Banda Aceh, NAD, Indonesia**

**Fax: + 62 651 26979 (if someone answers, please ask for the fax: "saya mau kirim fax")**

**Salutation: Dear Brigadier General**

**COPIES TO:** diplomatic representatives of Indonesia accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 April 2004.