

INDONESIA

Printers of independent journal arrested

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SUMMARY

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Amnesty International is concerned about the arrest of two men on charges of insulting the President and the government, apparently in connection with their alleged involvement in printing an unlicensed magazine in Indonesia.¹ Amnesty International considers the two to have been detained solely for their peaceful and lawful activities as printers of an independent magazine. If tried and imprisoned, Amnesty International would consider the two to be prisoners of conscience. The organization is calling on the Indonesian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the two men.

Andi Syahputra, 31, and **Dasrul**, who is believed to be over 60 years of age, were both arrested at around 9 am on 27 October 1996 at a printing house in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. The printing house had just completed printing an edition of a monthly magazine, *Suara Independen* (Independent Voice), which is published by the Indonesian Society for Alternative Press (MIPPA), based in Melbourne, Australia. Andi Syahputra is the manager of the printing house where Dasrul is an employee. During the raid, 5,000 copies of *Suara Independen* were confiscated by the police. Andi Syahputra was arrested with a warrant but it is not clear whether there was a warrant for the arrest of Dasrul.

Both men were taken into custody at the South Jakarta Police District Headquarters where they are believed to be still held. The following day, on 28 October, police conducted a raid on Andi Syahputra's house in Central Jakarta during which they confiscated materials allegedly in connection with the magazine, including photographs.

The two are being held under Articles 134 and 154 of Indonesia's Criminal Code, which are commonly used to imprison individuals for peaceful activities of a political nature. A conviction under Article 134 for "*insulting the President*" can lead to a maximum sentence of six years' imprisonment, while a charge under Article 154, which forbids "*...the public expression of feelings of hostility, hatred or contempt toward the government...*" is punishable by up to seven years' imprisonment. While the specific charges against the two are not clear, it appears that the two men,

¹Under Indonesia's media laws all publications are required to have a Press Publication Business Licence (SIUPP), which is issued by the Minister of Information.

whose role is to merely print the magazine, are facing charges based on the content of the magazine. The magazine, while it has not been officially licensed under Indonesia's restrictive press regulations, is not subject to a formal ban.

There is concern that while being questioned in custody, the safeguards designed to protect the rights of detainees outlined in Indonesia's Code of Criminal Procedure may not be adhered to. Under the Code, only the police and officials from the Attorney-General's office have the authority to interrogate detainees. Frequently, this procedure is ignored, and individuals are questioned in military custody or by military intelligence officials in police or the Attorney-General's custody. In these circumstances, they are at greater risk of torture or ill-treatment, and individuals are frequently subjected to pressure, both physical and mental, to sign statements and provide information.

Amnesty International considers the arrest of Andi Syahputra and Dasrul to be a violation of the rights to freedom of speech and expression in Indonesia. Amnesty International considers the arrest and charges against the two men to be part of the broader government crackdown on activists and other alleged opponents of the regime which has been on-going since the raid on the headquarters of the political party the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) in July. Since the raid, at least 103 peaceful political, human rights, labour and other activists have been taken into custody. Members of the media, NGOs and lawyers have also been subjected to harassment and intimidation. Andi Syahputro is also believed to be involved with the Independent Election Monitoring Committee (*Komite Independen Pengaman Pemilu - KIPP*), members of which have also been arrested previously.²

Journalists and individuals who have sought to defend freedom of speech in Indonesia are frequently the target of human rights violations, including imprisonment as prisoners of conscience. In September 1995, two journalists, **Ahmad Taufik**, **Eko Maryadi**, and an office worker, **Danang Kukuh Wardoyo**, were imprisoned, found guilty of "insulting the government" and sentenced to prison terms ranging from 20 months to 32 months for their role in disseminating an unlicensed publication. In November 1995, the two journalists had their sentences increased by four months. Also in September 1995, another journalist, **Tri Agus Susanto**, was found guilty of "insulting the President" and sentenced to two year's imprisonment. All four remain in prison, although Danang Kukuh Wardoyo is due for release in mid-November. Amnesty International considers them all to be prisoners of conscience.

²See Amnesty International, *Indonesia: Independent election monitors targeted*, AI Index ASA 21/23/96, 29 April 1996.

Please send appeals urging the authorities:

- to immediately and unconditionally release **Andi Syahputra** and **Dasrul**;
- to ensure that **Andi Syahputra** and **Dasrul** are not subjected to torture or ill-treatment during their time in custody;
- that individuals engaging in peaceful activities in defence of freedom of speech and expression in Indonesia be able to do so without fear of arrest or intimidation by the authorities.

Appeals should be sent to:

Head of South Jakarta Police Headquarters
 Jalan Dharmawangsa
 Kebayoran Baru
 Jakarta Selatan
 Indonesia

Copies of appeals can be faxed to Indonesian newspapers:

The Jakarta Post
 Fax: 62 21 549 2685

Kompas
 Fax: 62 21 548 6085

Merdeka
 Fax: 62 21 555 6063

and Indonesia's National Commission on Human Rights:

Komisi Nasional Hak Asazi Manusia (Komnas HAM)
 Jalan Pemuda No 104
 Jakarta
 Indonesia

<p>KEYWORDS: PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE1 / PRINTERS1 / AGED / JOURNALISTS / CENSORSHIP /</p>
