

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 28/10/96

28 June 1996

Further information on UA 127/96 (ASA 28/08/96, 22 May 1996) - Legal Concern / Possible Prolonged Detention without trial / Possible Prisoners of Conscience

MALAYSIA Ibrahim Mohamad  
Sabri Abdul Rani  
Nasiruddin Ali  
Fakhruddin Al-Rozi Abdullah

New names:           Pahrol bin Mohd Juoi  
                          Khatijah Aam (f)  
                          Nizammudin Ashaari  
                          Jaafar Ahmad  
                          Hashim Ahmad  
                          Haji Mohd Salim Omar  
                          Hashim Jaafar  
                          Hashim Muhammad  
                          Azura Mohd Yusof (f)  
                          Fakhrurrazi Ashaari  
                          Tengku Noriah Binti Tengku Abdullah (f)  
                          Dr Mandur bin Mohd Nur  
                          Mohammad Abu Bakar  
                          Sheikh Abdul Rahim

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A further 14 former members of the banned *Al Arqam* Islamic sect have been detained between 4 and 16 June, bringing to 18 the total number held without charge or trial under the Internal Security Act (ISA). The group, including three women, one of whom was arrested with her six-month-old baby, have all been detained in connection with alleged attempts to revive the sect. Two of the women are wives of Ashaari Muhammad, the former leader of the sect. Other members of Ashaari Muhammad's family are also said to be included in the group.

Ashaari Muhammad himself is still living under a restricted residence order after being detained under the ISA during the 1994 crackdown on the *Al Arqam*. He recently stated publicly that he has no intention of reviving the sect.

A number of those who have been arrested were also held under the ISA in 1994 and were subsequently placed under restricted residence orders.

The Malaysian authorities have recently directed all state religious authorities to monitor the activities of all former *Al Arqam* members in the country. The authorities have also announced that about 500 former *Al Arqam* leaders would be required to attend "rehabilitation courses" again despite having already done so following the 1994 ban. According to press reports, the second phase of this "rehabilitation programme" will "test the sincerity" of the movement's members and try to convince them to return to the true *akidah* (faith).

Amnesty International remains concerned that the detainees are being held for the peaceful expression of their religious beliefs. The organization calls on the Malaysian Government either to charge them with a recognizable criminal offence or to release them immediately and unconditionally.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, Bahasa Malaysia or in your own language:**

- expressing concern at the detention without charge or trial of 18 former members of *Al Arqam*;
- urging that the group be charged with a recognizable criminal offence or immediately and unconditionally released;
- urging the government to allow all former *Al Arqam* members their freedom of religion and freedom of expression as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- calling for a review of the Internal Security Act so that the rights of the individual and the rights of the community can be balanced through courts of law and not through Executive action.

**APPEALS TO:**

Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs

Dato' Seri Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad

Prime Minister's Department

Jalan Dato' Onn

50502 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**Faxes: +603 298 4172**

**Telegrams: Prime Minister Mahathir, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**

**Salutation: Dear Prime Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

Deputy Minister of Home Affairs

Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayub

Jalan Dato' Onn

50502 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**Faxes: + 60 3 230 1051**

and to diplomatic representatives of Malaysia accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 17 August 1996.