

EXTRA 149/99

Fear for safety / "Disappearance"

27 October

INDONESIAAbubakar Ahmad, 39] whereabouts  
Alhamdi Mahmuddin, 19] unknown  
Hamdani, 24]  
Safriadi Hamid 31]  
  
Iskandar, 23  
Musnidar, 20

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Amnesty International is gravely concerned for the safety of the six men named above. Four of them have "disappeared" after being arrested by security forces in North Aceh District, Aceh Province, northern Sumatra. The other two, believed to be in police custody, could be at risk of being tortured or ill-treated in detention.

Abubakar Ahmad, from Blang Rangkulah Village, Peudada, was reportedly arrested by the security forces on 11 July 1999 in Keude Cot Lureng, Peudada Sub-district. Hamdani and Alhamdi Mahmuddin, both from Dayah Seupeng Village, Syamtalira Bayu Sub-district, were arrested on 6 October in Rayeuk Tok Salem Village, Syamtalira Bayu. Safriadi Hamid, from Meunasah Asan Village, Samalanga Sub-district, was arrested by the security forces on 17 October in his village.

Iskandar and Musnidar, from Tanah Luas Sub-district, are believed to have been arrested by police on 23 October, reportedly because they were using walkie-talkies "without permission".

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Serious human rights violations in Aceh, including "disappearances" and unlawful killings, have increased since the end of 1998 in the course of Indonesian National Army (TNI) counter-insurgency operations against the armed separatist group, *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (GAM), Free Aceh Movement. Dozens of people have been arrested in recent months on suspicion of links to GAM. Suspects detained by the TNI and the *Petugas Penindak Rusuh Massa* (PPRM), riot control police unit, are often denied access to lawyers of their choice, and are at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

Since June 1999 the number of "disappearances" in the province appears to have escalated sharply, with more than 40 cases reported to Amnesty International. While some of those "disappeared" have later been found in detention, or released, the fate of most of them is still not known. According to local human rights groups, the dead bodies of at least three "disappeared" people were found last month.

GAM have also been accused of committing human rights abuses.

On 30 July, the then president, BJ Habibie, announced he had established an Independent Investigation Commission on Violence in Aceh (*Komisi Independen Pengusutan Tindak Kekerasan di Aceh*) which was expected to conduct investigations into human rights violations committed since August 1998. It was also expected to submit a report within six months recommending legal measures, rehabilitation and reconciliation. The commission was made up of 27 people, including members of Indonesia's National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM), non-governmental organizations, academics and government representatives.

The commission, however, was not given a mandate to investigate human rights violations which occurred during TNI counter-insurgency operations between 1989 and 1998. Amnesty International believes that the commission can only be effective if it is given unrestricted access to all areas of Aceh to conduct full and independent investigations into all human rights violations including those since 1989, if its findings are made public and if its report leads to the prosecution of those found responsible.

Indonesia's new president, Abdurrahman Wahid, elected on 20 October, has stated that he will personally address the situation in Aceh.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in Bahasa Indonesia, English or your own language:**

- urging the authorities to immediately establish and make public the whereabouts of the six men named above, and to provide guarantees for their safety;
- urging the authorities to ensure that, if they are found to be in custody, they are allowed regular access to human rights lawyers, their families and to medical attention, and that they are immediately released if they are not to be charged with recognizably criminal offences;
- calling on the authorities to cease the practice of arbitrary and incommunicado detention and to bring those responsible for these violations to justice before a civilian court.

**APPEALS TO (note that fax numbers are sometimes difficult to obtain):**

President

President Abdurrahman Wahid  
 Presiden RI  
 Istana Negara  
 Jl Veteran  
 Jakarta Pusat  
 Indonesia

**Telegrams: President Wahid, Jakarta, Indonesia**

**Faxes: + 62 21 328169 / 3904541 / 526 8726**

**Salutation: Dear President Wahid**

**COPIES TO:**

Military Commander Region I/Bukit Barisan  
 (covers North & West Sumatra and Aceh)  
 Major General Abdul Rahman Gaffar  
 Pangdam I/Bukit Barisan  
 Markas Besar KODAM I  
 Medan, Sumatra Utara  
 Indonesia

Chief of National Police  
 Gen. Roesmanhadi  
 Kapolri, Markas Besar Kepolisian RI  
 Jl. Trunojoyo 13  
 Kebayoran Baru  
 Jakarta Selatan  
 Indonesia

**Faxes: + 62 21 720 7277**

and 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 24 November 1999.