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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - **INDONESIA** (please note this is an updated version of the Indonesia news release sent out in news service 207/94. Some changes have been made based on new information from Indonesia. I have highlighted the additional material in bold. This is the version that will be used at the press conference in Bangkok on Wednesday)

INTERNAL

PLEASE NOTE: FOR YOUR INFORMATION: Unfortunately Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn has been taken ill and will not be able to speak at the Indonesia Campaign press conference on Wednesday.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Indonesia - 0400 hrs GMT 28 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 215 FOR INFORMATION ABOUT PANEL AT PRESS CONFERENCE LAUNCH

France - 12 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

Algeria - 25 October - PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE. SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

APEC - 3 November -SEE NEWS SERVICE 212/94

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Turkey - 14 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 181/94

Iraq - 29 November - SEE NEWS SERVICE 212/94

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EMBARGOED FOR 0400 hrs GMT 28 SEPTEMBER 1994

INDONESIA & EAST TIMOR: POWER AND IMPUNITY - THREE DECADES OF SUFFERING

Against a backdrop of professed political openness and the push for economic development, the Indonesian Government has turned on human rights defenders, trade unionists and other activists as the latest targets in three decades of systematic human rights repression, Amnesty International said today.

On the eve of the anniversary of the military coup that brought the New Order government to power on 1 October 1965, the international human rights organization said that the strong arm tactics initially used to stamp out communism are now being used to wipe out new waves of dissent.

During a visit to Indonesia last week (20-25 September), an Amnesty International researcher found that the government has once again stepped up its intimidation of alleged critics and journalists. He also met three men who were tortured two days earlier because they had released balloons bearing pre-democracy messages.

"What's scandalous is that foreign governments have let the Indonesian authorities get away with it for so long, apparently seeing the country only as an economic prize and strategic lynch pin," Amnesty International's Secretary General Pierre Sané said at a press conference in Bangkok.

Tourist brochures on Indonesia show a country thronging with happy people in an idyllic setting; financial institutions portray the country as an emerging economic success story. But in a major report titled *Power & Impunity* released today, Amnesty International documents another reality -- a country ruled with an iron rod, where dissent is punished by imprisonment, torture and death.

Since the 1965 coup, hundreds of thousands of people have been killed, prisoners have been routinely and sometimes fatally tortured and thousands have languished in jails after show trials -- all in the name of stability and order.

In recent years, aggressive economic development policies have involved banning free trade unions and evicting farmers from their land for hydroelectric and real estate projects and golf courses. This in turn has led to increasing industrial unrest and widespread rural opposition to which the government has reacted with deliberate harassment, arbitrary imprisonment, torture and killings.

Since 1989, the Indonesian Government's much vaunted era of new political openness has spurred journalists, students and political activists to demand greater political freedom and respect for human rights, only to find themselves banned, jailed or "disappeared".

In late June, three leading Indonesian magazines were forced to shut down and more recently six East Timorese were sentenced to 20 months in prison for unfurling a banner in front of foreign journalists in Dili in April.

During his visit, Amnesty International's researcher also observed the trial of banned trade union leader, Muchtar Pakpahan, one of ten labour activists currently detained or being tried for "inciting" workers to demonstrate and strike. Based on this observation and the examination of trial documents, the organization has been able to confirm that Muchtar Pakpahan is a prisoner of conscience. Amnesty International said it feared the same might be true for the other nine labour leaders.

The comments of the former military commander for Central Java, Major General Hariyoto, in 1991 reveal the true nature of political openness in Indonesia: "We hope for openness, but openness of course has limits. If it goes beyond the system that we have arranged, then it is not allowed."

Some of the most dramatic violations in recent years -- including mass killings -- have occurred in East Timor, the former Portuguese colony illegally occupied by Indonesia since 1975, and other regions where the government faces armed opposition such as Aceh and Irian Jaya. Yet human rights violations are pervasive throughout Indonesia, even in areas commonly portrayed as stable and harmonious such as Java and Bali.

"The government tries to brush off these violations as isolated incidents or the work of a few poorly-disciplined soldiers, when in fact they are the byproduct of a network of institutions, procedures and policies which the government uses to crush perceived threats to stability and order," Pierre Sané said.

In recent years the government has taken some measures to counter criticism of its poor human rights record, establishing a National Human Rights Commission and punishing a few soldiers and police officers.

But it has failed to address the root causes of human rights violations. The arbitrary use of repressive measures is reinforced by the fact that the security forces have been free to commit human rights violations without fear of punishment.

Although the New Order leadership claims to rule "in accordance with the law", the country's legal system simply reflects and reinforces executive and military power, with a judiciary that is neither independent nor impartial. And while Indonesia has been a member of the United Nations Human Rights Commission since 1991, it has still not acceded to any of the major international human rights standards.

The Indonesian Government has until recently largely escaped international condemnation of its human rights record. Uncritically accepting arguments about "Asian values" and "development", many governments have continued to offer abundant economic, military and political support, while ignoring clear evidence of systematic human rights violations.

"Foreign governments will have to stop putting economics ahead of human rights, if we are to see the fundamental policy changes necessary to restore human rights to the people of Indonesia and East Timor," Pierre Sané said.

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