

PUBLIC

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Further information on UA 27/08 (ASA 21/002/2008, 25 January 2008) - Fear of imminent execution

INDONESIA Achmad Suradji (m)

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According to Indonesian media reports, prosecutors are planning to execute five death row inmates in July, and the first of these is Achmad Suradji. He was sentenced to death on 27 April 1998 for the murder of 42 women and girls found buried in a field next to his house in the village of Semayang, North Sumatra province.

Indonesia resumed executions on 26 June after a 14-month hiatus, with the shooting of Samuel Iwachekwu Okoye and Hansen Anthony Nwaliosa, two Nigerian men convicted of drug-related offences. The Indonesian authorities have publicly stated their intention to execute 57 long-term death row prisoners who have exhausted the appeal process.

According to the Indonesian news agency, Antara, the Deputy Attorney General for General Criminal Affairs, AH Ritonga, said that the five executions expected this month would be carried out as soon as the Attorney General's Office had notified the prisoners that they were to be put to death. However, a spokesperson for the Public Prosecutor in North Sumatra province said that plans were already underway to execute Achmad Suradji.

Achmad Suradji was a well-known and respected witch doctor often consulted by local women regarding matters of money, health and romance. He was arrested on 2 May 1997 when relatives of one girl who had visited him became concerned that she had not returned home. Police eventually uncovered the remains of 42 women and girls buried around Achmad Suradji's property. All were reportedly strangled by Achmad Suradji between 1986 and 1997.

Achmad Suradji's appeal for clemency to President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono was rejected in December 2007. He is held in Tanjung Gusta prison, Medan city, North Sumatra Province, where it is likely the execution will be carried out.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Death sentences in Indonesia are carried out by firing squad. The person under sentence of death has the choice of standing or sitting and of using a blindfold or cover for their head. Firing squads consist of 12 people, six of whom are supplied with live ammunition and six whose guns are loaded with blanks. The squad fires from a distance of between five and 10 metres.

To Amnesty International's knowledge, at least 110 people are believed to be under sentence of death in Indonesia. Eleven of these were convicted and sentenced to death in 2007.

Amnesty International recognizes the need to address serious crime, including murder, but is convinced that the death penalty does not provide a solution. There is no clear evidence that the death penalty deters crime any more effectively than other forms of punishment. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty unreservedly in all cases, and supports the global trend away from the use of the death penalty, powerfully expressed in the UN General Assembly's resolution calling for a worldwide moratorium on executions on 18 December 2007. Today 135 countries have abolished the death penalty in law or practice.

In 2006, Indonesia ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which states that "every human being has the inherent right to life." However, the Indonesian authorities did not authorize ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, aimed at the abolition of the death penalty.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Bahasa Indonesia, English or your own language:**

- **calling for the planned execution of Achmad Suradji to be halted immediately and for his sentence to be commuted;**
- urging the authorities to rescind their stated intention of executing five people this month and halt the intended executions of 57 long-term death row inmates;
- recognizing Indonesia's need to address serious crime, but asserting that there is no clear evidence that the death penalty is an effective deterrent;
- calling on the Indonesian authorities to commute all death sentences in Indonesia, as they constitute the violation of one of the most fundamental of human rights – the right to life;
- calling on the government of Indonesia to sign and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR and commit themselves to working towards the abolition of the death penalty.

**APPEALS TO:**

President

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Istana Merdeka, Jakarta Pusat 10110, Indonesia

**Fax: + 62 21 345 2685**

**+ 62 21 526 8726**

**Salutation: Dear President**

Chief Attorney General

Mr. Hendarman Supandji, Jl. Sultan Hasanuddin No. 1, Kebayoran Baru, Jakarta, Indonesia

**Fax: + 62 21 725 0213**

**Salutation: Dear Attorney General**

**COPIES TO:**

Mr. Yon Suharyono, Head of Tandjung Gustan Prison, Medan City, Jalan. Pemasarakatan Tanjung Gusta, Medan 20125, North Sumatra Province

**Salutation: Dear Mr Suharyono**

Governor of North Sumatra

Mr. Syamsul Arifin SE, Jl. P. Negero No 30, Medan, Sumatra Utara, Indonesia

**Fax: +62 061 4520111**

**Salutation: Dear Governor**

and to diplomatic representatives of Indonesia accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.**