

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 28/01/99

UA 30/99

Fear of torture/ill-treatment

22 February 1999

MALAYSIA

Shaharudin Abdul Kadir, 35, computer technician

Amnesty International is concerned that Shaharudin Abdul Kadir may face ill-treatment or torture while being held in incommunicado detention. He was reportedly detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA) at his home in the early hours of 19 February 1999. Plain-clothes policemen are said to have removed computer disks and hardware from his residence at the time of detention.

Shaharudin is believed to have been detained under suspicion of association with the *Reformasi* movement (see background).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There have been at least 25 arrests under the ISA since September 1998, linked to the arrest of former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and to the activities of the movement for social and political reform in Malaysia, *Reformasi*. Anwar Ibrahim was allegedly beaten while detained under the ISA on 20 September. On 22 February 1999 a Royal Commission launched a public enquiry into injuries sustained by Anwar Ibrahim while he was in police custody. Others detained under the ISA have reported ill-treatment and inadequate access to medical care, and have been held incommunicado, beaten, and denied adequate sleep. (See *Malaysia: The Arrest of Anwar Ibrahim and his Political Associates - an Update* (AI Index ASA 28/39/98, 9 November 1998), Urgent Actions 271/98, 256/98, and updates.)

The ISA allows 60 days' detention without charge for acting "in a manner prejudicial to the security of Malaysia". The Minister of Home Affairs may authorize further detention for up to two years at a time, without judicial review or the filing of formal charges. The ISA has been used to curb freedom of expression and association in Malaysia, and Amnesty International is concerned that it fails to meet internationally recognized standards on detention and fair trial. Despite repeated calls from Malaysian human rights groups for its repeal, the government claims that the ISA is needed to maintain political, religious and ethnic stability.

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

- expressing concern at the detention of Shaharudin Abdul Kadir under the ISA, and calling for him either to be charged with a recognizable criminal offence, or released immediately;
- urging that he is not ill-treated in detention;
- urging that, pending his release from detention, he is granted immediate access to lawyers, relatives and doctors.

APPEALS TO:

Minister for Home Affairs

Abdullah Ahmad Badawi

Minister of Home Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister

Jalan Dato' Onn

2

50502 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Faxes: + 60 3 230 1051

COPIES TO:

Acting Inspector General of Police

Tan Sri Norian Mai

Ibu Pejabat Polis Persekutan

Bukit Aman

Kuala Lumpur

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Faxes: + 603 2910707

and to diplomatic representatives of Malaysia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 March 1999.