

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 28/44/98

1 December 1998

Further information on UA 256/98

(ASA 28/20/98, 23 September 1998) and follow-up (ASA 28/25/98, 25 September 1998)

-Legal Concern / Prisoners of Conscience / Fear of ill-treatment

MALAYSIA Anwar Ibrahim, Ex-deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister
S Nallakaruppan, Ex-director of Public Relations Magnum Corp
(possible prisoner of conscience)

RELEASED Ruslan Kassim, President of Negri Sembilan state United Malays
National Organisation (UMNO)

Ruslan Kassim was released from detention on 17 November 1998, reportedly without condition. All associates of Anwar Ibrahim detained in late September 1998 have now been released.

The separate trials of S. Nallakaruppan and Anwar Ibrahim are continuing.

Anwar Ibrahim is currently on trial under charges of sexual impropriety (sodomy) and corrupt practices. His trial is expected to last until June 1999. Amnesty International believes that the charges against him are politically motivated, and that he is a prisoner of conscience. The results of an investigation into his alleged beating in custody on 20 September were reportedly given to the Attorney-General on 19 November, and have not yet been made public.

S. Nallakaruppan is being tried under the Internal Security Act (ISA) on charges of illegal possession of 125 bullets. The bullets in question were previously held under a licence, but S. Nallakaruppan had neglected to return them to authorities. They were discovered when police searched his house during an investigation of allegations of sexual impropriety made against Anwar Ibrahim.

If convicted, he faces a mandatory death sentence under the Internal Security Act (ISA).

In an affidavit filed at the High Court on 28 November, it was alleged that the prosecutors in the trial of Anwar Ibrahim had offered to consider trying S. Nallakaruppan on lesser charges, should he cooperate in implicating Anwar Ibrahim in the commission of sexual improprieties. In connection with the submission of this affidavit, the presiding judge has held Zainur Zakaria, a member of Anwar Ibrahim's legal counsel, under contempt of court and ruled that he be sentenced to three months' imprisonment, and has ordered the arrest of Manjeet Singh Dhillon, a lawyer representing S. Nallakaruppan. The detention of Zainur Zakaria has been stayed, pending a court hearing on Friday 4 December.

No further action is required by the Urgent Action network - S. Nallakaruppan and Anwar Ibrahim will be worked on in a separate action form by groups. Thank you to all those who sent appeals.