

UA 205/99

Fear for**In police custody:****Emiliano da Silva Guterres, 24****Missing:****Armindo Martins****Afonso da Silva Guterres****Augusto da Cruz****Egas Moniz****Jacinto****Julia Aquino (f)****Amelia de Jesus (F)****EAST TIMOR**

Amnesty International fears for the safety of eight students who are either missing or detained. Their "disappearance" follows two separate attacks by an armed pro-Indonesian militia group on the office of the Student Solidarity Council of East Timor (*Dewan Solidaritas Mahasiswa Timor Timur*, DSMTT), in the town of Viqueque, Viqueque District, East Timor.

The DSMTT is a group of East Timorese students studying in Dili, with a membership from all districts of East Timor. The first attack on its Viqueque office by the local militia group, known as 59/75 Juniors, took place at around 8 pm on 10 August. The DSMTT claim that the police took no action, even though their office is only 300 metres from a police station.

During the attack the militia reportedly destroyed communication equipment in the office and abducted two students, Josefina Baptista, 25, [f] and Emiliano da Silva Guterres, 24. They were reportedly taken to a militia post outside Viqueque town. Josefina Baptista has subsequently been released, but Emiliano da Silva Guterres, who is believed to have been badly beaten while in militia custody, has been handed over to the police in Viqueque. The reason for his continued detention is unclear. Amnesty International is concerned that he is at risk of ill-treatment in police custody.

Five other students are missing following this first attack. Their names are Armindo Martins, Afonso da Silva Guterres, Augusto da Cruz, Egas Moniz and Jacinto. Amnesty International has not been able to confirm whether the students are in the custody of the militia group or the Indonesian security forces. It is possible that they have fled into hiding for fear of further attack by the militias. Concern for their safety is heightened by the fact that students in East Timor, in particular members of the DSMTT, have been a particular target of human rights violations by the militia groups and the Indonesian National Army (TNI) in recent months.

A second attack by the militia occurred around midday on 11 August, during which the militia are reported to have opened fire on the DSMTT office. Students in Viqueque claim that two students were killed, while church sources say that three were killed. Amnesty International is currently investigating these reports. Five other people were reportedly injured.

Two female students are believed to be missing since this attack. They are Julia Aquino and Amelia de Jesus from the women's section of the DSMTT, the East Timor Female Youth Group (*Grupo Feto Foin Sae Timor Lorosae*, GFFTL). It

is possible that the students have fled into hiding. Fears for their safety remain.

Tensions between the militia group in Viqueque and the DSMTT had been high since the DSMTT officially inaugurated its Viqueque branch office this week. There are believed to be some 700 students currently in Viqueque. The two attacks on the DSMTT office heighten fears for the safety of all students who face threats, intimidation or attack by militia groups.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Supporters of independence for East Timor remain at risk of arbitrary arrest, "disappearance" or unlawful killing, by militias that support continued integration with Indonesia, and by the TNI. Students have traditionally played a prominent role in the independence movement in East Timor. They have frequently been at the forefront of pro-independence demonstrations and many have been members of underground political groups or groups providing support for the armed opposition group, Falintil. These activities have led students in general to be perceived as supporters of independence by the authorities, and by armed militia. Students have been victims of human rights violations, including arbitrary detention, imprisonment as prisoners of conscience, torture and ill-treatment, "disappearance" and extrajudicial executions.

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

- urging the authorities to clarify and make public the whereabouts of the seven missing students; if found to be in custody ensure that they have access to independent legal counsel, their families and to medical assistance;
- urging the authorities to ensure that Emiliano da Silva Guterres has immediate, regular and on-going access to independent legal counsel and that there are guarantees provided for his safety in custody and that he be immediately and unconditionally released if he is not to be charged with a recognisably criminal offence;
- urging the authorities to ensure there is a full and impartial investigation into the attacks on the DSMTT office and the allegations that some students have been killed, and that those believed responsible are promptly brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Chief of Police for East Timor

Col. GM Timbul Silaen

Kapolda Timor Timur

Dili

East Timor

Indonesia

Faxes: + 62 390 321 544 / 321 690

Salutation: Dear Sir

COPIES TO:

CHIEF OF NATIONAL POLICE

Gen. Roesmanhadi

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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.