
amnesty international

INDONESIA

@Cheppy Sudrajat prisoner of conscience

25 OCTOBER 1993

SUMMARY

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DISTR: SC/CO/GR

Cheppy Sudrajat, a 43-year-old farmer from Rancamaya village in the Bogor area of West Java, was sentenced to ten months' imprisonment on 11 October 1993 for organizing a peaceful protest against a real estate and golf course development in the Ciawi district of Bogor regency¹. Amnesty International believes Cheppy Sudrajat to be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for his non-violent activities, and is calling on the Indonesian authorities to release him immediately and unconditionally. It is also urging the authorities to stop the use of short-term detention, ill-treatment, intimidation and threats of legal action against those undertaking peaceful activities in connection land disputes.

In recent years, scores of communities in both rural and urban parts of Indonesia have been forced from the land which they own or cultivate to make way for a variety of real estate and development projects. Many of these communities have organized to resist eviction or to demand fair compensation for the land they occupy; in doing so some have received support from human rights organizations and university students. Although such protests have, for the most part, been non-violent, government authorities have used a variety of repressive measures - including short-term detention, imprisonment and ill-treatment - to stop them, and have accused "third parties" of using land issues for subversive political ends.

¹ For further information about the protest and Amnesty International's concerns, see *Amnesty International Urgent Action Extra 82/93, Legal concern/possible prisoner of conscience: Dedi Ekadibrata, human rights activist* (ASA 21/23/93, 30 September 1993), and *Amnesty International Urgent Action 355/93, Death threats/harassment: Ahmad Jauhari, lawyer* (ASA 21/26/93, 7 October 1993).

All of these measures have featured in the treatment in recent weeks of local people involved in the land dispute in Bogor, and clearly demonstrate the way in which the government seeks to intimidate individuals and communities from taking steps to protect their land.

The protest Cheppy Sudrajat is said to have organized, and for which he is now serving a 10-month prison sentence, took place on 24 September 1993 when some 300 farmers and over 20 human rights activists took part in a peaceful demonstration outside the office of the Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs in Jakarta. The group had gone to the office to raise with the minister their concerns over a number of long-standing land disputes in the Bogor area. At no time was any violence used by the protesters, but at least eighteen people were nonetheless detained for questioning by police and military authorities in Jakarta before being released without charge some hours later. The 300 or so remaining protesters, including women and children, were detained by military authorities on their return to Bogor. Most were released without charge after 13 hours, although five of them were held for a few days. One of those held for questioning, M. H. Sinaga, a director of the Ampera Legal Aid Institute (LBH-Ampera) in Bogor, has alleged that he was ill-treated and threatened with a pistol during his interrogation.

Following the incident Amnesty International raised its concerns about the arbitrary detention of those who took part in the demonstration. It believes that the detentions were intended to intimidate the farmers and their supporters into dropping their protest, and also to extract political intelligence about the identity of the organizers. An arrest warrant issued against a human rights activist, **Dedi Ekadibrata**, a few days after he took part in the demonstration appeared to be a further attempt by the authorities to prevent or discourage him and others for engaging in non-violent human rights work. A human rights lawyer, **Ahmad Juhari**, received death threats and had his house wrecked less than two weeks after the demonstration, apparently in retaliation for his non-violent activities on behalf of farming communities in the Bogor area. While the identity of the attackers is not yet known to Amnesty International, the timing and context of the attack raised suspicions of police involvement, or complicity. The sentencing of Cheppy Sudrajat to a 10-month prison term for organizing a peaceful political protest appears to be yet another attempt by the Indonesian authorities to discourage involvement in peaceful activities in connection with land disputes.

Amnesty International has been further concerned by a statement made by the head of the Siliwangi military command, which covers West Java, during a meeting with the press on 16 October 1993. According to press reports (*Jakarta Post*, 19 October 1993) Major General Syukur alleged that some of the recent demonstrations in West Java had been instigated by foreign organizations. According to the same report, Major General Syukur is also said to have blamed Amnesty International in particular for encouraging those involved in the land dispute in Bogor to take action. The allegation is false.

This is not the first time that external forces have been blamed for internal political dissent. In recent years a number of government officials, including the President, have warned that "foreign ideologies" such as communism and liberalism, are a threat to national security. Amnesty International believes, however, that such allegations are designed to disguise official intolerance of domestic political dissent and to justify the repressive measures being used against those involved in such process.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send faxes/airmail letters either in English or in your own language:

- expressing concern that Cheppy Sudrajat has been sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment because of his non-violent activities;
- urging that he be immediately and unconditionally released;
- urging that those involved in peaceful political protest be permitted to express their non-violent opinions freely and without interference.

APPEALS TO:

General Feisal Tanjung	Susilo Sudarman
Commander of the Armed Forces (ABRI)	Coordinating Minister
Markas Besar ABRI	for Political/Security Affairs
Jl. Merdeka Barat 13	Jl. Merdeka Barat No. 15
Cilangkap, East Jakarta	Jakarta Pusat
Indonesia	Indonesia
Fax: +62 21 36 1471	Fax: +62 21 36 0517/7781/7782
(Armed Forces Headquarters)	(c/o Foreign Ministry)
Salutation: Dear General Feisal Tanjung	Salutation: Dear Minister Sudarman

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Major General Syukur	Major General R. Nuriana
Military Commander for Region III/Siliwangi	Governor of West Java
Bandung	Jl. P. Diponegoro 1
Jawa Barat, Indonesia	Bandung, Jawa Barat, Indonesia
Salutation: Dear Major General Syukur	Salutation: Dear Major General Nuriana

<p>KEYWORDS: PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE / ARBITRARY ARREST / BANNING / TORTURE/ILL-TREATMENT / HARASSMENT / FARMERS / HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS / LAWYERS / WOMEN / CHILDREN / LAND PROBLEMS / DEMONSTRATIONS / AI AND GOVERNMENTS /</p>
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