

UA 216/99

"Di.**EAST TIMOR Antonio Amaral, 28**

Amnesty International is gravely concerned for the safety of Antonio Amaral, who was detained in Hera, Dili District by members of the pro-integration militia group *Aitarak* (Thorn), at around 4 am on 19 August 1999.

Antonio Amaral was travelling on a motorbike from Dili to the town of Baucau, Baucau District when he was stopped by members of the *Aitarak* Militia. According to witnesses, he was beaten and taken to Hera Polytechnic College.

When Antonio Amaral's relatives went to the *Aitarak* post to inquire about his whereabouts, they were told that he had been released at 10 am that same morning, 19 August 1999. However, as of 22 August, his family has had no news of him.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over 430,000 voters within East Timor have registered to vote in a UN-organized ballot, which will determine the future status of the territory.

Despite assurances from the Indonesian Government that it would provide an environment for the "popular consultation" process, free from intimidation and other forms of violence, the security situation in East Timor continues to be serious. Supporters of independence continue to be at risk of arbitrary arrest, "disappearance" or unlawful killing by militias who support continued integration with Indonesia, and by the Indonesian National Army (TNI).

During the campaigning phase, which is currently underway and is scheduled to conclude on 27 August 1999, intimidation and threats by pro-integration militia groups aimed at intimidating people from voting for independence have continued. In addition, staff of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) have also been the target of militia threats and violence. According to reports, a number of UNAMET staff had to be evacuated to the police station in the town of Same after their house was attacked on Saturday 21 August 1999.

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

- urging the authorities to clarify and make public the whereabouts of Antonio Amaral;
- urging that, if found to be in the custody of *Aitarak* militia, he is immediately released; or that he is handed over to the police who are the only authority with the power of arrest or detention in Indonesia and East Timor, and charged with a recognizably criminal offence or immediately and unconditionally released;
- urging the authorities to ensure that there is a full and impartial investigation into allegations of the arbitrary detention and ill-treatment of Antonio Amaral by members of the *Aitarak* militia;
- urging the authorities to disarm and disband all militia units.

APPEALS TO:

Chief of Police for East Timor
Col. GM Timbul Silaen
Kapolda Timor Timur
Dili

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East Timor
Indonesia

Faxes:+62 390 321 544 / 321 690

Salutation: Dear Chief of Police

COPIES TO:

Chief of National Police
Gen. Roesmanhadi
Kapolri
Markas Besar Kepolisian RI
Jl. Trunojoyo 13
Kebayoran Baru
Jakarta Selatan
Indonesia
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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 4 October 1999.