

18 August 2008

UA 230/08

Torture

THAILAND

Ismael Tae (m), aged 22]
Amisi Manak (m), aged 23]
Ruslan Tuyong (m), aged 23] University students
Waerosalee Latae (m), aged 23]
Romlee Latae (m), aged 21]

The five Muslim university students named above were detained on the morning of 15 August by a military unit that had previously tortured two of them. The group, from the Rajabhat University in the southern province of Yala, are in grave danger of torture.

Special Task Force 11 detained the students in their university dormitories. The following day, family and friends visited them at the military unit's base, and found that they had not been tortured. On 18 August the five students were transferred to the Yala Police Academy.

The five are members of a student organization, the Student Federation of Yala, that organizes human rights education and training activities in Yala Province. They are in particular danger of being tortured to make them confess to involvement in the insurgency that has been underway in southern Thailand since 2004, and which has pitted Muslim insurgents against the pre-dominantly Buddhist security forces and civilians.

Ismael Tae and Amisi Manak were detained on 27 January 2008 by Special Task Force 11, two days after the Student Federation of Yala organized a human rights education session in a village in Yala Province. They were tortured in an effort to make them confess to being involved in the southern insurgency, first by Special Task Force 11 and then by soldiers at a camp in neighbouring Pattani Province. The security forces released them on 4 February, although the students had not confessed to anything.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In January 2004, Muslim insurgents in the three predominantly Muslim southern Thai provinces of Pattani, Narathiwat, and Yala renewed a decades-old armed conflict against the predominantly Buddhist security forces and Buddhist civilians. The insurgents have articulated a long list of grievances and demands, including religious discrimination against Muslims, a lack of economic development in the south, a poor education system, and regional autonomy. A series of Thai governments have responded primarily with force, and the incidence of torture by the security forces has risen in the past year.

Thailand signed the UN Convention Against Torture, which expressly prohibits the use of torture, in 2007.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or own language or your own language:

- expressing concern that the five students (naming them) were detained by Special Task Force 11 on 15 August and are at risk of torture;
- reminding the authorities that they have signed the UN Convention Against Torture, which obliges them not to allow torture in any circumstances.
- urging the authorities to either charge the detainees with recognizably criminal offences or release them.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister
Samak Sundaravej

The Secretariat of the Prime Minister, Office of the Prime Minister
Government House
Pitsanulok Road
Dusit, Bangkok 10300
Thailand

Fax: +66 2 280 0858
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Minister of Justice

Sompong Amornwiwat
Office of the Minister
Ministry of Justice
Chaeng Wattana Road
Pak Kred, Nonthaburi 11120
Thailand

Fax: +66 2 502 6734
Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister of Interior

Pol. Gen. Kowit Wattana
Minister of Interior
Office of the Secretary to the Minister
Ministry of Interior
Assadang Road
Pra Nakorn, Bangkok 10200
Thailand

Fax: +66 2 226 4371
Salutation: Dear Minister

Governor of Yala Province

Teera Mindrasak
Yala Provincial Hall, Office of Governor
Sookka Yang Road
Tumbon Sateang, Amphur Mueng
Yala 95000
Thailand

Fax: +66 73 212321
Salutation: Dear Governor

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Thailand accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 29 September 2008.