

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 21/43/97

UA 189/97

Fear of torture

26 June 1997

EAST TIMOR Jose Antonio Belo  
Guilherme dos Santos  
Manuel

One other - name not known

David Alex

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Amnesty International fears for the safety of four men arrested after an alleged confrontation between the Indonesian Armed Forces and the East Timorese Armed Resistance, *Falintil*, in Kaibada, close to the East Timorese town of Baucau.

All four detainees are believed to be at serious risk of torture and ill-treatment, which is common in both police and military custody in East Timor. They should be granted immediate access to independent lawyers, their families and medical personnel.

The four, Jose Antonio Belo, Guilherme dos Santos, Manuel and one unnamed man, were arrested by members of the Indonesian military on the morning of 25 June 1997, together with armed resistance leader David Alex. Although some reports state that the five were taken into custody during a military confrontation, the precise circumstances of the arrests, and the details of any military confrontation which may have occurred, remain unclear. On 26 June, the military made an announcement claiming that David Alex had died as a result of wounds sustained during the confrontation (see below).

The whereabouts of the other four men is not clear. One source has claimed that Jose Antonio Belo, Manuel and the unnamed man are being held in military custody in Baucau. Sources claim that the three were not armed at the time of their arrest, although Amnesty International is unable to confirm this. It is believed that Guilherme dos Santos may have been taken to Dili.

Jose Antonio Belo was imprisoned for his peaceful activities in support of East Timorese independence in 1995 and sentenced to 18 months in prison. During his interrogation, and at times while he served his prison sentence, he was subjected to torture and ill-treatment. He was released from prison in 1996 (see UA 05/95, ASA 21/06/95, 11 January 1995 and update ASA 21/13/96, 12 February 1996).

David Alex, 44, the second-in-command of *Falintil* with responsibility for the armed resistance's operations from Baucau to Viqueque, had been accused by the military of planning recent attacks on military targets around the Baucau area. Amnesty International is concerned that the military have not yet provided full information about how David Alex died and that the information that they have provided has been inconsistent. According to one military source David Alex was shot twice in the leg during the confrontation and died on the night of 25 June as he was receiving treatment at a hospital in Dili. Another military source, however, was quoted by *Agence France Press* as saying that David Alex died in a helicopter as he was being transported from Baucau to Dili. Concern about how David Alex died has been heightened by the news that he has already been buried in Dili. It is believed that his family is currently attempting to negotiate with the military for the return of the body.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since late May, there has been an increase in attacks by *Falintil* against military and civilian targets. At least 42 people, including civilians, members of the armed forces, the police force and *Falantil*, have been killed during the attacks.

Amnesty International condemns the attacks on civilians by *Falantil* and calls on it to abide by international humanitarian standards. The organization is also concerned that retaliation by the Indonesian security forces may result in further human rights violations, in particular that arrests will be conducted outside of Indonesia's domestic procedures and international obligations. There are now believed to be at least 71 people in custody in Dili. It is not known precisely how many others remain in custody in other areas of the territory.

Torture or ill-treatment of political detainees in East Timor in both police or military custody is routine. The risk is particularly high during interrogation when detainees are frequently denied access to legal counsel and to their families. In addition, restrictions are placed by the Indonesian authorities on access to East Timor for independent human rights monitors.

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

- seeking assurances that none of the four detainees will be subjected to ill-treatment or torture and that they will be given immediate and continuing access to medical care, to members of their families and to independent legal advisors;
- urging the authorities to clarify the whereabouts of all four detainees and to provide information on the identity of the unnamed individual;
- urging the authorities to provide information on the precise circumstances surrounding the arrest of the four men, the precise charges against them and the circumstances surrounding the death of David Alex.

**APPEALS TO:**

Commander Resort Military Command (KOREM)  
164/Wiradharma (covers East Timor)  
Col. Slamant Sidabutar  
Markas KOREM 164/Wiradharma  
Dili  
East Timor (Indonesia)  
**Telegrams: Col Sidabutar, Markas KOREM, Dili, East Timor**  
**Salutation: Dear Col Slamant Sidabutar**

Commander of Special Forces Command  
Major General Prabowo  
Panglima Kopassus  
Markas Besar ABRI  
Cilangkap  
Jakarta Timur  
Indonesia  
**Telegrams: Panglima Kopassus, Markas Besar ABRI, Jakarta, Indonesia**  
**Salutations: Dear Major General Prabowa**

**COPIES TO:**

National Commission on Human Rights

Komisi Nasional Hak Asazi Manusia (Komnas HAM)  
Alex Refialy SH  
Jalan Dr Antonio de Carvelho  
Dili, East Timor  
(Indonesia)

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 6 August 1997.