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Indonesia: Resumption of executions

Today's executions of Fabianus Tibo, Dominggus da Silva and Marinus Riwu are a serious setback for all those combating the use of death penalty across the world. Amnesty International is deeply disappointed that despite the debate about the use of the death penalty that the case had sparked throughout Indonesia in recent months, the executions of the three men went ahead.

The death penalty is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and should never be inflicted on anyone. As the world continues to turn away from the use of the death penalty, the executions of these three men are an anomaly. Such state sanctioned killing is all the more unacceptable where, as in this case, there have been serious doubts about the fairness of the trial.

Fabianus Tibo, Dominggus da Silva and Marinus Riwu were sentenced to death by Palu District Court in Central Sulawesi in April 2001 for committing premeditated murder and inciting riots, following ethnic and religious violence in the district of Poso, Central Sulawesi, in May 2000. Amnesty International received reports that the trial of the three men was unfair. In particular, there were concerns that witness testimony provided as evidence by the defence may have been ignored by the Court when giving its verdict. Further, There were demonstrators armed with stones outside the courthouse, demanding that the three be sentenced to death, and their legal representatives were subjected to intimidation including death threats. A bomb was planted at the house of one legal adviser. However, the authorities did not review the trial.

Indonesia's neighbour, the Philippines, abolished the death penalty for all crimes in June this year. President Arroyo declared that the death penalty had been shown to be unsuccessful in "effectively deterring the commission of heinous crimes." The Philippines joined more than 125 countries in the world who have already abolished the death penalty in law or practice.

As a member of the Human Rights Council and as a recent ratifier of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Indonesian government today lost the opportunity to follow the Philippines' lead and establish a trend in Southeast Asia for better respect of human rights through the protection of the most fundamental of all - the right to life.

At least 90 people are believed to be under sentence of death in Indonesia. The executions of Fabianus Tibo, Dominggus da Silva and Marinus Riwu are the first recorded by Amnesty International in Indonesia since May 2005. This raises strong fears for the fate of all those who are currently awaiting execution.

Amnesty International calls on the Indonesian government to take immediate steps towards the abolition of the death penalty by halting all executions and commuting all death sentences.

