

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 21/55/97
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To: Health professionals
From: Medical Office /Asia/Pacific sub-regional team
Date: 1 August 1997

**Further information on MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION
Muchtart Pakpahan
INDONESIA**

See AI Index: ASA 21/08/97 - 28 February 1997

Keywords

Theme: prisoner of conscience / ill-health / denial of medical treatment
Profession/association: trade union leader

Summary

In February 1997, AI issued a medical action on Muchtart Pakpahan, aged 44, and Petrus Hariyanto, aged 26, who were both reported to be denied adequate medical care in Cipinang Prison in Jakarta. Both men are adopted prisoners of conscience. There have been further developments regarding the medical treatment for Muchtart Pakpahan, who is suffering from a benign tumour on one of his lungs.

The Indonesian Attorney-General Singgih announced on 21 July 1997 that the government had rejected a request for Muchtart Pakpahan to receive treatment overseas, after an assessment by government-appointed doctors. Singgih was reported as saying:

"According to the procedures, a second opinion was asked for from the Department of Health which formed a team of doctors. The results said the illness from which he was suffering was not fatal and could be treated here". (AFP 22 July 1997).

The doctors reported that Muchtart Pakpahan was suffering from a long-term infection of his right lung which *"could have been caused by TB, bacteria or fungus"*. Singgih announced that Muchtart Pakpahan's trial should resume because he was considered well enough to attend court, even if this meant that he needed to be "accompanied by 100 doctors" [*Bernas*, 22 July 1997].

The Indonesian Medical Association has stated publicly that Muchtart Pakpahan is entitled to a third opinion on his health and on whether he should be sent overseas to receive medical treatment. The Association's Chair, Azrul Azwar, was reported as saying *"If he is dissatisfied with the results of the previous medical checks, he can ask for a third opinion"* (AFP 30 July 1997). The Association has not, however, called for Pakpahan to be allowed to travel abroad for treatment, but their call, coming from a domestic professional body, is significant.

Following the Attorney-General's announcement that Muchtart Pakpahan does not require medical treatment overseas, the judge presiding over his trial, Jude Djazuli P Sudibyo, was quoted in *Kompas* (23 July 1997) as questioning how a court could subject a defendant who was sick to a trial. He was reported to have said that a *"trial is conditional on the good health of the defendant. It is difficult for the defendant to defend themselves if they are sick."*

Muchtart Pakpahan remains in Cikini Private Hospital in Jakarta.

Recommended actions

Letters from health professionals in your personal or professional capacity *without mention of Amnesty International* should continue to the addresses below. Letters can be in English or your own language and should:

express continuing concern at the detention of Muchtar Pakpahan, stating your belief that he is a prisoner of conscience who has neither advocated nor used violence
 note that you are aware that Muchtar Pakpahan has a serious though benign lung tumour
 calling for the trial not to be resumed while Muchtar Pakpahan remains unwell
 call for his immediate and unconditional release and permission for him to seek medical care as recommended by his medical advisers

Addresses

Minister of Foreign Affairs
 Ali Alatas S.H.
 Minister of Foreign Affairs
 Menteri Luar Negeri
 Jl. Medan Taman Pejambon No.6
 Jakarta
 Indonesia
 Tel: +62 21 345 6014
 Fax: +62 21 360 517

+62 21 380 5511
 +62 21 345 7782
 +62 21 360 541
 +62 21 724 5354

Minister of Justice
 Haji Utoyo Usman S.H.
 Menteri Kehakiman
 Jl. H.R. Rasuna Said Kav. 6-7
 Kuningan
 Jakarta Selatan, Indonesia
 Tel: +62 21 51 3006
 Fax: +62 21 525 3095

Attorney General
 Agung Singgih S.H.
 Jaksa Agung
 Jl. Sultan Hasanuddin No.1
 Kebayoran Baru
 Jakarta Selatan
 Indonesia
 Tel: +62 21 773 557
 Tel/fax: +62 21 720 8557

Letters could also be sent to the Indonesian Medical Association:

welcoming their statement that the political prisoner Muchtar Pakpahan, currently held in Cikini Private Hospital in Jakarta, should be able to receive a third opinion on his health;

calling on the Medical Association to continue encouraging the government to allow Muchtar Pakpahan to receive independent medical treatment and advice.

Dr Ishan Oetama
 Secretary General
 Indonesian Medical Association
 Jalan Dr Sam Ratulangi No.29
 Jakarta 10350, Indonesia
 Fax: +62.21.3900473

Please **send copies of your letters to:** the diplomatic representative of Indonesia in your country.
