

UA 225/99

Fea.

EAST TIMOR Priest, name not known

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of a priest, reportedly detained by a militia group in the Manatuto District of East Timor.

The priest is believed to have been detained on 31 August after the local militia, Mahadomi, refused to let him leave Manatuto. Mahadomi is apparently trying to control access to and from Manatuto following the 30 August United Nations ballot on the future status of East Timor.

It is not known where the priest is being held. The militia have reportedly confiscated his vehicle.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At least one and possibly three local members of the United Nations Assistance Mission to East Timor (UNAMET) were killed on 30 August 1999, the day the people of East Timor voted whether to accept or reject special autonomy inside Indonesia. Serious human rights violations, including unlawful killings, "disappearances", arbitrary arrests, threats and intimidation had continued throughout the three month popular consultation process which ended with the ballot. The overwhelming majority of the victims have been supporters of independence for East Timor. UNAMET staff have also been subjected to repeated threats and intimidation and there have been sporadic attacks on UNAMET local and international staff.

Although the armed opposition group, Falintil, have committed some abuses, the majority of the violations have been carried out by members of pro-integration militia groups. There is clear evidence that the Indonesian military are supporting the militias, including eyewitness accounts of direct military involvement in many of the attacks which have taken place. The Indonesian police have also given support to the militias by failing to act to prevent attacks or to investigate reports of human rights violations. They are also known to be directly involved in some incidents such as the attack on the village of Memo on 27 August 1999 in which three people died. At least one of them is thought to have been shot dead by the police.

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

- urging the authorities to immediately establish the whereabouts of the priest from Manatuto, and ensure that he is not tortured or ill-treated while detained by the militia;
- urging the authorities to take steps to ensure that he is immediately released from militia custody.

APPEALS TO:**COMMANDER RESORT MILITARY COMMAND (KOREM) 164/WIRADHARMA (covers East Timor)**

Colonel Muhamad Noer Muis
Markas KOREM 164/Wiradharma
Dili
East Timor
Indonesia
Fax/Tel: + 62 390 321 624

Salutation: Dear Colonel

CHIEF OF POLICE FOR EAST TIMOR

Colonel GM Timbul Silaen

Kapolda Timor Timur

Dili

East Timor

Indonesia

Fax/Tel: + 62 390 321 544

Salutation: Dear Colonel

COPIES TO:

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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 12 October 1999.