

UA 133/96

Fear of Ill-Treatment

31 May 1996

INDONESIA269 Vietnamese asylum-seekers

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Amnesty International fears that 269 Vietnamese asylum-seekers, detained by the Indonesian authorities in the state prison in Tanjung Pinang, on the island of Bintan, are at risk of ill-treatment. The 269 people had their asylum claims considered and rejected and are due to be repatriated to Viet Nam within the next two months. According to reports, the Indonesian military authorities have isolated the 269 people from the main group of more than 4,000 Vietnamese, because they have actively opposed the repatriation process. The isolation of the 269 asylum-seekers places them at greater risk of ill-treatment.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Members of the security forces in Indonesia, both the police and the army, frequently resort to excessive force and ill-treatment in dealing with protestors, asylum-seekers and other individuals in detention. In April 1996, military officers were filmed beating and kicking East Timorese asylum-seekers who had attempted to flee Indonesia via the German Embassy in Jakarta. Also in April, student riots in Ujung Pandang, Sulawesi, resulted in the deaths of up to six students following military intervention on several university campuses. Local human rights groups claim that the security forces used excessive force in handling the riots. Labour and land demonstrations are frequently broken up with the use of force including beating with sticks and kicking. Individuals in detention are at greater risk, particularly those without access to independent lawyers.

Thousands of people left Viet Nam during the late 1970s and 1980s. Many of these people have since been resettled in Western countries. However, the numbers of people who left, and concerns that people were not refugees but economic migrants led an international agreement in 1989, known as the Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA), to deal with the problem of migration from Viet Nam and Laos. Under the terms of the CPA, asylum-seekers were screened to establish whether or not they were refugees fleeing persecution. Those found to be refugees were resettled in third countries; those "screened-out" would have to return to Viet Nam or Laos, under a voluntary repatriation scheme. The CPA is coming to an end, with funding from the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) for refugee camps across southeast Asia ending on 30 June 1996. Efforts to speed up the repatriation process in these countries have been met with fierce resistance from the Vietnamese, who do not wish to return home. In some places, excessive force has been used by the authorities against asylum-seekers.

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

- expressing concern at the removal of 269 Vietnamese nationals from a refugee camp to a state prison where they may be at greater risk of ill-treatment;
- urging that their treatment in detention conform to international standards, and that they be allowed access to representatives of the UNHCR, medical personnel and their families;
- urging the military to exercise restraint in their handling of the Vietnamese nationals during the repatriation process.

**APPEALS TO:**

Commander of the Armed Forces (ABRI)

General Feisal Tanjung

Panglima ABRI

Markas Besar ABRI

Jl. Medan Merdeka Barat No 13

Jakarta Timur, Indonesia

**Telegrams: Panglima ABRI, Jakarta, Indonesia**

**Salutation: Dear General Tanjung**

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ali Alatas S.H.

Menteri Luar Negeri

Jl. Medan Taman Pejambon No 6

Jakarta, Indonesia

**Faxes: +62 21 345 517/ 380 5511/ 345 7782**

**Telegrams: Foreign Minister, Jakarta, Indonesia**

**Salutation: Dear Minister Alatas**

**COPIES TO:**

Secretary General, National Commission on Human Rights

Prof. Dr Baharuddin Lopa

Sekretaris Jenderal, Komisi Nasional Hak Azasi Manusia (Komnas HAM)

Jl. Pemuda No. 104

Arawamangun

Jakarta Timur, Indonesia

and to diplomatic representatives of Indonesia accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 12 July 1996.