

PUBLIC

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Possible "disappearance" / Fear for safety 26 August

EAST TIMORMissing

Seven people

Killed

Agusto dos Santos Martins

Amnesty International is gravely concerned for the safety of seven people who have not been seen since 18 August 1999 when they were arrested by members of a militia grup.

On 18 August, members of the militia group *Dadurus Merah Putih* stopped a public bus in Lahomea Village, Maliana Sub-district, Bobonaro District. They forced all the passengers off the bus and checked their identity documents, and arrested Agusto dos Santos Martins, a university student, on suspicion of being an independence supporter. He was then reportedly taken to a house used by the militia, where he was detained for several hours. He is believed to have been killed later that day. His body was found buried in Lahomea Village on 21 August.

Seven other people who were also on the bus were reportedly arrested. It has not been possible to confirm that the seven are still detained by the militia, but there are serious concerns for their safety. The names of the seven are not known.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over 430,000 people in East Timor have registered to vote in a UN-organized ballot to be held on 30 August 1999, which will determine the future status of the territory.

Despite assurances from the Indonesian Government that it would provide an environment for the "popular consultation" process, free from intimidation and other forms of violence, the security situation in East Timor continues to be serious. Supporters of independence continue to be at risk of arbitrary arrest, "disappearance" or unlawful killing by militias who support continued integration with Indonesia, and by the Indonesian National Army (TNI).

In the days prior to and during the two week campaign period (14 - 27 August 1999) the situation has deteriorated dramatically. Militia activity has increased in several districts, in particular in Bobonaro, Covalima, Ainaro, Liquica and Ermera, resulting in a number of deaths and causing thousands of people to flee their homes and places of registration. In addition, staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission to East Timor (UNAMET) have also been the target of militia threats and violence.

On 26 August, pro-integration militias held a show of force on the streets of Dili, which has resulted in clashes between independence and integration supporters. At least three people are reported to have been killed - including one member of the military shot by another soldier, and two civilians possibly shot by members of the militia or the military. Two others are reported to have been stabbed. Militia operations have continued throughout the day.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send faxes/express/airmail letters in Indonesian, English or your own language:

- urging the authorities to investigate the whereabouts of seven people missing since 18 August 1999 after they were forced off a bus by *Dadurus Merah Putih*;

- if the seven are found to be in custody, urging the authorities to ensure that they have immediate and continuing access to independent legal counsel and to their families, that they are not at risk of torture or ill-treatment, and that they are immediately and unconditionally released if not to be charged with a recognisably criminal offence;
- urging that they be given access to medical professionals if required:
- urging the authorities to conduct a full and impartial investigation into the death of Augusto dos Santos Martins and to ensure that those found responsible are brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

COMMANDER RESORT MILITARY COMMAND (KOREM) 164/WIRADHARMA (covers East Timor)

Colonel Muhamad Noer Muis

Markas KOREM 164/Wiradharma

Dili

East Timor

Indonesia

Fax/Tel: +62 390 321 624

Salutation: Dear Colonel Muis

COPIES TO:

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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 7 October 1999.