

PUBLIC

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UA 78/99

Fear of i.

MALAYSIA Ahmad Zaidi bin Mohamad Aris

Ahmad bin Awang

Tian Chua, vice-chair of the *Parti Keadilan Nasional*, social activist

Abdul Malek Hussein, former president of *Islam Se Malaysia Youth*

Ikhwan Abdul Jabar

Mohamed Razali bin Nordin

At least 18 others

Amnesty International fears that at least 24 people, including those named above, may be ill-treated in detention. They have been detained in the last 24 hours in connection with demonstrations in support of Anwar Ibrahim, the former Deputy Prime Minister, sentenced on 14 April 1999 to six years' imprisonment for misuse of power.

Police reportedly beat and kicked a number of demonstrators at the time of arrest. Tian Chua and other peaceful demonstrators were also heavily beaten with sticks, by people believed to be plainclothes policemen, during a demonstration today.

Among those detained are two prominent members of the opposition, who have previously been detained for their peaceful political activities. Abdul Malek Hussin was detained shortly after the arrest of Anwar Ibrahim in September 1998, and was held for nearly two months under the Internal Security Act. Tian Chua, a social activist and vice-chair of the newly formed *Parti Keadilan Nasional*, National Justice Party, has already been arrested three times since September 1998 for his involvement in peaceful demonstrations and opposition activities, and is reported to have been assaulted twice in custody.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Sporadic demonstrations, some violent, have taken place in the last 24 hours throughout Kuala Lumpur in support of Anwar Ibrahim, the former deputy Prime Minister.

Since the detention of Anwar Ibrahim in September 1998, street protests in support of the reform movement in Malaysia have taken place, the majority of which have been peaceful. Police have repeatedly broken up these demonstrations using water cannon and tear gas. Peaceful protestors have been beaten by police and reportedly by men in civilian clothes wearing red armbands, believed to be plainclothes policemen. Hundreds of protesters have been detained amid reports of ill-treatment during and immediately after arrest, and in police station detention cells ('lock-ups'). They have had their access to legal counsel restricted or denied before remand hearings. Three hundred and thirty one people have so far been brought to trial for taking part in demonstrations, under charges including "illegal assembly" and "failure to disperse", of whom 160 have been acquitted. The government has stated that at least 12 students who took part in protests over the last few months would be expelled or suspended from their educational establishments. Under Malaysia's Universities and University Colleges Act, students are prohibited from involvement in opposition political activities.

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

- expressing concern at reports that demonstrators have been beaten by police and calling for a full and independent investigation of these reports and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- urging that the Royal Malaysia Police exercise maximum restraint in their treatment of demonstrators, and act at all times in accordance with international standards on the use of force and firearms by law enforcement officials;
- urging that the detained protestors are not ill-treated;
- urging that everyone detained in connection with demonstrations is given immediate access to family, independent lawyers and medical attention;
- urging the authorities to ensure that the right of Malaysians to engage in peaceful assembly is respected.

APPEALS TO:

Minister for Home Affairs

Abdullah Ahmad Badawi

Minister of Home Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister

Jalan Dato' Onn

50502 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Faxes: + 60 3 230 1051

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Acting Inspector General of Police

Tan Sri Norian Mai

Ibu Pejabat Polis Persekutan

Bukit Aman

Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia

Faxes: + 603 2910707

Salutation: Dear Inspector General

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Malaysia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 May 1999.