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Indonesia: Death threat to campaigner's family

The family of the deceased human rights campaigner Munir must be protected, said Amnesty International after his wife received a death threat at their family home.

A decapitated and dismembered chicken was sent to Munir's wife Sucawati on Saturday 20 November, along with a note warning, *"Be careful!!!! Do not connect the TNI [Indonesian military] to the death of Munir. Do you want to end up like this?"*

"In light of the recent threats the Indonesian government must give the highest priority to the protection of Munir's family, his supporters, and to all human rights campaigners in the country," said Natalie Hill, Deputy Asia Director at Amnesty International. "In the past, threats against activists have rarely been investigated. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's new government should show its commitment to human rights by taking concrete steps to protect those who work to uphold them."

"The government should publicly condemn and properly investigate threats and attacks against human rights campaigners, including those that happened in the past," continued Ms Hill.

Munir, 38, was on a flight from Singapore to the Netherlands on 7 September when he died from arsenic poisoning, according to the Dutch autopsy report. Indonesian police have started an investigation into his death.

Amnesty International is concerned that if threats of the kind received by Sucawati are not properly addressed, the investigation into Munir's death will be undermined. "In order for the investigation to be credible, it is vital that those who provide information about Munir's death are able to do so without fear for their safety," said Ms Hill. "We urge the government to establish a witness and victim protection programme as a matter of urgency."

Background

Munir was one of Indonesia's most prominent human rights campaigners. During the last months of the Suharto government in 1998, he took up the cause of dozens of activists who had "disappeared", and co-founded the Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (Kontras). He was also involved in investigations into human rights violations in Timor-Leste in 1999.

Munir received numerous threats as a result of his human rights work. In August 2003, a bomb exploded outside his home in Jakarta. In 2002 and 2003, the Kontras office where he worked was attacked by a mob, who destroyed office equipment and took information.

Public Document

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