

22 February 2000


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**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL APPEAL
INDONESIA: ACEHNESE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS
UNDER ATTACK**

Sukardi, Environmental Activist

Sukardi, a 30-year-old staff member of an environmental and community



development group called the Indonesian Bamboo Thicket Institute (*Yayasan Rumpun Bambu Indonesia, YRBI*), “disappeared” on 31 January 2000 in Sawang Sub-district, South Aceh. His body was discovered the following day. Serious injuries, including bruising, swelling and broken bones suggest that he may have been tortured before being killed.

According to reports received by Amnesty International, Sukardi was abducted in the vicinity of Sawang district police command (Polsek) while travelling back to his office on his motorcycle at around 6pm in the evening of 31 January. When he failed to return, some friends went out to look for him. They stopped searching at around 10pm because of bad weather. At around 6am the following day, Sukardi’s colleagues received a phone call stating that a corpse had been discovered around eight kilometres from the YRBI office in the direction of the town of Tapak Tuan, South Aceh. Sukardi’s friends went to the Tapak Tuan General Hospital to identify his body. According to reports, his right hand was broken and several muscles were exposed. He had also been shot several times in the chest as well as in the back of his legs. His motorcycle was discovered on 4 February 2000 in a nearby ravine.

It is not known who is responsible for his death or why he was killed. There are unconfirmed reports that a witness heard the sounds of someone apparently experiencing severe pain coming from Sawang police station on the evening of Sukardi’s “disappearance”. A police spokesman has stated that a police investigation has been launched into the case. In view of serious concerns that the security forces may be responsible for his death, Amnesty International is calling on the authorities to conduct an independent inquiry into the incident.

Background

Despite encouraging indications that Indonesia’s new administration will continue with the reform process, the human rights situation in the country remains fragile. In the absence of fundamental institutional and legal reforms, human rights violations continue to go unpunished and perpetrators continue to evade justice.

The people of Aceh, in northern Sumatra, have endured serious human rights violations for many years. These have been committed in the context of counter-insurgency operations by the Indonesian security forces against the armed opposition group, Free Aceh Movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, GAM*). Thousands of civilians, including women and children, have been caught up in the violence which has created untold misery and suffering for the region’s population.

In recent weeks, there have been worrying signs of increased attacks on civilians, in particular human rights defenders. Human rights lawyers, humanitarian workers, student activists and journalists are just some of those who have been threatened, attacked and, in some cases, killed.

Action

Please write politely worded letters, faxes or telexes in Bahasa Indonesia, English or your own language to the Indonesian authorities at the addresses below. In your letters, state your concern about the case of Sukardi detailed above. Please urge the Indonesian government to:

- ✉ take immediate steps to protect the right of human rights defenders and other human rights monitors to carry out their human rights activities in Aceh free from fear of arrest, intimidation or attack;
- ✉ carry out a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the case of Sukardi and all other alleged human rights violations targetted at human rights defenders;
- ✉ ensure that all those responsible for serious human rights violations - including extrajudicial execution, torture and "disappearance" - are brought promptly to justice before a civilian court according to international human rights standards;
- ✉ issue immediate instructions to the security forces to halt all arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture and ill-treatment, "disappearances" and unlawful killings;
- ✉ ensure that all security operations in Aceh are carried out in line with international human rights standards.

Please send copies of your letters to the diplomatic representatives of Indonesia in your country.

Addresses

<p>KH Abdurrahman Wahid President of the Republic of Indonesia Istana Merdeka Jakarta 10110 Indonesia Fax: +62 21 345-2685 or 380-5511 or 526-8726 Telex: 44283 BIGRA IA or 44469 DEPLU IA Salutation: Dear President</p>	<p>Mr Hasballah M. Saad State Minister for Human Rights Affairs JI Kuningan Timur M 2/5 Jakarta 12950 Indonesia Fax: +62 21 525-0075 or 525-0139 Salutation: Dear Minister</p>
<p>Dr Juwono Sudarsono Minister of Defence and Security (Menteri Pertahanan dan Keamanan) Jl. Medan Merdeka Barat No.13-14 Jakarta Pusat 10110 Indonesia Fax: +62 21 381-4535 or 384-5178 Salutation: Dear Minister</p>	<p>Brig. Gen. Bachrumsyah Kasman Chief of Police for Aceh (Kapolda Aceh) JI Cut Meutia No.3 Banda Aceh Aceh Indonesia Salutation: Dear Brigadier General</p>

Note: fax tones may be difficult to obtain. Please be patient and try several times if necessary.

End of Action: 31 May 2000