

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 21/71/97

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Further information on UA 284/97 (ASA 21/61/97, 26 August 1997) - Fear of torture/ill-treatment

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It is now believed that the six people taken into police custody following disturbances in the Timika area of Irian Jaya, on 22 August 1997, have all been released. The six were held for four hours and then released.

The latest clashes between local people and the security forces occurred in the area around the US-owned PT Freeport Indonesia Mine at Tembagapura. The disturbances broke out in the immediate aftermath of the death of two people, Nela Pakage (f) and Akuilan Kotouki, who had been riding in a truck owned by Freeport on 20 August. Two other people, Stevanus Tekege and Timotius Koga, died after they were shot by security forces during a violent disturbance on 22 August. Three soldiers were reportedly injured during the disturbance.

While the six taken into custody have been released, some of them have received summons from the police and the military police. Some are believed to have been called as suspects under charges of assault, while others have been called as witnesses in connection with official investigations into the deaths of the four people. At least 10 people have received summons, many of whom are relatives of the four dead people. Some of those already questioned are known to have not been accompanied by lawyers. Local community workers have expressed concern that the questioning by the police and the military police may hinder any efforts to independently and fully investigate all four deaths.

At the same time, Indonesia's National Human Rights Commission, (Komnas HAM), travelled to Timika to conduct an investigation. Three members of Komnas HAM travelled to the area for two days, during which they met with the police, PT Freeport Indonesia and church and community groups. It is believed that Komnas HAM has so far directly questioned only one eyewitness to any of the deaths.

No further action is required. Thank you to all those who sent appeals.