

PUBLIC

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Fear for

EAST TIMOR Marcelino Guterres

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Marcelino Guterres, who was arrested by members of the Indonesian National Army (TNI) and an armed militia group *Besi Merah Putih* (BMP red and white iron) on 12 August 1999.

Marcelino Guterres was arrested in Darulete, Liquisa District. He was taken into custody because he was suspected of supporting the pro-independence armed opposition group, the East Timorese National Liberation Army (*Forças Armadas de Libertacao Nacional de Timor*, Falintil). He has not been seen since his arrest.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over 430,000 people in East Timor have registered to vote in a UN-organized ballot to be held on 30 August 1999, which will determine the future status of the territory.

Despite assurances from the Indonesian Government that it would provide an environment for the "popular consultation" process, free from intimidation and other forms of violence, the security situation in East Timor remains serious. Supporters of independence are at risk of arbitrary arrest, "disappearance" or unlawful killing by militias who support continued integration with Indonesia, and by the TNI.

In the days prior to, and during the two week campaign period (14 - 27 August 1999), the situation has deteriorated dramatically. Militia activity has increased in several districts, in particular in Bobonaro, Covalima, Ainaro, Liquica and Ermera, resulting in a number of deaths and causing thousands of people to flee their homes and places of registration. In addition, staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission to East Timor (UNAMET) have also been the target of militia threats and violence.

On 26 August, pro-integration militias held a show of force on the streets of Dili, which has resulted in clashes between independence and integration supporters. At least three people are reported to have been killed, including one member of the military shot by another soldier, and two civilians possibly shot by members of the militia or the military. Two others are reported to have been stabbed. Their condition is not known. Operations by the militia have continued throughout the day.

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

- urging the authorities to immediately establish the whereabouts of Marcelino Guterres;
- if found to be in custody, urging the authorities to ensure that he has immediate and on-going access to independent legal counsel and to his family, that he is not at risk of torture or ill-treatment, and that he is immediately and unconditionally released if he is not to be charged with a recognisably criminal offence.

APPEALS TO:

COMMANDER RESORT MILITARY COMMAND (KOREM) 164/WIRADHARMA (covers East Timor)
Colonel Muhamad Noer Muis
Markas KOREM 164/Wiradharma

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Dili
East Timor
Indonesia
Fax/Tel: +62 390 321 624
Salutation: Dear Colonel Muis

COPIES TO:

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ali Alatas S.H.
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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 7 October 1999.