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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

TO: German Indonesia Co-ordination Group
Australia Amnesty Indonesia Committee
Dutch Indonesia Co-ordinator

Indonesia: Numbers of Prisoners

Attached is a newspaper report (The Times, 17 August 1973) containing a new set of official figures for the number of untried political prisoners in Indonesia. You will see that these statistics were issued on President Suharto's initiative, relate to the end of June 1973, and set the total at 46,119.

From the report, it is not absolutely clear whether Buru prisoners are included in the 'B' group figure of 26,650. But it seems likely that this is not so, and that 9,898 should be added on, to make a 'B' group total of 36,548. This interpretation gains strength from an earlier statement in October 1972, when a figure of 29,000 'B' prisoners was given by the Military Command for the Restoration of Public Order and Security and it was made clear that this excluded Buru. (See attached Asian report 15 October 1972). On the Government's own admission, no 'B' prisoners have been released since then - or indeed since 1965 - and so there is no reason why the total for this category should have dropped in the last eight months.

We think that these press reports, and especially the President's June figures, will be useful in explaining Amnesty's own estimate of 55,000.

You may also want to mention three additional points:

- The figures quoted above relate to 'A', 'B', and 'X' categories, but, despite repeated official statements that all 'C' prisoners had been freed, we know that in October, 1972, there remained at least 3,000 'C' prisoners in Central Java; it is very likely that there were similar groups of 'C' prisoners in other parts of the Republic. Large scale releases have not taken place since then, while there have been new arrests.
- Official statements are often flatly contradictory; in March 1973 President Suharto told the Peoples' Congress that categories 'A' and 'B' totalled no more than 17,117 - a discrepancy with his later statement which is pointed out in the Times report.
- The statistical map contained in Amnesty's published report 'Indonesia Special' shows the wide geographical distribution of prisons and camps, and so explains the difficulties in the way of a final and precise figure.

Bearing these factors in mind, we still believe that the total of untried prisoners exceeds 55,000.

Research Department
17th August 1973