

EXTRA 90/96

Fear of torture

11 June 1996

EAST TIMOR East Timorese detained after riots

At least 13 and possibly more than 50 East Timorese have been arrested following disturbances, at times violent, in Baucau, a town about 80 kilometres from the East Timorese capital, Dili. The identities and whereabouts of the detainees remain unknown, heightening concern for their safety.

Large-scale disturbances involving hundreds of East Timorese youths took place in Baucau on 10 June 1996. The exact causes of the disturbances are not clear but are reported to be related to religious tensions between local Roman Catholics and Muslim immigrants. According to reports East Timorese youths threw stones at the security forces who then opened fire on the youths. It is not yet known if any East Timorese have been killed. *Agence France Presse* reported that the East Timor military commander Colonel Mahidin Simbolon denied any East Timorese fatalities during the disturbances, but he said that two members of the military had been stabbed by East Timorese youths, at least one of whom may have died as a result. He said, however, that a number of East Timorese youths had been injured, but declined to give exact figures.

Official military sources also reported that 13 youths had been detained by Baucau police as a result of the disturbances. The names of the youths have not been given, nor have details of their whereabouts been provided. House to house searches by the security forces are reported to have continued throughout 11 June and according to unofficial sources the number of people arrested is at least 50.

Amnesty International recognises the right of the Indonesian authorities to bring to justice those responsible for acts of violence. However, the organization is seriously concerned for the safety of anyone arrested in relation to the disturbances. In particular, Amnesty International fears that the those detained may be tortured during interrogation and that they will not be provided with proper access to independent lawyers, necessary medical attention or to their families.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since November 1994, there have been increased, and sometimes violent, demonstrations against Indonesia's occupation of East Timor. The authorities have responded to the demonstrations with arbitrary detention, including the detention of peaceful protesters, beatings, torture and extrajudicial executions. Up to 300 people were believed to have been arrested following riots throughout East Timor in September and October 1995. Most were released shortly afterwards but between 35 and 50 of these people have been tried or are currently facing trial. Some of those arrested during these disturbances are known to have been severely beaten and subjected to electric shocks by police or military while in detention.

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 names and whereabouts of those detained in Baucau as a result of the disturbances on 10 June 1996;
- calling for all possible measures to be taken to ensure the safety of all the detainees, including allowing them access to the International Committee of the Red Cross, lawyers and their families;

- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of the detainees, unless they are charged with recognisably criminal offences under existing laws.

APPEALS TO:

CHIEF OF POLICE FOR EAST TIMOR
Lt. Col. S Y Wenas
Kapolda Timor Timur
Dili
East Timor
Indonesia

Telegrams: Kapolda Timor Timur, Dili, East Timor

Salutation: Dear Lt. Col. Wenas

MILITARY COMMANDER REGION IX/UDAYANA
(covers Bali, Lombok, Nusa Tenggara and
East Timor)
Maj Gen H A Rivai
Pangdam IX/Udayana
Markas Besar KODAM IX/Udayana
Denpasar
Bali, Indonesia

Telegrams: Pangdam IX/Udayana, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia

Salutation: Dear Major General Rivai

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ali Alatas SH
Menteri Luar Negeri
Jl Medan Taman Pejambon No 6
Jakarta, Indonesia

FAXES: +6221 36 0517

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 7 August 1996.