

## **Malaysia: Imprisoned for one year without charge or trial - no human rights for government critics**

*Amnesty International members around the world today renewed their appeals for immediate and unconditional release of six government critics detained for a year without charge or trial under the Internal Security Act (ISA). They are mostly senior members of the opposition party, Keadilan, headed by the wife of former deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.*

*"These men are held solely on account of their peaceful dissenting political activities. They have been denied their fundamental rights to liberty, to freedom of expression, to a fair trial and to be free from the fear of ill-treatment or torture," Amnesty International said.*

*The six prisoners of conscience, Tian Chua, Mohamad Ezam Mohd Nor, Badrul Amin Bahron, Lokman Nor Adam, Haji Saari Sungib and Hishamuddin Rais, were arrested in April 2001 and accused of plotting to overthrow the government by "militant" means. No evidence to support these allegations has been made public.*

*During prolonged periods of interrogation, while held in isolation and denied access to lawyers, they were subjected to intense psychological pressure, at times amounting to torture. According to their sworn testimonies, the police interrogated them mainly about the internal organization of their opposition party, without mentioning any alleged plots to use violence.*

*For decades a broad range of Malaysian voices have called for the repeal of the ISA, which empowers the government to order the indefinite "preventive" detention, without judicial intervention, of any person it perceives as a threat to national security. Its use has repeatedly*

*been politically-motivated and selective, with opposition activists, academics, students, trade unionists and other peaceful members of civil society detained without trial.*

*Since 2001 the ISA has also been used to detain at least 40 Malaysians accused of links to international "terrorism". Amnesty International has called for these suspects to be charged and brought to court, or else released.*

*"The injustice inflicted on the six detained opposition activists is in danger of being obscured as the government retrospectively justifies the ISA as a necessary means to fight international 'terrorism'. Faced with this abuse of security legislation in Malaysia, we must stand up for the human rights of those detained," Amnesty International said.*

*Amnesty International is also concerned at reports that the six prisoners of conscience will stage a hunger strike to protest at their continued detention, and that the authorities may respond by denying them their right of regular access to lawyers and family members.*

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