

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 21/90/99

This is a limited UA. Please restrict appeals to 25 per section.

UA 204/99

Fear for

INDONESIA Samsul Ibrahim, 30

Abdul Samad, 50

A Rani M Jalil, 25

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of the three men named above who are being held incommunicado in military custody in the province of Aceh, northern Sumatra. They are at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

Samsul Ibrahim, Abdul Samad and A Rani M Jalil are all residents of Matang Puntong village, Seunuddon Sub-district, North Aceh. They were detained on 15 July 1999 by the PPRM (*Petugas Penindak Rusuh Massa*), a riot-control police unit, during a security check by the PPRM in Seunuddon Sub-district.

Media reports the following day quoted the security forces as saying that the three men were arrested on suspicion of involvement in the murder of two policemen in Aceh. The security forces have blamed the murder on the armed opposition movement, *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (GAM), Free Aceh Movement.

The three men are believed to have been detained first at the Sub-district Military Headquarters (Koramil) in Baktiya Sub-district. They are then thought to have been removed from there and ultimately detained at the North Aceh District Police Headquarters (Mapolres) in the town of Lhokseumawe. The men allegedly remain in custody at Mapolres in Lhokseumawe and there are concerns that they have not yet had access to independent legal counsel.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since late 1998, serious human rights violations in Aceh have increased in the course of TNI counter-insurgency operations against the armed opposition group, GAM. Dozens of people have been arrested in recent months on suspicion of links to GAM. Suspects detained by the TNI and the PPRM are often denied access to lawyers of their choice, and are at risk of torture or ill-treatment. Many of those taken into custody have "disappeared" or have been unlawfully killed by the security forces.

Since late 1998 large numbers of people have been unlawfully killed by the security forces in Aceh. On 23 July, at least 45 people and possibly as many as 70 were killed by the TNI during counter-insurgency operations in Beutong Sub-district, West Aceh. The TNI claimed that those killed were members of GAM, but eyewitnesses and human rights groups deny this and claim that the people who died were unarmed and that they were executed by the TNI.

Human rights workers claim that at least four civilians were killed when the PPRM attacked a camp site in Bintang Kala village, Nisam Sub-district, North Aceh, on 7 August. The PPRM, who were reportedly searching the area for GAM members, came across a camp of civilians who were in the area searching for wood and suspected that they were members of GAM. Three others reportedly taken into PPRM custody were later released, apparently bearing marks of ill-treatment.

GAM have also been accused of committing human rights abuses.

On 30 July 1999, President Habibie announced that he had established an Independent Investigation Commission on Violence in Aceh (*Komisi Independen Pengusutan Tindak Kekerasan di Aceh*). The Commission is expected to conduct investigations into human rights violations that have occurred since August 1998, and to submit a report within six months, including recommendations on legal measures, rehabilitation and reconciliation. The commission is apparently made up of 27 people, including members of Indonesia's National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academics and government representatives.

However, the commission has not been given a mandate to investigate human rights violations which occurred during TNI counter-insurgency operations between 1989 and 1998. Amnesty International believes that the commission can only be effective if it is given unrestricted access to all areas of Aceh to conduct full and independent investigations into all human rights violations including those since 1989, if its findings are made public, and if its report leads to the prosecution of those found responsible.

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

- urging the authorities to immediately establish and make public the whereabouts of Samsul Ibrahim, Abdul Samad and A Rani M Jamil and to provide guarantees for their safety;
- urging the authorities to ensure that, if they are found to be in custody, they have regular access to human rights lawyers, their families and to medical professionals, and that they be immediately released if not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

APPEALS TO:

Coordinating Minister for Political/Security Affairs

Jend. Purn. Feisal Tanjung

Menteri Koordinator Bidang Politik dan Keamanan

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Salutation:Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

President

President Jusuf Habibie

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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 22 September 1999.