

EXTERNAL

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EXTRA 88/97

Fear of torture

19 June 1997

EAST TIMOR Virgilio dos Santos Pinto  
Cancio da Costa  
Gil Fernandes

Lorencio Monteiro

Sergio Paul Dias  
Aurelio Mendes  
Jose da Costa

Joao da Costa

Aurelio  
Aleco Neves

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Three men, Virgilio dos Santos Pinto, Cancio da Costa and Gil Fernandes, arrested on or around 14 June 1997, are believed to be in military custody in the town of Los Palos, East Timor, where they are at serious risk of torture or ill-treatment. Another seven men, Lorencio Monteiro, Sergio Paul Dias, Aurelio Mendes, Jose da Costa, Joao da Costa, Aurelio and Aleco Neves, are also reported to have been recently arrested in the region of Los Palos. There is no information on their whereabouts, raising fears that they too may be at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

Virgilio dos Santos Pinto, Cancio da Costa and Gil Fernandes were detained by members of the Special Forces, *Kopassus*, during house-to-house searches by the Indonesian security forces in the village of Soru, approximately five kilometres from Los Palos. The searches followed a series of attacks on military and civilian targets by *Falintil* - the armed opposition group fighting for East Timorese independence. The three men were taken to the *Kopassus* detention centre in Los Palos, known locally as *Mess Gula*. Amnesty International has received testimonies in the past from people who have been tortured or ill-treated in this detention centre and believes that it is likely that the three men arrested from Soru will be facing such treatment. They are not believed to have been permitted access to lawyers or to members of their families.

The precise reasons for the arrest of all ten men is unclear, but it is believed to be in relation to the attacks by *Falintil*.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent weeks there has been an increase in reported attacks by *Falintil* against military and government targets. Over 40 people, including civilians, members of the armed forces, the police force and of *Falintil*, have been killed during the attacks.

Amnesty International condemns the attacks on civilians by *Falintil*. However, the organization is concerned that retaliation by the Indonesian security forces may spread beyond those directly responsible for the killings and result in the arrest of people who have been involved only in peaceful activities in support of East Timorese independence.

Since the attacks the military authorities are believed to have arrested over 100 individuals, many of whom have been released after short periods in detention.

Torture or ill-treatment of political detainees in East Timor in both police or military custody is routine. The risk is particularly high during interrogation when detainees are commonly denied access to legal counsel and to their families. The risk is further exacerbated by the restrictions placed by the Indonesian authorities on access to East Timor for independent human rights monitors.

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

- seeking assurances that none of the 10 men believed to have been arrested in the Los Palos region will be subjected to torture or ill-treatment;
- urging the authorities to clarify the whereabouts of Lorencio Monteiro, Sergio Paul Dias, Aurelio Mendes, Jose da Costa, Joao da Costa, Aurelio and Aleco Neves and to clarify the charges against them and also against Virgilio dos Santos Pinto, Cancio da Costa and Gil Fernandes;
- urging the authorities to ensure that all the detainees have access to medical care, to members of their families and to independent legal advisors.

**APPEALS TO:**

Commander of Special Forces Command  
Major General Prabowo Subianto  
Panglima Kopassus  
Markas Besar ABRI  
Cilangkap  
Jakarta Timur  
Indonesia

**Telegrams: Panglima Kopassus, Markas Besar ABRI, Jakarta, Indonesia**

**Salutation: Dear Major General Prabowo Subianto**

Military Commander for Region IX/Udayana  
(Covers Bali, Lombok, Nusa Tenggara and East Timor)  
Major General Rivai  
Pangdam IX Udayana  
Markas Besar KODAM IX/Udayana  
Denpasar, Bali  
Indonesia

**Telegrams: Pangdam IX/Udayana, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia**

**Salutation: Dear Major General Rivai**

**COPIES TO:**

National Commission on Human Rights  
Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia (Komnas HAM)  
Alex Refialy SH  
Jalan Dr Antonio de Carvelho  
Dili, East Timor  
(Indonesia)

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 20 July 1997.