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## MEDIA ADVISORY

### Indonesia: Human Rights and the 1997 Parliamentary Elections

Amnesty International today sent an open letter to President Suharto calling on him to ensure that the rights of Indonesian citizens to freely express their political beliefs and to peacefully promote their interests are respected during the campaign for parliamentary elections which take place on 29 May 1997.

Already there are disturbing signs that the spirit of Indonesia's "Festival of Democracy" is being undermined by the arrests, harassment and intimidation of people who have set up independent political parties, called for an election boycott or are involved in monitoring the election process.

More than 40 people have already been taken into custody for calling for an election boycott, at least four of whom are facing criminal charges. Three others, including the outspoken former parliamentarian Sri Bintang Pamungkas, are facing charges under Indonesia's notorious Anti-subversion Law for their peaceful activities with an unofficial political party, the United Democratic Party of Indonesia. The Anti-subversion Law carries a maximum penalty of death.

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**Amnesty International has produced a media briefing pack for journalists, with background information on the Indonesian election process including campaigning regulations, the role of the military, independent election monitoring and the growing boycott movement. The pack also includes case details and a copy of the open letter to President Suharto.**

**To receive a copy of this pack, *Indonesia: No Room for Dissent -- the 1997 Parliamentary Elections -- Media Briefing* (AI Index: ASA 21/29/97), or to arrange an interview, please contact:**

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