

PUBLIC

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Fear of ill-treatment, prisoners of
Conscience/Possible Prisoner of Conscience

16 November 1998

MALAYSIALokman Noor bin Haji Adam, member of the United Malay National Organization (UMNO), Johore division
Mohamad Khair Mohamad Noor, 38, UMNO member
Abdullah Rashid bin Ahmad, UMNO member

Amnesty International believes that the above-named men, who are all currently held in incommunicado detention under the Internal Security Act (ISA), could be at risk of ill-treatment. Their whereabouts remain unknown.

Lokman Noor bin Haji Adam and Mohamad Khair Mohamad Noor were reportedly detained on 24 October 1998 in connection with making recordings of speeches by Anwar Ibrahim, the former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia. Amnesty International believes that they are prisoners of conscience, arrested for their peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of association and expression. Abdullah Rashid bin Ahmad was reportedly arrested on 25 October 1998 in connection with ongoing demonstrations in the country. Amnesty International is concerned that he may have been arrested for his exercise of the right to freedom of assembly.

Amnesty International has also recently learnt of the arrest under the ISA on 26 October of Sharifuddin bin Budin, a member of UMNO, previously connected to the information office of ABIM (a Muslim youth organization), and of his subsequent release on 13 November 1998.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since September 1998 at least 21 people have been detained under the Internal Security Act in Malaysia in connection with the arrest of Anwar Ibrahim. For further information please refer to AI document *Malaysia: The arrest of Anwar Ibrahim and his political associates - an update* (AI Index ASA 28/39/98, 9 November 1998), Urgent Actions 271/98 and 256/98 and updates.

Detainees recently held under the ISA are known to have been held incommunicado, to have been beaten and placed in conditions of aggravated mental distress, induced by sleep deprivation and other forms of harassment. Anwar Ibrahim was allegedly beaten while detained under the ISA in September 1998. Other individuals arrested under the ISA in September 1998, including Dr. Munawar Anees, Anwar Ibrahim's speech-writer, have reported ill-treatment during their detention, as well as inadequate access to medical treatment.

Amnesty International is concerned about the continued use of the ISA to silence freedom of expression in Malaysia. The organization is also concerned that the law fails to meet internationally recognised standards of detention and fair trial. Despite repeated calls from domestic human rights groups for its repeal, the government continues to assert that the ISA is necessary in order to maintain stability. Under the ISA, individuals considered to be acting "in a manner prejudicial to the security of Malaysia" may be detained without charge for up to 60 days. The Minister of Home Affairs may then authorize, in writing, further indefinite detention without judicial review or the filing of formal charges for periods of up to 2 years. Those released before the end of their detention period may be subject to restrictions limiting free association, expression and travel.

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

- expressing concern at the detention under the Internal Security Act (ISA) of Lokman Noor bin Haji Adam and Mohamad Khair Mohamad Noor, as prisoners of conscience detained solely for their non-violent political activities and calling for their immediate and unconditional release;
- expressing concern at the detention of Abdullah Rashid bin Ahmad under the ISA, and calling for him either to be charged with a recognizable criminal offence or released immediately;
- expressing concern at reports that the group has been held in incommunicado detention, and urging that, pending their release, they be granted immediate access to family members, independent lawyers and medical personnel;
- urging that they are not subjected to ill-treatment in detention;
- reminding the government of Malaysia of its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 19: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression".

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs
Dato' Seri Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad
Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs
Jalan Dato' Onn
50502 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Telegrams: Prime Minister, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Faxes:+ 60 3 238 3784

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

COPIES TO:

Deputy Minister of Home Affairs
Dato' Tajol Rosli Ghazali
Deputy Minister of Home Affairs
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 28 December 1998.

" "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression" "
Article 19, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Visit the Amnesty International UDHR campaign website on <http://www.amnesty.excite.com>