

# URGENT ACTION

## DETAINED POLITICAL ACTIVISTS AT RISK OF TORTURE

**At least ten political activists in detention in the Indonesian province of Maluku are at risk of torture and other ill-treatment. They were arrested for planning peaceful political activities.**

At least ten political activists (**Benney Sinay, Izak Sapulete, Andy Maruanaya, Ongen Krikof, Marven Bremer, Steven Siahaya, Ong Siahaya, Nomo Andries, Charly Souisa, Glenn Wattimury**) were arrested on 2 August 2010, in the province of Maluku. The police anti-terrorist unit, Detachment 88, arrested them for alleged links to the Republic of South Maluku (RMS) movement, a day before the visit of Indonesia's President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, to the province. At least eight of the men are currently being detained at the Tantai police station in Ambon. Amnesty International is concerned about their safety, as detained political activists have previously been tortured and ill-treated in Maluku.

According to local sources, the activists were planning to use the visit of the President as an opportunity to disseminate posters, books and other materials related to alleged human rights violations in Maluku and posters calling for the release of political prisoners who were arrested in Maluku for their peaceful political activism.

Families of political activists in Maluku are frightened as Detachment 88 officers are also reportedly conducting searches in their houses looking for other activists.

The rights to free expression, opinion and peaceful assembly are guaranteed under the Indonesian Constitution and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Indonesia is a state party. However, many peaceful political activists have in the past been arrested, tortured or otherwise ill-treated, charged for "rebellion" under the Indonesian Criminal Code and given long prison sentences after trials that did not meet international standards of fairness.

### **PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Indonesian or your own language calling on authorities in Indonesia:**

- Urging the authorities to guarantee that the ten men, and any other detainees, will not be tortured or otherwise ill-treated while they remain in custody;
- Urging the authorities to ensure that the ten men are allowed access to legal counsel of their choosing, their families and any medical treatment that they may require;
- Calling for the immediate and unconditional release of the ten men if they have been arrested and detained solely for planning peaceful political activities;
- Urging the authorities to ensure the right to freedom of expression and opinion is upheld in Maluku;
- Ensure that all pre-trial procedures comply with Indonesia's obligations under the ICCPR.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 15 SEPTEMBER 2010 TO:**

Minister of Justice and Human Rights  
 Ministry of Justice and Human Rights  
 Mr. Patrialis Akbar  
 Jl. H.R. Rasuna Said Kav No. 4-5  
 Kuningan  
 Jakarta Selatan 12950, Indonesia  
**Fax: +62 21 525 3095**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Chairperson National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM)  
 Ifdhal Kasim  
 Jl Latuharhary  
 No4 Menteng Jakarta Pusat  
 10310 Indonesia  
 Fax: +62 21 39 25 227  
**Salutation: Dear Ifdhal Kasim**

**COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Indonesia accredited to your country.** Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Indonesian authorities continue to use repressive legislation to criminalize peaceful political activities. Violations of this right are particularly severe in areas where there has been a history of pro-independence movements such as Maluku and Papua. Amnesty International has documented dozens of arrests in past years of political activists who have peacefully called for independence.

The Republic of South Maluku (RMS), an armed pro-independence movement, officially ended in Maluku with the execution by the Indonesian authorities of its leader in 1966. However some villagers continue to raise the 'Benang Raja flag', a symbol of the South Maluku independence, in Maluku as a peaceful political act of protest against the central government. These protests may encompass several messages, including simply calling for greater autonomy from Jakarta or as a symbolic way of expressing grievances about the central government's failure to address ongoing economic and social problems in the isolated province.

In June 2007, 22 political activists in Maluku province were arrested for unfurling the 'Benang Raja flag' while performing a traditional 'Cakalele' dance in front of Indonesia's President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. After their performance, the police, particularly the anti-terrorist unit Detachment-88, detained all 22 of the dancers. They were beaten, forced to crawl on their stomachs over hot asphalt, whipped with an electric cable and had billiard balls forced into their mouths. The police also beat them on the side of the head with rifle butts until their ears bled and fired shots close to their ears. The police threatened them continually with further torture, sometimes at gunpoint, in an attempt to force them to confess.

The 22 political activists are serving sentences of between seven and 20 years' imprisonment for 'rebellion' under Articles 106 and 110 of the Indonesia Criminal Code. Amnesty International considers them to be prisoners of conscience. The organization is further concerned that the courts sentenced them to long terms of imprisonment after unfair trials and after being subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. A twenty-third dancer, also a prisoner of conscience, was arrested in June 2008 and was sentenced to four years' imprisonment in March 2009.

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