

UA 182/01

Fear for safety

20 July 2001

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Mudal, activist, Students Solidarity with the People (SMUR)
Fazal, SMUR activist
Zamzami, SMUR activist
Amri Saldin, SMUR activist
Banta, activist, Coalition of Achenese Students for Reform (KARMA)
Misdawan, activist, Peoples Network for Human Rights (JRP HAM)
Oppie, activist, Student Solidarity against Violence (SMAK)

Eleven human rights activists are in police custody in Aceh. They have been subjected to ill-treatment and there is continued concern for their safety.

On 20 July the Police Mobile Brigade (Brimob) raided the offices of the Banda Aceh branch of the *Lembaga Bantuan Hukum* (LBH), Legal Aid Foundation, where a meeting was taking place to discuss arrangements for a week-long campaign against militarism, which began on 16 July. Around 27 Brimob officers entered the offices. One of them fired a shot into the air. Those attending the meeting were forced to squat on the floor and take off their shirts. A police officer beat one of them. They were taken out to the yard, where they were forced to lie face down on the ground. After around one hour, 15 committee members and activists were taken to Aceh Besar District Police Headquarters (Polres Aceh Besar). Four of them have since been released. The others remain in custody. It is unclear whether they have had access to a lawyer.

During the raid documents, photographs, a computer and other equipment was confiscated.

LBH is among the oldest and most prominent human rights organizations in Indonesia. In Banda Aceh it shares an office with another human rights group, the *Komisi untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Tindak Kekerasan* (Kontras), Commission for Disappearances and the Victims of Violence. A member of Kontras from Banda Aceh, who had been detained with one other person on 17 July, was released on 18 July. He was severely tortured while in police custody.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Serious human rights violations, including unlawful killings, torture and arbitrary arrests, are continuing in Aceh during military and police operations against the armed opposition group, the *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*, (GAM) Free Aceh Movement. New military operations began in May 2001, and hundreds of extra troops have been sent to the province. Local human rights groups estimate that over 1,000 people - many of them civilians - have been killed in the conflict so far this year. Anyone detained by the police or military in Aceh is at grave risk of torture or other human rights violations.

The level of threats and intimidation directed against human rights defenders in Aceh has intensified in recent months. Human rights defenders have been the victim of extrajudicial executions, arbitrary detention and torture. Others have been accused of criminal offences which are believed to be primarily

intended to intimidate them and to discourage them from continuing their human rights work. An increasing number of activists have had to leave the province for their own safety.

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

- urging the authorities to guarantee that the 11 human rights activists in detention will not be tortured or subjected to other human rights violations;
- calling on the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release them;
- urging the authorities to launch an immediate, independent investigation into the arbitrary arrest of the activists, and into allegations that they were ill-treated on arrest.

APPEALS TO:

CHIEF OF POLICE FOR ACEH
Senior Commissioner Ramli Darwis
Kapolda Aceh
Cut Meutia No.3
Banda Aceh
Aceh
Indonesia

Telegram: Senior Commissioner Ramli Darwis, Cut Meutia No.3, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

Fax: + 62 651 26689 / 22488 / 46864

Salutation: Dear Senior Commissioner

NATIONAL POLICE CHIEF
Kapolri
Markas Besar Kepolisian RI
Jl. Trunojoyo 3
Kebayoran Baru
Jakarta Selatan
Indonesia

Telegrams: National Police Chief, Jl. Trunojoyo 3, Jakarta Selatan, Indonesia

Fax: + 62 21 7201402

Salutation: Dear Sir

COPIES TO:

Coordinating Minister for Politics and Security
Lt.Gen. Agum Gumelar
Jl. Medan Merdeka Barat No.15
Jakarta Pusat 10110
Indonesia

Fax: + 62 345 1064 / 345 0918 / 344 1751

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 31 August 2001.