

Amnesty International

Oral statement on the outcome on Indonesia under the Universal Periodic Review

9 June 2008

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Mr. President,

Amnesty International is deeply concerned about serious violations against human rights defenders in Indonesia and welcomes the call on the government, during the review, “to support and protect” their work.

Human rights defenders in the province of Papua operate in a climate of fear and their activities are restricted by the heavy presence of security personnel. In June 2007, security forces arrested more than 20 people in Ambon, Maluku province. The incident occurred when dancers performing a traditional dance in front of President Yudhoyono, raised the flag of an independent Maluku. The dancers were subsequently arrested and allegedly beaten and threatened by the police. Most of them were charged with ‘rebellion’ under the Criminal Code. On 4 April 2008, one of the protesters was sentenced to life imprisonment. If it is confirmed the dancers did not use or advocate violence, Amnesty International will consider them prisoners of conscience.

Amnesty International calls the government to guarantee the rights to freedom of expression and assembly in Papua and Maluku provinces, and to ensure that the police and military are aware of the legitimate role of human rights defenders and their responsibility to protect them.

Mr. President,

Despite the creation in 2000 of a human rights court to deal with gross human rights violations, including crimes against humanity, the government has consistently failed to bring to justice those responsible for such violations. As recommended during the review, the government must ensure that full and independent investigations are carried out into all reports of extrajudicial executions, torture and other ill-treatment, excessive use of force during demonstrations, and harassment of human rights defenders; that those responsible are brought to justice; and that the victims receive effective reparations.

Amnesty International welcomes the endorsement by Indonesia of recommendations to finalise the draft criminal code. Amnesty International believes that the absence of effective legal safeguards against torture is one of the main weaknesses in the current system.

Thank you Mr. President.

MORE INFORMATION

- See a representative from Amnesty International deliver this statement at the Human Rights Council. Watch the video on:
<rtsp://webcast.un.org/ondemand/conferences/unhrc/eighth/hrc080610am1-eng.rm?start=00:15:46&end=00:17:49>
(UN webcast - www.un.org)
- This oral statement is based on a written statement prepared by Amnesty International to the 8th session of the Human Rights Council. See the statement at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA21/007/2008/en>