

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 21/101/99

This is a limited action. Please restrict appeals to 15 per section.

EXTRA 115/99

Fear for safety / Incommunicado detention

20 August

INDONESIA Syaiful Bahri (alias Apa Dom) aged 45, a farmer from Buloh Beureghang Village, Kuta Makmur sub-district
Jalil bin Meutini, a farmer from Buloh Simpang Kramat, Kuta Makmur sub-district

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of the two men named above, who are being detained by the Indonesian National Army (TNI) in the province of Aceh, northern Sumatra. They have not had access to independent legal counsel or to their families and there are grave fears that they are at risk of torture, ill-treatment or unlawful killing.

They were among a group of eight arrested as they drove through a transmigrants camp (permanent settlements for Indonesians moved from other more densely populated islands), called SP-II, PTP V, in Krueng Pase, Kuta Makmur Sub-district, North Aceh, on 9 August. It is believed that they were attacked by people living in the camp who then handed them over to TNI officers based there.

The TNI apparently tied the men up, forced them to line up in front of a large ditch and threatened to shoot them. It is not clear what happened subsequently but it appears that five of the men were either released or escaped and now appear to be safe.

Tgk Daud, 45, a farmer from Kuta Makmur sub-district, is believed to have died in TNI custody on the 10 August as a result of ill-treatment.

Syaiful Bahri and Jalil bin Meutini remain in custody at the transmigration camp.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since late 1998, serious human rights violations in Aceh have increased in the course of TNI counter-insurgency operations against the armed opposition group, *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (GAM), Free Aceh Movement. Dozens of people have been arrested in recent months on suspicion of links to GAM. Suspects detained by the TNI and the PPRM (*Petugas Penindak Rusuh Massa*), a riot-control police unit, are often denied access to lawyers of their choice, and are at risk of torture or ill-treatment. Many of those taken into custody have "disappeared" or have been unlawfully killed by the security forces.

Since late 1998 large numbers of people have been unlawfully killed by the security forces in Aceh. On 23 July, at least 45 people and possibly as many as 70 were killed by the TNI during counter-insurgency operations in Beutong Sub-district, West Aceh. The TNI claimed that those killed were members of GAM, but eyewitnesses and human rights groups deny this and claim that the people who died were unarmed and that they were executed by the TNI.

Human rights workers claim that at least four civilians were killed when the PPRM attacked a camp site in Bintang Kala village, Nisam Sub-district, North Aceh, on 7 August. The PPRM, who were reportedly searching the area for GAM members, came across a camp of civilians who were in the area searching for wood and suspected that they were members of GAM. Three others reportedly taken

into PPRM custody were later released, apparently bearing marks of ill-treatment.

GAM have also been accused of committing human rights abuses.

On 30 July 1999, President Habibie announced that he had established an Independent Investigation Commission on Violence in Aceh (*Komisi Independen Pengusutan Tindak Kekerasan di Aceh*). The Commission is expected to conduct investigations into human rights violations that have occurred since August 1998, and to submit a report within six months, including recommendations on legal measures, rehabilitation and reconciliation. The commission is apparently made up of 27 people, including members of Indonesia's National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academics and government representatives.

However, the commission has not been given a mandate to investigate human rights violations which occurred during TNI counter-insurgency operations between 1989 and 1998. Amnesty International believes that the commission can only be effective if it is given unrestricted access to all areas of Aceh to conduct full and independent investigations into all human rights violations including those since 1989, if its findings are made public, and if its report leads to the prosecution of those found responsible.

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

- urging the authorities to immediately establish and make public the whereabouts of Syaiful Bahri and Jalil bin Meutini and to provide guarantees for their safety;
- urging the authorities to ensure that they have regular access to human rights lawyers, their families and to medical professionals, and that they be immediately released if not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

APPEALS TO:

Coordinating Minister for Political/Security Affairs
 Jend. Purn. Feisal Tanjung
 Menteri Koordinator Bidang Politik dan Keamanan
 Jl. Medan Merdeka Barat No. 15
 Jakarta Pusat 10110, Indonesia
Faxes:+ 62 21 345 0918
Salutation:Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

President
 President Jusuf Habibie
 Presiden RI, Istana Negara
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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 16 September 1999.