

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety

8 December 1998

EAST TIMOR36 Families

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of thirty-six families who have been arbitrarily detained by the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI) in Dotik village, Manufahi District, East Timor, for around the past two weeks.

The families are believed to have been taken into custody in an attempt by the military to force them to reveal the identities of others from the village and to force others to come forward who allegedly took part in a recent attack on a local military base on 9 November 1998.

Fears for the safety of the families have been heightened by news that 11 other people recently detained by the military in connection with the same events were severely tortured, including being beaten, burnt with cigarettes and sexually abused.

Access to the families is believed to be restricted. Other residents in the village are also reported to have had restrictions placed on their movements.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Serious human rights violations, including unlawful killings, arbitrary arrests and ill-treatment have recently been committed in East Timor by ABRI. This has been part of an intensive military operation by ABRI to find those responsible for recent attacks against them. One such attack, in October, took place at a political meeting in Manufahi District, south of the capital of East Timor, at which members of the armed resistance, the East Timorese National Liberation Army (Falintil), were present. It resulted in the killing of three Indonesian soldiers and a civilian. In November, a second incident occurred when a military command post in Alas was attacked, three soldiers were killed and 13 were taken captive (11 have since been released), and a large number of weapons were taken.

At least two men are known to have been killed by the military as a result of recent military activities. Other reports that up to 50 people may have been killed by ABRI have not been confirmed.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of 36 families who are in the custody of the Indonesian Armed Forces and urging that they should not be ill-treated;
- asking the authorities to clarify the identities of all those detained and any charges against them;
- asking that they be released or promptly charged with a recognisably criminal offence;
- requesting that they be given access to independent legal council, medical professionals and other family members.

APPEALS TO: (note, fax tones can difficult to obtain)

Commander Resort Military Command (KOREM) 164/Wiradharma (covers East Timor)
Colonel Tono Suratman
Markas KOREM 164/Wiradharma
Dili

East Timor
Indonesia

Telegrams: Colonel Suratman, East Timor, Indonesia

Faxes: + 62 390 21 624

Salutation: Dear Colonel Suratman

COPIES TO:

Minister Of Defence And Security

Gen. Wiranto

Menteri Pertahanan dan Keamanan

Jl. Medan Merdeka Barat No.13-14

Jakarta 10110

Indonesia

Faxes: + 62 21 381 4535.

Minister Of Foreign Affairs

Ali Alatas S.H.

Menteri Luar Negeri

Jl. Medan Taman Pejambon No.6

Jakarta

Indonesia

Faxes: + 62 21 380 5511/ 345 7782/ 360 541/ 724 5354

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 18 January 1998.