

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 21/71/96

UA 243/96 Possible "Disappearance" / Fear for safety

23 October 1996

EAST TIMOR Ildefonso de Deus dos Santos, aged 17, student

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of East Timorese student Ildefonso de Deus Dos Santos, having just received the disturbing news that he has not been seen since 14 July 1996, when he was reportedly detained by unidentified men.

At around 11pm on 14 July, Ildefonso De Deus Santos was seen being detained by a number of men wearing the clothing of gangs called *Ninjas*, in Gleno, Ermera, East Timor. *Ninjas*, who are believed to act with the connivance of the authorities, have been involved in attacks on individuals suspected of pro-independence activities, in several towns throughout East Timor since 1995. Ildefonso de Deus Santos' seizure came after soldiers had conducted house-to-house searches in Gleno for individuals allegedly responsible for the burning of the town's market earlier that evening. Eye-witnesses reported that Ildefonso de Deus Santos was stopped as he came out of his house and was taken away, apparently wounded, in a military jeep and that blood was found on the road where the jeep had been parked.

Fifteen other youths were also arrested by the military on the same night. Amnesty International is not aware if all 15 have subsequently been released, but at least two were reportedly tortured in custody.

The day after Ildefonso De Deus Santos was seized, a local government official raised his case with the Military Commander for Ermera, but was told that there was no warrant for the arrest of Ildefonso. Amnesty International has just been informed that Ildefonso De Deus Santos remains missing and that there is no information as to his whereabouts or whether he remains in custody.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Arbitrary detention, torture, "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions of individuals suspected of involvement with the resistance continue in East Timor. The risk of human rights violations is increased by restrictions placed by the Indonesian authorities on access to East Timor for independent human rights monitors and foreign journalists. In January 1995, five East Timorese men "disappeared" after being arrested in Dili. In February 1995, East Timor's Police Chief announced an inquiry into the fate of the five, but Amnesty International is not aware of any progress made by the inquiry. Individuals taken into custody are frequently denied access to independent lawyers, their families and medical assistance placing them at risk of torture and possible "disappearance".

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

- asking for clarification of Ildefonso De Deus Santos's whereabouts and the reason for his arrest and, if he is still detained, seeking assurances that he is not being subjected to any torture or ill-treatment and asking for details of any specific charges against him;
- urging that if he is no longer in custody, the authorities hold an immediate inquiry into the circumstances surrounding his arrest and his current whereabouts;

- urging that the authorities take measures to ensure that any arrests are carried out only by the police force, in accordance with Indonesian domestic law;
- urging that families are immediately informed of a detainee's whereabouts and that detainees have prompt access to independent legal counsel.

APPEALS TO:

Military Commander Region IX/Udayana
(covers Bali, Lombok, Nusa Tenggara and
East Timor)
Maj Gen Benyamin L.S. Mamuaya
Pangdam IX/Udayana
Markas Besar KODAM IX/Udayana
Denpasar
Bali
Indonesia

Telegrams: Pangdam IX, Udayana, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia
Salutation: Dear Major Gen. Mamuaya

Commander Resort Military Command (Korem) 164/Wiradharma
(covers East Timor)
Col. Mahidin Simbolon
Markas KOREM 164/Wiradharma
Dili
East Timor
(Indonesia)

Faxes: +62 390 21 624
Telegrams: Korem 164/Wiradharma, Dili, East Timor, Indonesia
Salutation: Dear Col. Mahidin Simbolon

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ali Alatas S.H.
Menteri Luar Negeri
Jl. Medan Taman Pejambon No.6
Jakarta
Indonesia

Faxes: +62 21360 517/380 5511/345 7782/360 541

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 15 December 1996.