

Public Statement

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Indonesia: Concern over missing human rights activist

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Jafar Siddiq Hamzah, an Acehnese human rights activist who has reportedly gone missing in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia.

Jafar Siddiq Hamzah, head of the US-based non-governmental organization International Forum for Aceh, failed to keep an appointment for a meeting in Medan on the evening of Saturday 5 August 2000. He did not return to the house where he was staying in Medan that night, and his family have reportedly had no contact with him since then. They have checked with local hospitals in Medan, but found no record of him there.

Jafar Siddiq Hamzah is a well-known human rights activist both inside and outside Indonesia. His family are worried that he may have been kidnapped or "disappeared" because of his high profile human rights work.

*More than 300 people are reported to have been killed this year in Aceh, where serious human rights violations -- including arbitrary arrests, torture, "disappearances" and killings -- have been routine. Many civilians have been killed or arbitrarily arrested by soldiers and police ostensibly trying to capture suspected members of the armed opposition group Free Aceh Movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*, GAM). GAM have also been accused of serious human rights abuses.*

Violations have continued, despite the implementation of an agreement between the Indonesian authorities and GAM on 2 June 2000, which provided for a suspension in armed operations to allow humanitarian aid to be delivered in the province. Human rights defenders and humanitarian workers in Aceh are among those who have suffered harassment, intimidation and arrests over recent months.

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