

---

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 254/94

---

TO: PRESS OFFICERS  
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICE  
DATE: 8 NOVEMBER 1994

AI INDEX: NWS 11/254/94  
DISTR: SC/PO  
NO OF WORDS: 609

## INTERNAL

NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - **INDONESIA**

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

### \*\*Egypt - 10 November\*\*

We have just discovered that the President of Egypt will be in London early next week for meetings with the UK Government. AI Egypt's AGM (27/28 October) was declared illegal by the Egyptian Government and we're using this media opportunity for an international news release. It is now being written and will be sent out to you tomorrow morning.

Peru/Committee against Torture - 9 November - SEE NEWS SERVICE 243/94

Nigeria - 11 November - SEE NEWS SERVICE 252/94

### \*\*Pakistan - 24/25/28 November\*\*

The researcher on Pakistan is now on mission in Pakistan. Immediately she returns (date not finalized) we plan to put out an international news release focusing purely on ill-treatment of women and rape in custody. We will put her forward for interviews with the media with the "fresh from the field" approach.

Iraq - 29 November - SEE NEWS SERVICE 212/94

## TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

News Service 254/94

AI INDEX: ASA 21/WU 22/94

8 NOVEMBER 1994

INDONESIA: INDEPENDENT UNION LEADER RECEIVES THREE YEAR PRISON SENTENCE

On Monday the leader of the independent trade union, the Indonesian Prosperous Workers' Union (SBSI), Muchtar Pakpahan, was found guilty of "incitement" and sentenced to three years in jail. Pakpahan has indicated he will appeal the decision.

The verdict and sentence come in the week that Indonesia hosts the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meetings in Jakarta and Bogor -- where Amnesty International has urged participating governments to consider the issue of human rights in meetings with the Indonesian Government.

The charges against Pakpahan and 10 other labour leaders and activists are linked to widespread labour unrest in Medan in April this year which included violent incidents. Amnesty International believes however that the charges were intended to intimidate activists and labour organisations from carrying out their peaceful activities in support of labour rights -- activities which have increased in recent years. The prosecution did not allege that Pakpahan had urged others to commit acts of violence. Amnesty International considers Muchtar Pakpahan to be a prisoner of conscience. The 10 others charged with "incitement" may also be prisoners of conscience, held solely for non-violent activities.

Pakpahan was tried under Articles 160 and 161 of the Indonesian Criminal Code. Article 160 prescribes a maximum of six years' imprisonment for inciting others to disobey a government order or to break the law, and Article 161 prescribes a maximum of four years in jail for distributing written materials which do the same. Of the 10 others, six have already received sentences ranging from five to 15 months in jail.

Amnesty International is also concerned at the way in which Pakpahan's trial was conducted. Defence lawyers were not provided with a copy of his interrogation deposition, as required under the Indonesian Code of Criminal Procedure, there were restrictions on prison visits while he was awaiting trial and the defence were given limited time to prepare for the case. After being refused permission to bring expert witnesses before the court, Pakpahan's lawyers walked out of the trial.

There has already been considerable international criticism of the sentence, including from the USA Government and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). SBSI officials have stated that the sentence "was engineered to break down the SBSI". The Indonesian Government has defended the decision stating that Pakpahan and the other labour leaders on trial were

"criminals who had disrupted stability and triggered a haemorrhaging of foreign investment". (Reuters 7.11.94).

For further details of the current labour trials and other human rights violations in the run-up to APEC, please refer to Indonesia: "Operation Cleansing": Human Rights and APEC, AI Index: ASA 21/50/94, November 1994.