

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 21/16/96

UA 75/96

Fear of Torture

19 March 1996

INDONESIAUp to 50 people arrested after riots in Irian Jaya

Up to 50 unnamed people arrested after renewed rioting in the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya may be at risk of torture.

Military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Maulud Hiayat is quoted in an Indonesian newspaper as saying that 37 people were arrested after riots in Abepura, near Jayapura, the capital of Irian Jaya on 18 March 1996. According to the report they were accused of offences including ripping the Indonesian flag, burning Abepura's central market and damaging or burning cars and shops. An unofficial source, which put the number of people arrested at between 20 and 50, said that many of those arrested were students. They were arrested by both police and soldiers and some were reported to have been beaten, in some cases seriously, during arrest.

The disturbances broke out on the morning of 18 March when the body of Dr Thomas Wainggai, a prisoner of conscience from Irian Jaya who died last week in Cipinang prison, Jakarta, arrived by plane at Jayapura airport for burial. Protests began in Abepura, the nearest town to the airport, when crowds were prevented from paying their last respects to Dr Thomas Wainggai by members of the security forces. Buildings and vehicles were burnt and stones thrown during the riots which involved hundreds and possibly thousands of people. Riot troops are reported to have fired over the heads of the crowd. There are no reports of anyone being injured or killed by the shooting, although there are reports that at least two people may have died as a result of the riots.

Amnesty International recognises the right of the Indonesian authorities to bring to justice those responsible for acts of violence. However, in view of reports of the recent pattern of serious human rights violations in Irian Jaya, including extrajudicial executions, "disappearances" and torture, Amnesty International fears for the safety of the detainees who, the organization believes, may be subjected to torture during interrogation. In addition, the detainees are believed not to have access to their families and there are also concerns that they will be denied access to independent lawyers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Opposition to Indonesian rule of Irian Jaya, both peaceful and armed, has continued since the authority over the province was transferred to the Indonesian Government in 1963 and has resulted in widespread human rights violations.

In recent years the issue of land and resources has generated discontent. This has focused particularly on the PT Freeport Indonesia Mine at Tembagapura and its perceived lack of benefits to the local community, the social impact of the mine's presence and environmental concerns. Since July 1994, opposition to the mine from local people has intensified. Protests, some involving the Free Papua Movement, *Organisasi Papua Merdeka* (OPM), a group advocating independence of the area, have included armed clashes with the Indonesian Armed Forces, flag-raising and peaceful demonstrations.

In April 1995, allegations of serious human rights violations in response to these protests began to emerge. The allegations, which included extrajudicial executions, "disappearances", torture and arbitrary arrests, were later

investigated and confirmed by Indonesia's National Commission on Human Rights, *Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia* (Komnas HAM).

The disturbance on 18 March follow riots in the towns of Tembagapura and Timika the previous week. Seven people arrested during last weeks riots are believed still to be in detention (see UA 71/96, ASA 21/15/96, 14 March 1996).

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

- urging the authorities to provide details of the whereabouts of the people detained in relation to the riots in Abepura on 18 March 1996, as well as any charges that are brought against them;
- seeking assurances from the authorities that the detainees are not at risk of torture or ill-treatment;
- calling on the authorities to allow the detainees to have access to lawyers of their own choice, their families and adequate medical care.

APPEALS TO:

Military Commander Region VIII/Trikora

Brig. General Wirdhana

Pangdam VIII/Trikora

Markas Besar KODAM VIII/Trikora

Jayapura

Irian Jaya, Indonesia

Telegrams: Pangdam VIII/Trikora, Jayapura, Indonesia

Salutation: Dear Brig. Gen. Wirdhana

Chief of Police for Irian Jaya

Brig Gen. (Pol.) Wayan Karya

Kapolda Irian Jaya

Jayapura

Irian Jaya, Indonesia

Telegrams: Kapolda Irian Jaya, Jayapura, Irian Jaya

Salutation: Dear Brig. Gen (Pol) I Wayan Karya

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ali Alatas SSH

Menteri Luar Negeri

Jl Medan Taman Pejambon No 6

Jakarta, Indonesia

Faxes: + 6221 354 0517 or 360 517

Chair of the National Commission on Human Rights

Ali Said SH

Ketua Komisi Nasional Hak Azasi Manusia

Jl Veteran No 11

Jakarta, Indonesia

Faxes: (c/o Ministry of Justice) + 6221 525 3095

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 5 May 1996.