

AI Index: ASA 21/047/2004

Stop violence against women

Indonesia – sexual violence by the security forces

[photo caption]

Cover photo : Three women watch as the military carries out a sweep close to Bireuen, North Aceh, 10 November 2003.

Left : A woman walks past 1,400 police officers who have just arrived in Krueng Raya, Aceh Besar, 21 April 2004.

[end caption]

Mutia (not her real name) wept as she told Amnesty International how she was stripped and raped by six soldiers in military detention in 2003. She described being punched and beaten with a wooden plank. On one occasion, she was forced to stand in a tank of cold water up to her neck for nine hours, she said. Her pleas to see her three young children were met with threats that they would be killed. Relatives were not told that she had been detained or where she was being held, and were only able to find out where she was a month later. Mutia was subsequently released and fled to Malaysia.

Her family is alleged to have close links with an armed opposition group, a charge she denies. In the last 10 years, her husband and four brothers have been shot dead by the military. Mutia believes that they were targeted because of her father's wealth and his refusal to pay bribes to the armed forces.

Women have been among the thousands who have been unlawfully killed, tortured or arbitrarily detained by the security forces during their 28-year conflict with the armed pro-independence group, the Free Aceh Movement, in the province of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam.

Many women have been made destitute by the years of armed conflict in the province. Thousands of men have been unlawfully killed, have "disappeared" or have fled the region, leaving wives and other women relatives to face severe economic hardship as family breadwinners and heads of households.

There is also a long-established pattern of rape and other crimes of sexual violence against women by the security forces in the villages of the region. During the current military operations, which began in May 2003, such abuses have continued to be reported. In August 2003 soldiers allegedly raped a 12-year-old girl in a village in North Aceh. Local military and civilian authorities reportedly refused to consider a report of the assault made by villagers. Women have been detained, effectively as hostages, in place of male relatives from the Free Aceh Movement who have avoided arrest. According to reports, women have been forced to strip naked for members of the security forces to check their breasts for tattoos said to indicate membership of the group.

During the current military operations, a few allegations of crimes of sexual violence by the military have been investigated. Following prosecutions before military tribunals, the longest sentence handed down so far has been three and a half years for rape. However, a growing body of opinion opposes the use of military courts to try members of the armed forces for offences under international law, because they lack or appear to lack independence and impartiality in such cases. Despite repeated allegations of crimes of violence against women by the security forces during previous military operations, only one case is known to have been investigated, and no one is known to have been brought to justice.

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In the home and in the community, in times of war and peace, millions of women and girls are beaten, raped, mutilated and killed with impunity. Join Amnesty International's campaign to demand action by governments, communities and individuals to stop violence against women throughout the world.

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Support our campaign: together we can make a difference

- Take an interest:

Find out and monitor how your community, government, police, security forces and courts respond to violence against women and girls.

- Take a stand:

Speak out about violence against women. Challenge prejudiced or dismissive attitudes.

- Take action:

Join our global campaign for women's right to freedom from violence and discrimination.

[end box]

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Together we can make our voices heard

Join our calls for justice for the women and girls in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam.

Urge the Indonesian authorities to:

- give clear instructions to the security forces that human rights violations against women, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, must stop and will not be tolerated
- conduct prompt, thorough, independent and impartial investigations into all allegations of such abuses and bring those responsible to justice in trials that conform to international standards of fairness
- ensure full reparation for the victims of such abuses, including access to health care, compensation, rehabilitation and guarantees that the crimes will not occur again
- ensure that the criminal justice system is made gender-sensitive, including by introducing amendments to the Penal Code that reflect the latest international standards with regard to violence against women
- ratify and implement the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

Send your appeals to:

Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of the Republic of Indonesia,  
Istana Merdeka, Jakarta 10110, Indonesia.

Fax: + 62 21 345 2685 / 526 8726 / 380 5511

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What you can do

- Join Amnesty International and become part of a worldwide movement campaigning for an end to human rights violations. Help us to make a difference.

- Take action on Amnesty International's website at [web.amnesty.org/actforwomen/actnow-index-eng](http://web.amnesty.org/actforwomen/actnow-index-eng)

- Make a donation to support Amnesty International's work.

Want to know more?

Contact the Amnesty International office in your country at the address in the box (right), if there is one.

Or contact

Amnesty International's International Secretariat in London:

Peter Benenson House, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 0DW, United Kingdom

Or visit Amnesty International's website at [www.amnesty.org/actforwomen](http://www.amnesty.org/actforwomen)

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