

UA 198/94 Fear of torture/Arbitrary Detention

23 May 1994

Indonesia/East Timor Jose Antonio Neves
 Nuno de Andrade Sarmiento Corvelho
 Anibal
 Rui Fernandes
 Octaviano
 Pedro Fatima Tilman
 Pantaleão
 Miguel
 Rosalino
 Marcos
 Lucas Tilman dos Santos

At least 11 East Timorese have been detained by Indonesian military forces in recent weeks in connection with their non-violent political activities. They include Jose Antonio Neves detained by military intelligence officers on 19 May 1994 in Malang, and at least ten others detained in Dili, East Timor, in the preceding weeks. Amnesty International believes that they may be at risk of being tortured and is seriously concerned for their safety.

A leading member of the pro-independence East Timorese underground, and a student at a theological institute in Malang, East Java, Jose Antonio Neves was arrested by military intelligence authorities at the town's main post office and taken to a safehouse of the military's intelligence unit (SGI). According to an unconfirmed report, he was later transferred to the headquarters of Regional Military Command IX in Denpasar, Bali. Indonesian military authorities have denied arresting Jose Antonio Neves, further heightening concern for his safety.

Colleagues said that Jose Neves had recently returned from East Timor where he had been gathering information about human rights violations and political developments, and that on his return to Malang he had hoped to make this available to the international community. One source said that at the time of his arrest he was carrying a letter from the leader of the guerilla resistance, Konis Santana. The letter was to be read out at a conference on East Timor scheduled to take place in Manila in early June.

At least ten other pro-independence activists were detained in Dili in the weeks prior to Jose Neves' arrest. They include: Nuno de Andrade Sarmiento Corvelho, and Anibal of Santa Cruz, Dili; Rui Fernandes, of Bemori, Dili; Octaviano, Pedro Fatima Tilman, Pantaleão, Miguel, Rosalino, and Marcos, all of Kuluhun, Dili; and Lucas Tilman dos Santos, of Bairro-Pite. According to reports the ten, and possibly others, were taken to military intelligence headquarters in Dili where they were interrogated about their political activities. One of the ten, Lucas Tilman dos Santos was reported to have been previously detained on 18 April, and apparently released after questioning.

Some of those detained in recent weeks are believed to have been released without charge after questioning, but on 23 May a military spokesperson in Dili said that at least six people had been "detained for questioning" and said they might be brought to court if there was enough evidence against them. He said those detained included a number of youths who staged a peaceful protest in Dili in front of foreign journalists in April. In view of the historical pattern

of abuse of both political and criminal suspects, there is serious concern for the safety of those still in custody.

Amnesty International is calling on the Indonesian authorities to act immediately to protect the prisoners named above from torture or ill-treatment. It calls upon the authorities to ensure that all detainees are given prompt and unrestricted access to legal counsel of their own choice, as required by Indonesian and international law. Amnesty International urges the government to release immediately all those currently detained for their non-violent political activities, and to cease the practice of short-term arbitrary detention of peaceful political opponents.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The arrests of the 11 East Timorese are consistent with a long-standing pattern of short-term detention and ill-treatment of real or alleged political opponents of Indonesian rule in East Timor. In the past two years alone, hundreds of East Timorese political suspects have been held by military authorities for periods ranging from a few hours to several days, before being released without charge; others are known to have been held in military custody without trial for several months. Many of those detained are known to have tortured or ill-treated.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in English or in your own language:

- expressing urgent concern for the safety of Jose Antonio Neves and the ten others named above (please list all the names);
- urging the government to act immediately to protect them from torture or ill-treatment;
- calling upon the government to permit all political detainees to have immediate access to legal counsel of their own choosing;
- urging the government to release immediately all those held for their non-violent political activities.

APPEALS TO

MINISTER OF JUSTICE

Haji Utoyo Usman S.H.

Menteri Kehakiman

Jl. Rasuna Said Kav. 6-7

Kuningan

Jakarta Selatan

Indonesia

Fax: +62 21 3141 625

Telex: 44404 ditjenim ia

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Jakarta, Indonesia

Salutation: Dear Minister Utoyo Usman

MILITARY COMMANDER REGION IX

- covers Bali, Lombok and Nusa Tenggara including East Timor]

Brigadier-General R. Adang Ruchiatna

Pangdam IX/Udayana

Markas Besar KODAM IX Udayana

Denpasar

Bali

Indonesia

Telegrams: Pangdam IX/Udayana, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia
Salutation: Dear Brigadier-General Adang Ruchiatna

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Lt. Gen. (Ret) Ali Said
Chairman, National Commission on Human Rights
c/o Direktorat Jenderal Pemasyarakatan
Jl. Veteran No. 11
Jakarta Pusat
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 4 July 1994.