

22 February 2000

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL APPEAL INDONESIA: ACEHNESE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS UNDER ATTACK

Syaifuddin Gani and Nazaruddin Ibrahim, human rights lawyers

On 4 January 2000, Syaifuddin Gani and Nazaruddin Ibrahim, two prominent human rights lawyers were arrested by police in Sigli town, Pidie District, Aceh. They were held at Sigli police resort (Polres) for three days before being released on bail on 7 January, following significant international pressure.

Their arrest is believed to be linked to their work with human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Aceh. The police have confiscated a laptop computer belonging to Syaifuddin Gani. It is still not clear whether the two will face legal proceedings. Amnesty International remains concerned for their safety and is closely monitoring their situation.

Background

Despite encouraging indications that Indonesia's new administration will continue with the reform process, the human rights situation in the country remains fragile. In the absence of fundamental institutional and legal reforms, human rights violations continue to go unpunished and perpetrators continue to evade justice.

The people of Aceh, in northern Sumatra, have endured serious human rights violations for many years. These have been committed in the context of counter-insurgency operations by the Indonesian security forces against the armed opposition group, Free Aceh Movement (*Gerakan Aceh*

Merdeka, GAM). Thousands of civilians, including women and children, have been caught up in the violence which has created untold misery and suffering for the region's population.

In recent weeks, there have been worrying signs of increased attacks on civilians, in particular human rights defenders. Human rights lawyers, humanitarian workers, student activists and journalists are just some of those who have been threatened, attacked and, in some cases, killed.

Action

Please write politely worded letters, faxes or e-mails in Bahasa Indonesia, English or your own language to the Indonesian authorities at the addresses below. In your letters, state your concern about the safety of the two lawyers. Please urge the Indonesian government to:

- ✉ take immediate steps to protect the right of human rights defenders and other human rights monitors to carry out their human rights activities in Aceh free from fear of arrest, intimidation or attack;
- ✉ carry out full, prompt and impartial investigations into all alleged human rights violations targeted at human rights defenders;
- ✉ ensure that all those responsible for serious human rights violations - including extrajudicial execution, torture and "disappearance" - are brought promptly to justice before a civilian court according to international human rights standards;
- ✉ issue immediate instructions to the security forces to halt all arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture and ill-treatment, "disappearances" and unlawful killings;
- ✉ ensure that all security operations in Aceh are carried out in line with international human rights standards.

Please send copies of your letters to the diplomatic representatives of Indonesia in your country.

Addresses

KH Abdurrahman Wahid President of the Republic of Indonesia Istana Merdeka Jakarta 10110 Indonesia Fax: +62 21 345-2685 or 380-5511 or 526-8726 Telex: 44283 BIGRA IA or 44469 DEPLU IA Salutation: Dear President	Mr Hasballah M. Saad State Minister for Human Rights Affairs JI Kuningan Timur M 2/5 Jakarta 12950 Indonesia Fax: +62 21 525-0075 or 525-0139 Salutation: Dear Minister
Dr Juwono Sudarsono Minister of Defence and Security (Menteri Pertahanan dan Keamanan) Jl. Medan Merdeka Barat No.13-14 Jakarta Pusat 10110 Indonesia Fax: +62 21 381-4535 or 384-5178 Salutation: Dear Minister	Brigadier General Bachrumsyah Kasman Chief of Police for Aceh (Kapolda Aceh) JI Cut Meutia No.3 Banda Aceh Aceh Indonesia Salutation: Dear Brigadier General

Note: fax tones may be difficult to obtain. Please be patient and try several times if necessary.

End of Action: 31 May 2000