

in detention in jails in Bihar and West Bengal. AI is taking steps to secure their early release.

Some 1,740 left-wing political prisoners held in West Bengal were to be released under an important decision of the Supreme Court which ruled on 19 April 1973 that arrest under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) was illegal. But most were immediately re-arrested either under other sections of the same act or on different charges. In October Secretary General Martin Ennals wrote to the West Bengal Home Minister asking for information about 66 cases. AI estimates the number of political prisoners held in West Bengal to be as high as 20,000, of whom 18,000 have not been charged in court. Most detainees are held under preventive detention legislation in force since the ending of the Pakistan war: the Defence of India Rules and the Maintenance of Internal Security Act. But those prisoners accused of Naxalite activities are held on a variety of criminal charges. AI knows of very few cases where prisoners were brought to trial. In a letter to the West Bengal Chief Minister in February 1974 Martin Ennals expressed AI's great concern about the situation and urged that the prisoners be brought to trial as soon as possible, or, in the absence of criminal evidence, be released immediately. Many have already spent some three years in prison without trial.

The first general railway strike, which started on 8 May 1974 at a time of economic crisis, provoked a very strong government reaction and massive arrests. AI estimates that 30,000 trade unionists were detained, most held under preventive detention laws. Those arrested included not only members of the strike action committee and leading trade unionists—like George Fernandez, a member of parliament, who is also a member of Amnesty International—but also railwaymen who participated in the strike. Martin Ennals sent a telegram and a letter protesting strongly against the arrest of people "for exercising what are generally recognized as legal trade union rights". The International Secretariat organized an urgent action campaign for all

national sections to demand the immediate release of all prisoners held under preventive detention. On 27 May the strike was called off. Although large numbers of prisoners were released, among them Mr Fernandez, some thousands remain in detention, charged with specific offences.

Indonesia

There were no discernible improvements in the position of political prisoners in Indonesia during the past year, and therefore Amnesty International's work continued for the relief and release of over 55,000 prisoners, all detained without charge or trial since 1965. Political change has been minimal. With the removal of General Sumitro early in 1974, President Suharto assumed real, as well as titular, responsibility for all security—and hence prisoner—issues.

Although arrests of suspected supporters of the banned Communist Party are a continuing feature of the Indonesian political situation, action by KOPKAMTIB—the army security forces—took a new direction in January 1974 when over 720 people were arrested after the visit to Jakarta by the Japanese Prime Minister had sparked off mass demonstrations against Japanese and foreign investment. Some of those arrested were students while others were economists, lawyers and intellectuals, many of whom are well-known for their anti-communist beliefs. A number remain in prison, due to be tried on subversion charges. AI groups are working for about 20 of them. The adopted cases include two internationally-known lawyers, Yap Thiam Hien, who is a leader of the Christian community, and Buyung Nasution, the founder of the Legal Aid Institute.

In August 1973, the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Treatment of Minorities accepted as "admissible" AI's communication presenting evidence to show that the government's detention policies "revealed a consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms". This was one of only eight "admissible"

cases. All were then referred to the Human Rights Commission which, at its February 1974 meeting, decided to appoint a special group to consider them. No report will be made until 1975.

Throughout 1973 approaches were made from the International Secretariat and from national sections to the member states of the Inter-Government Group on Indonesia (IGGI), the inter-governmental aid consortium which has provided large-scale development aid to Indonesia since 1967. Governments were asked to bear in mind the vast scale of political detention, and although some refused, others showed that they regarded this as a matter of importance: in December reference was made to political imprisonment in the opening session of the IGGI meeting in Amsterdam.

As a result of price rises, prison conditions have seriously deteriorated. In December 1973 Secretary General Martin Ennals wrote expressing AI's concern at reports of malnutrition from prisons in Jakarta and in Central Java. In Salemba Prison it was reported that three prisoners had died from starvation in a single week. Despite high inflation the daily allocation remains at its 1970 figure of 25 rupiahs per prisoner.

Other initiatives have been taken to publicize the detention situation. In July 1973, prior to a meeting in Jakarta of the Law Association for Asia and the Western Pacific (LAWASIA), the secretariat drew up a legal memorandum specifying major violations of the rule of law. This was sent to LAWASIA associations, and to AI's national sections in Asia. Although AI received no formal response, the Indonesian Government did not try to use the meeting as a forum in which to justify its political detention policies, despite an earlier announcement that President Suharto intended to do so.

The permanent "resettlement" of category "B" prisoners in labour camps has continued to be a prominent part of government policy. In October 1973, journalists were taken to visit the camps on Buru island, to which some wives and children have now been transported. The reports published by Indonesian journalists

were not uncritical and official statements contrasted sharply with an official statistic that 102 prisoners have died since 1969 when the first group of detainees were taken to the island.

In April and May 1974, large numbers of prisoners were removed from prisons in Jakarta and Central Java. Families were not told of their destination, but reports reaching AI said that many were to be transported to the prison island of Nusakambangan, off the south coast of Java, and to Central Java, to engage in varying forms of agricultural labour. AI wrote to President Suharto expressing the fear that this would not only have the effect of cutting family ties and ending the material aid provided by relatives living nearby, but represented a new and more permanent form of detention for these prisoners, none of whom had still been tried or convicted.

No firm figure for the total number of prisoners exists but in July 1973, President Suharto told the *London Times* that there were 2,547 "A" category detainees, 26,650 "B" category (a figure which may well exclude the 10,000 taken to Buru island) and 7,114 "X" category prisoners. It seems that the "C" group no longer exists as a classification and that its occupants have been released or, since few releases have taken place, re-allocated to "B" or "X". Trials have continued at a slow rate, and the number of prisoners who have come before the courts since 1965 is still probably fewer than 500, despite an army announcement in June 1973 that trials would proceed at a yearly rate of 200.

Death sentences have been reported, though not carried out, and in each instance AI has appealed by cable for clemency.

AI groups are now working for a total of 215 cases. In December 1973, a special campaign began for the release of 17 imprisoned members of parliament.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Case sheets were issued on two foreigners, a French linguist-translator and