

UA 228/98     "Disappearance" / Fear for safety / Fear of torture /  
                  Fear of extrajudicial execution                     20 August 1998

**INDONESIAAt least 34 people from Aceh**

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There are grave fears for the safety of 34 people from Aceh, northern Sumatra, who, according to recent reports from local non-governmental human rights organizations, have "disappeared" following their arrests and are at risk of torture and death.

The arrests, which took place between January and May 1998, were, according to family members and eyewitnesses, carried out by *Satuan Tugas Strategis dan Taktis Kopassus*, a unit of the Indonesian Special Forces Command (KOPASSUS) in the area of Pidie. It is now feared that they may be being held at the Kopassus post in the same area.

The arrests are linked to the Indonesian Armed Forces counter-insurgency operations against *Aceh Merdeka*, the armed separatist movement in Aceh. This has resulted in a pattern of torture and unlawful killings of individuals alleged to be members or supporters. The counter-insurgency operations have also, however, resulted in the arbitrary arrest of many people with no links to armed activity.

Those missing are **A Rahman Abubakar**, arrested on either 13 January or 12 February; **Abdullah Majid**, 50, arrested on 10 March; **Abd Wahab Ali**, 37, arrested on 15 January; **Abd Wahab Ibr**, 35, arrested on 11 January; **Aiyub Ali**, 50 arrested on 1 March; **Azhar Ahmad Cut**, 40, arrested on 28 March; **Baihaqqi Yusuf**, 40, arrested on 7 March; **Cut Raja AR**, 43, arrested on 23 April; **Hamzah Saleh**, 63, arrested on 1 March; **Hasbullah Usman**, arrested on 4 March; **Ibrahim Kaoy**, 60, arrested on 8 March; **Ibrahim M Yusuf**, 50, arrested on 13 March; **Jafar**, 45, arrested on 10 March; **Jamaluddin**, 40, arrested on 26 February; **Kaoy Ahmad**, 55, arrested on 26 January; **Khatijah**, 50, arrested on 24 April; **M Abbas Saleh**, 64, arrested in April; **M Diah Makam**, 85, arrested on 22 February; **M Gade Husein**, 35, arrested on 13 May; **M Hasan Asyek**, 50, arrested on 20 March; **M Hasan**, 65, arrested on 20 March; **Meuhran Bt Risyad**, 14, arrested on 10 March; **Muzakir Yusuf**, 17, arrested on 14 April; **M Yunus Ahmad**, 41 arrested on 28 March; **Nyak Maneh**, [f] 53, arrested in March; **Raden Cut Ben**, arrested on 18 February; **Razali Daud**, 55, arrested on 19 February; **Risyad**, 65, arrested on 10 March; **Syarifuddin H**, 35, arrested on 14 March; **Syarwan TA**, 47, arrested on 23 March; **Tgk Ahmad Abdullah**, arrested on 10 March; **Usman Ahmad**, 48, arrested on 7 March; **Yabuni Idris**, 40, arrested on 14 April; **Zulfikar F Ali**, 20, arrested on 26 March.

There are also concerns for the family members of some of the above-named after an Indonesian newspaper reported today of the attempted abduction by two men, allegedly from Kopassus, of the mother-in-law and child of one of the men who has "disappeared". The vehicle in which they had abducted them was stopped, however, by Indonesian Military Police who claim that the two men responsible escaped. They are now being pursued by Military Police investigators.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Since President Habibie took the place of the former President, Suharto, in May 1998, the government has taken a number of steps towards greater political freedom and protection of human rights. One step has been the holding of inquiries - albeit flawed - into reports of human rights violations and the

acknowledgement by the authorities that human rights violations have taken place in Indonesia over the last three decades.

During the last month, an Indonesian national parliamentary fact-finding team has been conducting an investigation into human rights violations in Aceh (although it is not clear whether their findings will result in full and impartial investigations of all the violations which have taken place in Aceh).

In the course of this investigation statements have been taken from those previously detained and tortured, from family members of those who have been "disappeared" or killed and from non-governmental organizations who attempted to monitor the violations amidst a climate of fear and intimidation. This resulted in information concerning the "disappearance" of those mentioned in this action.

In response to the above the Commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces, General Wiranto, has travelled to Aceh to apologize on behalf of the Armed Forces for the violations committed during the military's counter-insurgency activities.

He also announced the withdrawal of combat troops - although not regular, territorial troops - from the area. These make up around half of the 12,000 troops currently positioned there. Following this, on 20 August, 250 troops were withdrawn and a further 729 are expected to be withdrawn at the end of the month.

Indonesia's National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) is also preparing to visit Aceh on a fact-finding mission.

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

- welcoming the parliamentary fact-finding team's investigation into human rights violations in Aceh and expressing your hope that its findings will be made public, that it will lead to full and impartial investigations into all the reports of human rights violations that occurred and that those responsible will be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to investigate the whereabouts of the 34 above-named people who are still "disappeared" (naming some of those listed);
- urging the authorities that, if they are in custody, they be given full and on-going access to independent legal counsel, medical professionals and to their families and that any charges against them be clarified;
- urging that, if in custody, they are not tortured or ill-treated, mentioning Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment";
- urging that, if they are not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence they be immediately released;
- expressing concern for family members of the "disappeared" and requesting that their safety be ensured.

**APPEALS TO:**

**[Please note that it is frequently difficult to transmit faxes to Indonesia]**

General Wiranto  
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**Salutation:** Dear General Wiranto

**COPIES TO:**

**MINISTER OF JUSTICE**

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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 1 October 1998.