

7 December 1998

Further information on UA 357/97 (ASA 28/13/97, 13 November 1997) and follow-ups (ASA 28/15/97, 24 December 1997; ASA 28/03/98, 12 February 1998 ASA 28/04/98, 3 March 1998, ASA 28/38/98, 4 November 1998) - Legal Concern / Health Concern / Prolonged Detention without Trial / Prisoners of Conscience

MALAYSIA

Professor Lutpi Ibrahim, aged 48, professor in Islamic studies at the University of Malaysia (released)
Syed Sulaiman bin Syed Hassan, aged 35 (released)
Zainal Adam, aged 46 (released)
Said Muda, aged 43 (released)
Ustaz Abdul Hassan, aged 50 (released)

Che Kamarulzaman Ismail, aged 44
Fadzullah Shuib, aged 40, lecturer at Mara Institute of Technology

Five of the people named above, arrested in November 1997 for their Shi'a beliefs, have been released from detention under the Internal Security Act. Two were reported released in late October 1998 and three in late November or early December. Dr. Lutpi Ibrahim, Abdul Hassan and Said Muda have been released under conditions restricting their freedom of association, expression and movement, which are expected to be in force until November 1999. According to official reports, members of the group underwent 'Islamic faith rehabilitation courses...aimed at making self-evaluation as a Malaysian Muslim citizen holding to the Sunni sect teachings' while in detention.

Che Kamarulzaman Ismail and Fadzullah Shuib remain in detention. According to official reports, they are being held on account of their 'religious extremism.' Che Kamarulzaman Ismail is reported to have been on hunger strike in protest at his continued detention without trial. Amnesty International considers both men prisoners of conscience.

All seven were arrested in November 1997 under the Internal Security Act (ISA) for allegedly spreading the teachings of the Shi'a sect of Islam, which the authorities consider 'prejudicial to national security and Muslim unity.'

Participants may send telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or in your own language:

- welcoming the release from detention of Ustaz Abdul Hassan, Said Muda, Syed Sulaiman bin Syed Hassan, Professor Lutpi Ibrahim and Zainal Adam but expressing concern that Dr. Lutpi Ibrahim, Abdul Hassan and Said Muda were released conditionally under orders restricting their right to freedom of expression and association;
- urging that restriction orders on Dr. Lutpi Ibrahim, Abdul Hassan and Said Muda are lifted;
- expressing concern that Che Kamarulzaman Ismail and Fadzullah Shuib are being detained on account of peacefully held religious beliefs, and calling for their immediate and unconditional release from detention;
- urging that, pending their release from detention, Che Kamarulzaman Ismail and Fadzullah Shuib are provided with full access to lawyers, medical care and relatives, and are not ill-treated in detention;
- reminding the government of Malaysia of its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 18: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.'

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
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

Minister in Prime Minister's Department with responsibility for legal affairs
Dato' Abang Abu Bakar Mustapha
Law Division
Prime Minister's Department
Jalan Dato' Onn
57572 Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia
Faxes: +60 3 293 5734

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 18 January 1999

***"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought,
conscience and religion."***

Article 18, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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