

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 92/03 (ASA 21/009/2003, 7 April 2003) Fear of torture / Possible prisoners of conscience

INDONESIA **Susyanti Kamil (f), aged 22, student**
An'am Jaya (f), aged 24, worker
Sahabuddin (m), aged 23, student
Ansar Suherman (m), aged 21, student
Hariansyah (m), aged 22, volunteer
Muhammad Akman (m), aged 24, student

Amnesty International has learned that the six people named above were each sentenced to four and a half months' imprisonment for "insulting the President or Vice-president" on 4 June. All six were released five days later, having already served the sentence in pre-trial detention.

They had been detained on 25 January, two days after their participation in a peaceful demonstration in Kendari Town, Kendari Sub-district, Sulawesi Tenggara Province. At the demonstration, demands were made for the government of President Megawati Sukarnoputri and Vice-president Hamzah Haz to be replaced with a government of the poor. Demonstrators reportedly spread photos of the President and Vice-president out onto the street, so that passing vehicles drove over them. They also burned portraits of the President and Vice-president.

The six were initially detained at Kendari Police Resort (Polres) where, according to reports, they were beaten, punched, slapped on their faces and ears and kicked, including in their genitals. Although they were permitted to see lawyers the access was restricted. On or around 20 March, the six were moved to Kendari Prison. Following the transfer, there was reportedly some improvement in their treatment, although they were allegedly beaten on one occasion at the prison. To Amnesty International's knowledge, the authorities have not carried out a full and impartial investigation into the allegations of torture.

The six were charged with publicly expressing "feelings of hostility, hatred or contempt against the Government of Indonesia" and "insulting the President or Vice-president". In their trial, which opened on 8 April, the evidence for the charges focused on the burning of and stepping on the President's photograph during the demonstration. Amnesty International declared them prisoners of conscience, detained solely for their legitimate and peaceful political activities.

For further information please refer to the external report *Indonesia: Old laws – new prisoners of conscience*, (AI Index: ASA 21/027/2003, 10 July 2003).

No further action is required from the Urgent Action network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.