
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 138/94

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AI INDEX: NWS 11/138/94
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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - INDONESIA/E.TIMOR

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

United Kingdom - 14 July - SEE NEWS SERVICE 129/94

Pakistan - 27 July - PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE. SEE NEWS SERVICE 81/94

Myanmar - 20 July - PLEASE NOTE THIS IS AN INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASE SEE NEWS SERVICE 99/94

India - 16 August - SEE NEWS SERVICE 129/94

**** Kosovo - 20 September **** - Document and news release to accompany section level action on ill-treatment of Albanians. Document coming in weekly mailing of 22 August.

**** Algeria - first week of October **** - Will let you know the finalised date asap. Document and news release on killings by security forces to accompany section level action.

**** France - second week of October **** - Will let you know the finalised date asap. More details to follow.

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Lusophone Summit - 27 June - PLEASE NOTE - This summit has been postponed. Hold on to the news service item, we will let you know when the summit is rescheduled. SEE NEWS SERVICE 124/94 for item

Equatorial Guinea - 30 June - SEE NEWS SERVICE 135.

North and South Korea - 21 July - SEE NEWS SERVICE 135

**** Brazil - 14 September**** - Document and news service item to go with section level action. Release date is about three weeks before first round of presidential elections in October. Document focuses on police ill-treatment and will go in weekly mailing of 10 August.

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Annual Report - 0600 hrs GMT 7 July 1994 - SEE NEWS SERVICE 51/94

AI INDEX: ASA 21/WU 08/94
28 JUNE 1994

INDONESIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DEPLORES ARRESTS AND BEATINGS OF PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATORS

Amnesty International has condemned the beatings of peaceful demonstrators and arrest of more than 50 people by Indonesian security forces in Jakarta yesterday, during a peaceful protest against government restrictions on press freedom.

"This incident is symptomatic of the government's contemptuous attitude toward civil and political liberties," Amnesty International said.

"We deplore the heavy-handed tactics used to suppress the demonstrations, and are calling for the immediate and unconditional release of those arrested."

The people who were arrested and beaten were among some 300 protesters who had tried to march to the Ministry of Information in one of a series of peaceful protests against the recent banning of three of the country's major news magazines late last week.

The protesters, who included well-known Indonesian cultural figures, journalists, members of non-governmental organizations, human rights activists and university students, were calling for the news magazines *Tempo*, *Editor* and *Detik* to have their publishing licences reinstated, the repeal of the country's press licensing system, and an end to government restrictions on freedom of expression.

According to eyewitnesses, the protesters gathered at the Sarinah Jaya Department store in the heart of Jakarta at about 9am. An hour later, the group began to walk down Jalan Thamrin (street) toward the Ministry of Information building to present their demands.

The protesters stopped about 200 metres from the Ministry offices when organizers noticed that the building was surrounded by government forces. At about 10:30, riot police and troops wearing black T-shirts with the insignia *Opsih* - short for *Operasi Bersih* or "Operation Cleansing" - attacked the protesters with batons causing them to flee for safety. The troops followed the fleeing demonstrators down Jalan Thamrin and nearby sidestreets, causing serious injury to some of them.

At about 11am some 200 people, including the well-known Indonesian poet, Rendra, managed to reach the Ministry of Information building, where they planned to stage a peaceful poetry-reading protest. They were also attacked by government troops and some of them were arrested. The total number reported to have been arrested by mid-day on 27 June was 56.

Despite its stated commitment to political "openness", and the explicit guarantees of freedom of speech contained in Article 28 of the country's 1945 Constitution, Indonesia's New Order government continues to impose heavy restrictions on a wide range of internationally-recognized civil and political liberties including freedom of speech, assembly, conscience, and movement.

Such restrictions have helped to create an atmosphere of generalized fear within which dissent is seldom openly expressed. They have also served to justify and provide the political and legal framework for further violations, such as political imprisonment, torture and arbitrary killing.

The Press Law of 1982 stipulates that there shall be no press censorship, but adds that the press must also be "responsible", leaving considerable leeway for interpretation by the authorities. Executive discretion is further enhanced by a 1984 decree, which gives the Minister of Information the power to revoke the licence of any publication which, in his judgement, does not conform to this ideal. In

effect, the decree gives the Minister the power to censor at will. In the decade prior to the recent bannings, this power had been used to close down three major newspapers.

The heavy-handed government actions toward the press in the past week have come in response to a number of mass-circulation papers, including the three recently banned, becoming increasingly critical of the government. There are indications that Tempo, Editor and Detik may also have been singled out because, in their recent coverage of the Indonesian Government's controversial purchase of 39 naval vessels from Germany, they had touched too closely on possible corruption amongst the country's leadership.

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