

EXTRA 17/99

Risk of torture or ill-treatment / Possible

INDONESIA
Syukri (50) detained
Fadli (40) detained
Ali Yusuf (45) detained
Unknown under military guard
Walidin Usman (25) possibly "disappeared"
Jailani Ibrahim (16) possibly "disappeared"
Muhammad R. (29) possibly "disappeared"
Zamzami (23) possibly "disappeared"

Amnesty International is concerned at the rising level of human rights violations in Aceh province after at least 21 people were killed in Matang Ulim village in East Aceh on 3 February 1999 when soldiers opened fire on people leaving a meeting. Amnesty International has fears for the safety of 3 people detained by the military in connection with the incident (another 53 have apparently already been released), one other who is under military guard in hospital and four people who are possibly "disappeared" following the shootings. All are at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

According to reports, soldiers arriving in trucks outside a military base (Koramil) at Idi Cut fired at those making their way home from the meeting. The military asserts the meeting was about *Aceh Merdeka*, [Free Aceh] a separatist movement.

Syukri and Fadli are now in custody in Langsa Military Prison. Ali Yusuf, who was shot in the leg, is also in military custody. A fourth man, shot as he passed by on his motorcycle, is under military guard at Malahayati Hospital in Medan. None has been allowed to see an independent legal counsel or their families.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

From 1990 to August 1998, Aceh was given Daerah Operasi Militer (DOM), Area of Military Operation status. This enabled the government to justify activities labelled as "counter-insurgency operations", apparently to quell revolt. This often resulted in serious human rights violations.

Since President Habibie came to power in May 1998, some improvements have occurred in the human rights situation in Aceh. In August 1998, the Commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces, General Wiranto, visited the region and apologized for violations committed by the Armed Forces during military counter-insurgency activities. He also announced the withdrawal of combat troops - although not regular, territorial troops - from the area. Additionally, DOM status was lifted and several investigations into past human rights violations initiated, including a visit by a parliamentary fact-finding team to Aceh in July 1998.

Later that month, however, troop withdrawals were suspended after disturbances took place in Lhokseumawe during the withdrawal of special forces command (KOPASSUS) troops.

Over the last few months violence has returned to Aceh. On 29 December, seven members of the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI) were captured and killed in Lhok Nibong, East Aceh. Subsequent military operations, known as *Satgas Wibawa 99*,

to locate the captured soldiers and arrest those responsible for the deaths, have already resulted in the death of at least 11 civilians.

While it is unclear who was responsible for the deaths of the soldiers, Amnesty International is concerned that the event has been used to justify human rights violations in Aceh and that earlier efforts to improve the human rights situation in Aceh is being undermined.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or Indonesian or your own language:

- urging the authorities to ensure that all those detained be given immediate, on-going and regular access to independent legal advice and to their families;
- asking for assurances that they are not at risk of torture or ill-treatment;
- urging the government to clarify the number of individuals taken into custody and any charges brought against them;
- urging the authorities to clarify the whereabouts of Walidin Usman, Jailani Ibrahim, Muhammad R. and Zamzami;
- requesting the authorities to undertake an immediate and impartial investigation into the incident and to ensure that fully qualified investigators, including forensic experts are given access to investigate the shootings.

APPEALS TO:

Military Commander Region I/bukit Barisan

(covers North & West Sumatra and Aceh)

Major General Ismet Juhairi Chaniago

Pangdam I/Bukit Barisan

Markas Besar KODAM I

Medan, Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

Telegrams:Major General Chaniago, Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

Salutation:Dear Major General

COPIES TO:

Minister of Defence And Security

Gen. Wiranto

Menteri Pertahanan dan Keamanan

Jl. Medan Merdeka Barat No. 13-14

Jakarta 10110, Indonesia

Faxes:+ 62 21 381 4535

President Jusuf Habibie

Presiden RI

Istana Negara

Jl. Veteran, Jakarta Pusat

Indonesia

Faxes:+ 62 21 526 8726 or 62 21 380 5511 or 62 21 345 7782

Telexes:44283 BIGRA IA / 44469 DEPLU IA

and to diplomatic representatives of Indonesia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 9 March 1999.