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INDONESIA: JAILED FOR PRINTING SOMEONE ELSE'S OPINION

Amnesty International today called for the immediate and unconditional release of prisoner of conscience Andi Syahputra, who was sentenced to a two year and six months prison term on 6 April 1997 by the Indonesian courts. His "crime" was to print copies of an unlicensed publication which contained articles considered "insulting" by the authorities.

"We are used to seeing people imprisoned in Indonesia for peacefully expressing their views but Andi Syahputra's conviction takes it one step further -- he was not even tried for his own views, but for someone else's," Amnesty International said.

"This harsh sentence is meant as a warning to the Indonesian people to steer clear of any involvement, however indirect, with government critics."

Andi Syahputra, the manager of a printing company, was convicted of producing photographic negatives for the monthly magazine *Suara Independen*, well known for its dissident political analysis and commentary on Indonesian affairs. Among the articles cited by the prosecution as "insulting" was one which called for direct elections for the President and another which said that people no longer wanted President Suharto as their leader.

This is not an isolated case. Buyung Rachmad Buchori Nasution who was arrested on 20 March is awaiting trial on similar charges. He is accused of involvement in printing the book *New Era, New Leader: Badio* [the author of the book] *Rejects the Engineering of the New Order Regime* which was banned earlier in the month.

Parliamentary elections are due in May, and presidential elections next year. These trials are part of the government's attempt to prevent any public discussion of political change or calls for greater democracy prior to the elections, Amnesty International said.

The government has made it clear that no disruption of the election process will be tolerated and has threatened legal action against anyone who it believes has carried out such acts, under various laws including the notorious Anti-subversion Law which carries the death penalty or up to life imprisonment.

The arrests in the last week alone of 32 student activists in Yogyakarta, Central Java - during two separate demonstrations where there were calls for the May election to be boycotted - underline the authorities' determination to suppress dissent.

At the same time, outspoken former parliamentarian, Sri Bintang Pamungkas, remains in custody on charges brought under the Anti-subversion Law because of a message in the greeting cards which he sent to celebrate the end of the Moslem festival, *Idul Fitri*. The message called for a boycott of the 1997 elections; a rejection of the re-election of President Suharto in the 1998 Presidential elections; and for a new government to be prepared for the post-Suharto period.

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